TRANSFER VIRGINIA

Promoting Student Attainment through Reverse Transfer

A Toolkit for Virginia Colleges & Universities

MAKING TRANSFER WORK FOR EVERYONE

Date: September 2020
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Project Site: https://tinyurl.com/TransferVA
Preferred Citation:
Transfer Virginia – Promoting Student Attainment through Reverse
Transfer – A toolkit for Virginia Colleges & Universities, fall 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Transfer Virginia is the collaboration of the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV), the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), all two-year colleges, and all public and non-profit private senior institutions in Virginia to streamline transfer for all its students.

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Creating the Reverse Transfer Paradigm - Implementation Checklist

An institution's commitment to reverse transfer is a commitment to student success. Through this work, students at risk of leaving college with credits and debts but no degree have direct opportunities of earning a degree for work already completed or can have cost savings by taking advantage of the Commonwealth's Transfer Policy.

To create a comprehensive program, the following actions are important. Additional details for each are provided within this toolkit.

1. **Understand reverse transfer and how it benefits students, institutions, and the community. (page 4)**

2. **Identify institutional commitment to scaling regional work through implementing state policies and recommendations. (page 7)**

3. **Establish a reverse transfer team of dedicated staff. (page 9)**

4. **Develop regional or state level memorandums of agreement. (page 10)**

5. **Commit to data sharing by leveraging technology and develop processes for timely and quality transmission. (page 12)**

6. **Develop strategies for gaining student consent and maintaining records of consent. (page 15)**

7. **Identify and process eligible students. (page 18)**

   a. **(4-year) Establish data sharing that includes all students with a minimum of 16 transfer credits and no degree.**

   b. **(2-Year) Identify students eligible for consideration and a process for evaluating those students.**

   c. **(2-Year) Develop processes for auditing and conferring degrees, communicating with students, and communicating back to the senior institutions.**

   d. **(4-Year) Develop processes for retroactively applying benefits of an associate degree and communicating with students.**

8. **Develop a plan for student outreach and advising. (page 20)**

9. **Evaluate your plan and set goals for increasing student attainment. (page 22)**

Understand reverse transfer and how it benefits students, institutions, and the community.

Introduction

Although most Virginia students who start at a two-year college aim to receive a baccalaureate degree, less than a third of them ever transfer. Students aiming to transfer must navigate cumbersome processes, often lose credit for work completed at prior institutions, and face other obstacles. To become the best educated state by 2030—a goal articulated in the Virginia Plan for Higher Education—the Commonwealth must address these barriers.

Through high-level collaboration among all institutions of higher education, *Transfer Virginia* will reform the transfer experience and enable the Commonwealth to make measurable progress on student success and equity. *Transfer Virginia* focuses on one overarching goal: Improve the efficiency of the transfer system, while closing the gap for underrepresented populations and Pell Grant recipients. If this goal is met, the higher education institutions in Virginia will award an additional 6,600 baccalaureate degrees to transfer students each year.

According to the tracking transfer signature report by the National Student Clearinghouse, students who start at a community college complete a bachelor's at a rate of 13.3% and in Virginia the completion rate is 16% (2017). In the U.S., 62% of students transfer prior to earning an associate degree; Virginia students transfer at a rate of 56% with only a 44% bachelor completion rate (Shapiro et al., 2017). What does this mean? If 15,000 students in Virginia transfer annually, 8,400 of them will transfer without an associate degree and 3,696 of them will earn a bachelor's degree; that means that about 4700 students in one year will leave college with credits and debt but no degree. Many of these students are low income and students of color (Shapiro et. al, 2017). See appendix for Virginia specific data.

Reverse transfer is an avenue for these students.

To best serve the students of Virginia and to maximize their earning potential, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) State Committee on Transfer established a workgroup, representing 12 institutions, to focus on reverse transfer and create recommendations for scaling this work statewide. As a result of this group's work, state policies and this tool kit were developed to provide strategies, guidelines, and expectations that will generate a consistent application of reverse transfer principles across any participating institution. The recommendations included within this document represent the collective input the Toolkit workgroup, the Transfer VA Partners, and the membership of the State Committee on Transfer. The recommendations focus on the strategies that enable reverse transfer to be

taken to scale and incorporate the use of technology for data sharing and identification of eligible students.

The Importance of Degree Reclamation

As defined by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), degree reclamation is a combination of evidence-based and equity-focused strategies that helps institutions re-engage the "some college, no degree" population with targeted supports to aid in their completion of associate's degrees when sufficient credits are earned (Wheatle, Taylor, Bragg, & Ajinkya, 2017). As an umbrella term, degree reclamation refers to a combination of policies and targeted interventions aimed at increasing degree completion within a region or state. With the known barriers to student completion such as housing instability, access to mental health services, food insecurity, and lack of financial resources, degree reclamation as a strategy attempts to improve student quality of life by creating innovative and student-centered pathways to degree attainment.

Degrees/credentials lead to an increase in quality of life indicators such as lifetime earnings, professional development, and life expectancy. According to EMSI educational attainment data (2013), 1,092,281 Virginians have some college, but no degree. The majority of the some college, no degree population are adult learners (25 and older). Within the Richmond region for example, 20.8% of adults 25 and older or 180,323 have some college, but no degree. Not having a post-secondary credential significantly impacts economic mobility, job prospects and access to higher wage jobs, and life expectancy (Wright, 2013).

More data and research can be found in the Some College, No Degree Report: https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/SCND_Report_2019.pdf

Reverse Transfer

Reverse transferring is defined as the process of retroactively awarding associate degrees to students who did not complete the requirements for an associate degree before transferring from a two-year community college to a four-year institution (National Student Clearinghouse, 2020).

Reverse transfers can be awarded through joint degree auditing efforts between community colleges and four-year institutions. Some students will be eligible for degree conferment

without any additional coursework. Others may need to transfer credits back from the four-year institution to the community college for degree completion.

Benefits & Relevance of Reverse Transfer
Reverse Transfers promote student success and socioeconomic mobility through the following pathways:

Graduation Rates
On average, students that complete associate degrees at community colleges graduate from four-year institutions at a rate 10% higher than their peers who do not earn associate degrees. Associate degrees are considered a pivotal milestone for students and can serve as a motivational factor towards bachelor degree completion (Carnevale, Rose, & Cheah, 2011 & Taylor, 2015).

Specifically in Virginia, reverse transfer agreements will retroactively apply the benefits of a transferable associate degree to students having completed a minimum of 45 credits prior to transfer. Some four-year institutions may apply the same benefits to any reverse transfer student completing an associate degree. These include, but are not limited to, awarding satisfaction of lower-division general education requirements and qualification for transfer-specific state-level grants.

Workforce Participation
The associate degree credential adds value to student profiles as they pursue co-curricular real work experiences and as they enter the workforce. Having both an associate and bachelor degree is enticing to employers because it provides a broad view of educational training and related professional experiences (Carnevale, Rose, & Cheah, 2011 Taylor, 2015).

Earnings Potential
Students with associate degrees earn more over their lifespan than students with some college but no degree. Additionally, current students with associate degrees are better positioned for paid internships and higher paying jobs which can offset tuition costs that are often barriers to completion (Carnevale,Rose, & Cheah, 2011 & Taylor, 2015).

Regional Partnerships
Reverse Transfer Agreements strengthen and improve existing partnerships between community colleges and universities through mutually beneficial articulation agreements and improved shared student completion outcomes.

While the biggest benefit is for the student, institutions benefit from this work. Specifically, the two-year institutions benefit from the increased number of degree completers. It is true that four-year institutions enter into this work with a certain level of "goodwill" in helping students complete and improving the economic development arena – but students who earned an associate degree do complete the bachelor's degree at an increased rate, thus improving senior institution completion rates.

ACTION ITEMS
- Educate stakeholders on importance of reverse transfer.

Identify institutional commitment to scaling regional work through implementing state policies and recommendations.

Regions without Borders - Scaling Degree Reclamation through consistent practices across regional work.
Increased opportunities for identifying, enrolling, and awarding degrees to students in Virginia develop from collaborative work across the Commonwealth. Regional work when implemented in a consistent format can dissolve borders and result in additional degree awards.

What work can span statewide? State level reverse transfer policies and this tool kit define expectations and practices for institutions electing to participate in reverse transfer work in Virginia. Following these guidelines and electing to participate in electronic data submission aligns institutions and supports students more broadly. Additionally, state level collaboration on capturing student consent and willingness to participate in reverse transfer will increase the number of degree earners.

What work is needed locally in partnerships? Local and regional partnerships are an important part of the degree reclamation work as many students do transfer to physically close senior institutions or enroll in online degree programs. Raising awareness of reverse transfer opportunities through local businesses and community organizations can promote student engagement and better support the local economy. Regional institutions of higher learning can develop multiple strategies for identifying and gaining consent from students in their service region that will benefit all students regardless of colleges attended. Regional work also serves an important role in developing and implementing ideas that can then be shared across all institutions and considered for scale.

State Policy/Expectations for Institutions engaging in Reverse Transfer
As institutions develop strategies and engage in reverse transfer work, all state or VCCS policies related to transfer or degree conferral apply. Specific reverse transfer policies set minimum standards for institutional practices.

SCHEV Higher Education Policy Guidelines for the Development of Transfer Agreements in the Commonwealth
The policy guidelines offered here apply to the development and implementation of articulation, dual admission, and guaranteed admission agreements required by [§ 23.1-908 (B)](#) as well as the development of reverse transfer agreements. These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the [*State Policy on College Transfer*](#) when developing transfer agreements between two- and four-year institutions. Private institutions wishing to develop transfer agreements with public two-year institutions will need to create agreements based on these guidelines.

> ### Reverse Transfer Agreements:
> 1) Reverse transfer agreements are not mandated by code. However, institutions that opt to develop reverse transfer agreements are subject to the general transfer agreement provisions of this policy in addition to the reverse transfer specific guidelines below.
> 2) Reverse transfer agreements will retroactively apply the benefits of a transferable associate degree as identified in these policy guidelines and the *State Policy on College Transfer* to students having completed a minimum of 45 credits prior to transfer. Four-year institutions may elect to apply the same benefits to any reverse transfer student completing an associate degree. These include, but are not limited to, awarding satisfaction of lower-division general education requirements and qualification for transfer-specific state-level financial aid.
> 3) Institutions opting to develop reverse transfer agreements should consult the Virginia Reverse Transfer Tool Kit and Resource Guide and apply given recommendations whenever possible to promote consistent application of reverse transfer and maximize the number of students served.

Each year since 2017, the federal legislative proposal, The Reverse Transfer Efficiency Act, was sponsored to facilitate the efficient review of student education records to increase postsecondary credential attainment. While the bill never progressed beyond the House and Senate Committees, it raises the awareness of and need for streamlining work focused on reverse transfer and improving accessibility to student data to benefit the student. In the event the current legislation passes, the institution's ability to better identify and serve students will improve greatly.

ACTION ITEMS
- Outreach to broad stakeholders to increase access to students through employer and community service and student support entities.
- Develop a collaborative relationship between two-year and four-year institutions.
- Review state Transfer Policies related to transfer and agreements.
- Gain institutional commitment to the reverse transfer work and follow state recommendations to support state-level consistencies.

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS
- Apply all transfer policies to reverse transfer work.
- Reverse transfer agreements will retroactively apply the benefits of a transferable associate degree as identified in these policy guidelines and the *State Policy on College Transfer* to students having completed a minimum of 45 credits prior to transfer. Four-year institutions may elect to apply the same benefits to any reverse transfer student completing an associate degree. These include, but are not limited to, awarding satisfaction of lower-division general education requirements and qualification for transfer-specific state-level financial aid.
- Review and apply reverse transfer state recommendations defined within this toolkit.

Establish a reverse transfer team of dedicated staff

Success of a reverse transfer program depends not only on institutional buy-in but also on a strong team of dedicated individuals. As this work spans areas such as student outreach, advising, student records, and more, having a well-versed team sets the foundation for reaching the most students. A reverse transfer champion as the team leader will motivate its members. Success of reverse transfer at any institution depends on the buy-in and individual and collective investment of:

- Senior Leadership
- Registrars
- Strategic Enrollment
- Faculty
- Advisors/Coaches
- Transfer Centers
- IT/SIS Staff
- Marketing/Communication

At the four-year institutions, the following perspectives are important for the team:
- Leadership – a team leader who understands reverse transfer, its goals, and can develop/maintain processes, timelines, and motivation of the team.
- Data Sharing – technical person who understands the requirements for uploading student data from institutional student information system.

- Transfer Advising – a leader in transfer advising that can develop training for transfer intake advisors that enable them to identify reverse transfer candidates.
- Records – an administrator who receives confirmation of associate degree completion and retroactively applies benefits of that degree.

At the two-year institutions, the following perspectives are important for the team:
- Team leader who understands reverse transfer, its goals, and can develop/maintain processes, timelines, and motivation of the team.
- Data Sharing – technical person who understands the requirements for uploading student data from institutional student information system.
- Registrar – the person eligible to review records and confer degrees.
- Advising - a leader in transfer advising that can develop training for transfer advisors that enable them to identify reverse transfer candidates and advise students prior to transfer.

ACTION ITEMS
- Develop a reverse transfer team.

Develop regional or state level MOA's

Memorandum of Agreements

When entering into any major partnership agreement, memorandums of agreement are essential because they clarify parameters, define expectations, and formalize partner relationships. Serving as a legal document, memorandum of agreements (MOA) require review by partner counsel and must be endorsed by senior leaders at each partner institution. Because Reverse Transfer involves the exchange of student information and the coordination of degree auditing efforts between partner institutions, formal agreements must be established. Given the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), formalized agreements are needed to specify how and why student data will be shared between institutions as well as the process for obtaining student consent. Though not as legally binding as a contract, memorandums of agreement for the purposes of Reverse Transfer are strengthened when created with shared attainment goals and sustainability in mind. With this in mind, some agreements include timelines and term limits as well as formal review and program evaluation expectations.

Creating a multi-institutional MOA
When formalizing a shared partnership agreement, it is important to have active participation from each institution. Because the agreement will articulate goals for the partnership as well as establish accountability guidelines, leaders from each institution should be involved in the creation of the document. Additionally, since much of the reverse transfer process involves student records, representatives from records and registration and/or the registrar's office should be involved or at least consulted. The agreement should also specify responsibilities of

each partner institution and should include how data will be gathered, analyzed, and shared. The implementation of the National Student Clearinghouse Reverse Transfer Program simplifies the sharing of data and clearly separates the responsibilities of data analysis. Given the 2019 update to the Family Educational Rights & Responsibility Act that further restricts the sharing of student information, determining how consent will be gathered and documented as well as how data will be shared between institutions is the foundation of a reverse transfer agreement. Lastly and especially in regionally developed MOA's, it is important to recognize and acknowledge power dynamics when creating partnership agreements for reverse transfer. While it is not uncommon for two and four year institutions to work together, reverse transfer requires an enhanced coordination of services and shared student support. Partner expectations, efforts, and rewards should all be discussed as the agreement is being formulated.

Scaling Regional Work through State MOA's
There is much to be gained by senior institutions developing a Reverse Transfer MOA with the Virginia Community College System as a whole. The same MOA could potentially include Richard Bland College or be used for a second agreement between the senior institution and Richard Bland College. These commitments would provide for the following:
  ● If the senior institution commits in this agreement to participate in the National Student Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse) Reverse Transfer Program, all participating community colleges in Virginia (as well as those with students who have transferred from out of state) would receive student information for those eligible for reverse transfer and having given their consent.
  ● Student consents gathered by the four-year institutions could include students from any two-year college and thus allow the receiving two-year college to receive student information and determine their eligibility for a degree.
  ● Through this agreement, the acceptance of the Clearinghouse student records as an acceptable method for sharing course completion data can be established.

Institutional collaboration will enhance these agreements, especially in the area of gathering student consent and student outreach. Regional institutions are encouraged to work together to maximize the return on investment of both teams by gaining consent that covers the entire process.

Exemplars & Templates
Most institutions of higher education within the state have degree and/or program articulation agreements between regional two and four-year institutions. These agreements can serve as a starting point in the development of reverse transfer agreements between multiple institutions because they may involve the same parties and include relevant subsections regarding degree auditing, admissions, and data sharing. Exemplars of regional and state reverse transfer agreements can be found in the appendix and are referenced here.

Sample Virginia MOA Template:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1L4bVF9U9ExLhh6qeCfltcO4Zr99Uem1j/view?usp=sharing
Regional MOA Exemplar:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OYh2PkAlKvy1T_PmAKt0Dia9CedtTjHf/view?usp=sharing

ACTION ITEMS
- Determine what regional partnerships will be valuable to your institution and outreach to those institutions.
- Develop regional and/or state MOA's.

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS
- Senior institutions explore opportunities to develop a MOA for Reverse Transfer with the VCCS that includes the use of NSCH for official data sharing.

Commit to data sharing by leveraging technology and develop processes for timely and quality transmission.

Data Sharing & Student Consent

Gathering student consent and the sharing of data between junior and senior institutions is manpower intensive with a low return on the investment. The processes and recommendations below focus on leveraging technology and current student touch-points to generate the data and permissions needed to serve students.

The use of the National Student Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse) for transcript sharing and student identification is a no-cost method for reducing the amount of man-hours needed and increasing the number of students eligible for reverse transfer. When a four-year institution participates in the Reverse Transfer option with Clearinghouse, all community colleges who also participate can receive the appropriate student data for students eligible for consideration. This opportunity also includes Virginia's students who transfer to out of state schools.

In order to participate in the Clearinghouse Reverse Transfer, an institution must participate in Degree Verify and Enrollment Verify. Currently, 100% of Virginia's two-year college participate in these two programs as well as 100% of the public four-years and 21 of the 22 private four-years participating in Transfer VA. Two institutions have been early adopters but all 60 of these institutions are eligible to participate in the Clearinghouse Reverse Transfer program. The four-year institution is the host and the two-year college is the degree granting institution (DGI.)

National Student Clearinghouse Reverse Transfer Process
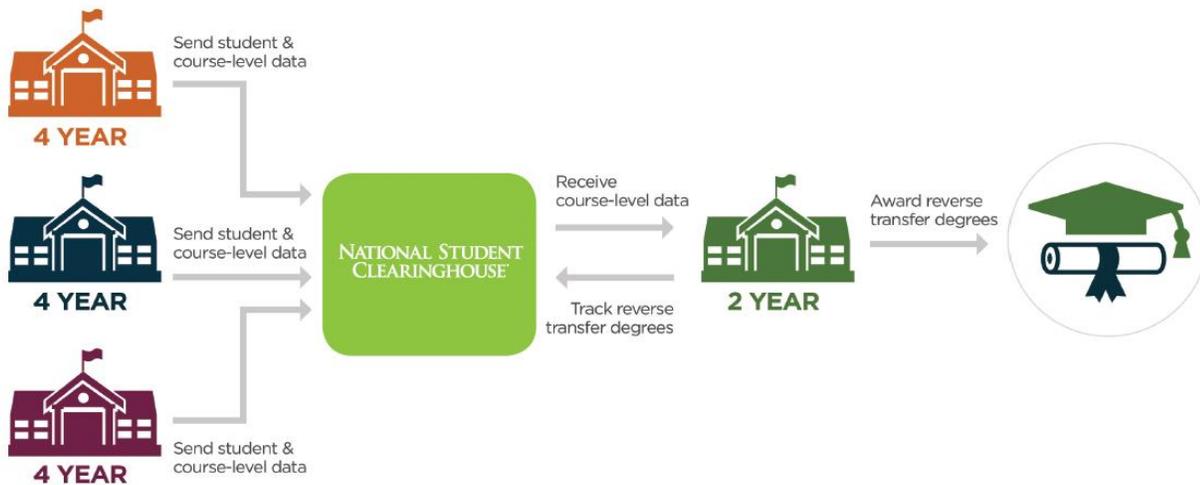
This process supports the scalability of our work by:
- Providing a national solution giving the ability to exchange course data for awarding degrees.
- Facilitating the opportunity to increase transfer student retention and graduation rates.
- Alleviating the workload for community colleges and universities requiring one file submission of course grade data from sending (host) institutions and removing the need to send transcripts throughout the semester.
- Including all of the two-year institution's transfer students no matter where they transferred (if senior institution is participating in reverse transfer.)
- Reporting for both host and degree granting institutions.
- Providing consultation and implementation support to assist with account set-up and testing of files.
- Providing standard format and one central location for data exchange.
- Processing students on the desired timeline by downloading cumulative student data when prepared to evaluate it for the semester.
- Creating files that can easily be searched for individual student information.
- Providing a secure and trusted place for all the reverse transfer students' data.

Data Reporting
Data is reported in a pipe delimited file as shown in the example below. EDI and XML formats are also available. Data reporting utilizes PESC TS 130 Transcript Standards.

Example of a body record:

```
RTD1|7100003|123456789||John|S|Smith|Sr|19850814|12345 Somewhere
Dr.||Someplace|VA|77396|US|703 999 9999|Someone@hometown.edu|Y|||||CHEM|1405|Intro
Chemistry|Fall 2014|20140825|20141214|B|20141214|3|Regular
Enrollment|y|Math|025|||888888|12131415|||||
```

Clearinghouse Data Fields for Reverse Transfer

DATA FIELDS						
Host OPEID	R	Student Email Address	R	Course End	R
Host Student ID	R	DGI OPEID	R	Date Grade	R
ITIN – IRS identifier	R	Host Student ID	O	Grade Scale	R
SSN	O	Core Competency Complete Flag	O	Grade Effective Date	O
First, Middle, Last Name	R	Course Name	R	Number of Credits	R
Suffix	R	Course Number	R	Credit Description	O
DOB	R	Course Description	R	Core Course Flag	O
Street Address	O	Course Semester Session	R	Core Course Type	O
Student Phone #	O	Course Begin Date			

R= required
O= optional

Data reports have the following features:
- Only data for consenting students will be sent to the Clearinghouse.
- Customized data filters for receiving students such as credits earned.
- Supports core competencies and general education requirements.
- Facilitates exchanging updated student contact information.

Detailed steps and samples are available in the National Student Clearinghouse Reverse Transfer Implementation Guide: https://studentclearinghouse.info/onestop/wp-content/uploads/ReverseTransferImplementationGuide.pdf

ACTION ITEMS
- Participate in the Clearinghouse Reverse Transfer program and develop appropriate data sharing reports.
- Process data uploads and/or data analysis on an established cycle.

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS
- Four-year Data Sharing
- Student consent must be on file.
- Student must have earned a minimum of 16 credit hours from one community college.
- Student must have earned a minimum of 3 credit hours at the senior institution.
- A student transferring from multiple 2-year institutions, data should be reported to the last attended if credit requirements are met.
- Data uploads are scheduled at minimum within 30 days of term grade submission.
- Two-year Data Receiving Institutions should develop a data review schedule based on data upload schedule above.
- Institutions develop a plan for data filtering to prioritize student eligibility.

Develop strategies for gaining student consent and maintaining records of consent.

Gaining Student Consent - FERPA Consent

National Student Clearinghouse worked with the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) and their Public Policy Advisory Group (PPAG) to draft language for schools to collect Reverse Transfer FERPA consent. Below is the suggested verbiage that gathers comprehensive consent for all reverse transfer processes:

Giving consent to allow your academic records to be shared with the college(s) you previously attended is for the sole purpose of considering eligibility for awarding of an Associate degree. The records may be released and re-evaluated in multiple terms until a credential is conferred.

Because a critical piece of this work depends on the senior institutions being notified of degree completion, your consent shall include the granting of permission for the two-year institutions to in turn share associate completion data back to the four-year institution.

By giving consent to participate in Reverse Transfer, I understand the following actions will be taken on my behalf.
- I give consent for (4-year institution) to share my academic information with (2-year college).
- I give consent for my information to be shared using the National Student Clearing House tool.

- I give consent for my (2-year college) to award me my associate degree when all requirements are completed.
- I give consent for my (2-year college) to apply completed course work to the requirements of a standard transfer degree instead of my more specialized transfer degree if it best supports my completion.
- I give consent for my (2-year college) to share my academic information back to (4-year institution) to confirm degree completion.

Student Signature and Date

AACRAO does support an 'opt-in' model so this question should be presented with a 'yes' or 'no' (or similar) selection for the student to actively consent to their records being exchanged for Reverse Transfer.

The above language addresses the minimal requirement. Some institutions may wish to develop more thorough documentation. An example of such is below with some institutional samples of forms used in the appendix.

Receive all the degrees you earn!

(University) is excited to partner with participating community and junior colleges in Virginia in an effort to increase the number of students earning postsecondary degrees. Reverse transfer allows students to earn their associate degree while pursuing a bachelor's degree program at (university). It ensures that you receive all degrees you have earned, increasing your opportunities in the workforce. In addition to earning your degree, if you transferred with at least 45 credit hours of two-year courses, you will be awarded satisfaction of lower-division general education requirements at the university and qualify for transfer-specific state-level financial aid.

With your approval, (university) will share your course work with your community college. Your community college will then evaluate your coursework to determine whether credits earned at (university) will fulfill any of your outstanding associate degree requirements. Upon awarding of an associate degree, the community college will notify the university of your completion. Just accept this option below and you're on your way!

FERPA Statement: Consistent with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, I authorize the release of my transcript and any other relevant academic records from (university name) to my former community college(s) and vice versa for the purposes of transfer credit evaluation and the awarding of any earned Associate Degree. I understand that I have the right to rescind this release of my academic records to the community college at any time by notifying the Registrar at (university name). In such an event, (university) will make no further disclosure of my

academic record to the community college(s) without my consent. I have read the FERPA statement and authorize the release of the student records described above from (university) to the community college. (Electronic option to accept or decline. It is recommended you require a choice be made.)

After developing the appropriate language for consent, it is important to develop strategies for gaining student consent.

<u>Gathering Student Consent</u>
The gathering of student consent depends greatly on collaborative efforts of high school, 2-year, and 4-year faculty/staff to help students understand this opportunity as well as quality electronic record keeping of consents collected.

Gaining student consent will be most successful when students understand the relevance of the choice being made. Students may initiate the reverse transfer processing of their credentials by requesting a transcript be sent from the four-year institution to the two-year institution of their choice. The process of gathering student consent supports the sharing of large batches of student data between the institutions.

Institutions may find the following strategies to be promising. Some of these strategies are dependent upon the four-year institution and/or the TransferVA Portal having electronic processes for collecting student consent through two-year outreach. (Sample Appendix 3) The four-year institutions will maintain records of student consent. Two-year institutions may require additional documentation from students to complete the reverse transfer process though every effort should be made to streamline the process.

Four-Year Institutions
- Gain consent on transfer admission application by asking if student has earned an associate degree and, if not, ask for Reverse Transfer consent as described in the previous section.
- Gain consent during initial advising sessions/new student intake through a consent form or electronic collection of consent.
- Gain consent through the submission process of withdrawal forms and/or during communication related to academic standing.

Two-year Institutions
- Gain consent when a student completes a transcript request (electronically through 4-year site or transfer portal) to be sent to a four-year institution prior to associate degree completion. Include that consent with the transcript when processed.

- Gain consent during advising sessions when a student indicates transferring plans prior to degree completion through a consent form or electronic collection of consent. Use of a link to senior institutions electronic form or registration through the portal.
- Gain consent of any dual enrollment student prior to high school graduation who has completed 16 or more dual enrollment credits through a consent form or electronic collection of consent. Use of a link to senior institutions electronic form or registration through the portal.

In addition to universities collecting consent through their transfer admission process, it would be ideal to have a state level electronic consent system. Work on the state transfer portal will result in students registering their interest with notifications going to both the two-year and four-year institutions for follow-up and gathering formal consent.

ACTION ITEMS
- Institutionally, regionally, or as part of state work, develop strategies for collecting student consent and sharing those consents with senior institutions.

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS
- Four-year institutions include consent option on transfer application and during intake transfer advising.
- Two-year institutions include consent option on transcript requests and during transfer advising sessions.

Identify and process eligible students.

The National Student Clearinghouse process and staff support will simplify institutional processing and provide guidance on establishing practices. As institutional processes are developed, attention to the following details is important.

(4-year) Establish data sharing that includes all students with a minimum of 16 transfer credits and no degree.
- Student consent must be on file.
- Student must have earned a minimum of 16 credit hours from one community college.
- Student must have earned a minimum of 3 credit hours at the senior institution.
- A student transferring from multiple 2-year institutions, data should be reported to the last attended if 16 credit-hour requirement is met.
- Data uploads are scheduled at minimum within 30 days of term grade submission.

(2-Year) Identify students eligible for consideration and a process for evaluating those students.

- Two-year institutions develop a local plan for number of, and credentials of, students to be considered based on available manpower and attainment goals. The plan should include a processing timeline based on four-year upload schedule.
- The Clearinghouse filtering capabilities will simplify student identification.

(2-Year) Develop processes for auditing and conferring degrees, communicating with students, and communicating back to the senior institutions.

Reverse transfer degree conferral is the formal awarding of an associate degree through the combination of credits earned at their community college and four-year institution. Sometimes flexibility in processes may increase degree conferrals.

- Waiving graduation applications or fees: As a promotional strategy, some community colleges have eliminated the graduation application process while others have waived graduation related fees for reverse transfer students as an incentive for participating. Colleges can further automate the process by requiring students to "opt out" from degree conferral.
- Invitations to graduation ceremonies: At some community colleges, reverse transfer graduates are invited to participate in graduation ceremonies as a motivational celebration of their accomplishments.
- Consider alternative degrees: Based on student course work, does the student qualify for an associate degree that differs from the one last declared? Would changing programs result in degree attainment?
- Consider catalog years: Based on your institutional practices, what are the options for applying either current or original catalog requirements?
- Bidirectional transfer of credits: Course equivalences from a two year institution to a four year institutions should be equitably applied in reverse for courses earned at the four year institution.

Having a system for contacting students under consideration will lead to greater efficiency. Degree conferral and awarding is thought of as the last step in the reverse transfer process. However, without the student or the community college sending an updated transcript back to the four-year institution the degree award may not be adequately documented. Notifying the four-year institution is a significant final step because it closes the loop of the reverse transfer process and offers specific benefits to students. In Virginia, reverse transfer degree conferral benefits may include eligibility for transfer grants, potential waiving of general education credits, and tuition discounts. At a systems level, notifying the four-year institution of the degree conferral through an updated transcript ensures that students are not erroneously identified through ongoing student data review for reverse transfer eligibility. The National Student Clearinghouse is currently exploring ways to notify senior institutions of degrees earned. Reverse transfer partnerships work best when all institutions effectively communicate and efficiently work together on towards shared student completion goals.

(4-Year) Develop processes for retroactively applying benefits of an associate degree and communicating with students.

Per state policy, students who transfer with 45 or more credits and earn an associate degree through reverse transfer are then eligible for all the rights and benefits of an associate degree earner. Senior institutions may extend these benefits to any reverse transfer degree earner. Institutions are encouraged to develop a process and timeline for reviewing and awarding retroactive benefits to students.

ACTION ITEMS
- Develop plans, processes, and timelines for sharing data, identifying students, conferring degrees, and/or applying retroactive benefits.

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS
Four-year data sharing through NSCH:
- Student consent must be on file.
- Student must have earned a minimum of 16 credit hours from one community college.
- Student must have earned a minimum of 3 credit hours at the senior institution.
- A student transferring from multiple 2-year institutions, data should be reported to the last attended if credit requirements are met.
- Data uploads are scheduled at minimum within 30 days of term grade submission.
- Two-year student assessment plan utilizing NSCH data filtering to maximize number of students considered for degrees.

Develop a plan for student outreach and advising.

Student Outreach & Advising

Much like any other comprehensive completion initiative, reverse transfer requires the coordination and support of multiple offices within each partner institution. Offices such as admissions, financial aid, records and registration, as well as advising and student success are important parts of the process and offer key support to students as they pursue degree completion though reverse transfer. Students at four-year institutions may not readily understand the benefits of reverse transferring. Through consultation with institutional advisors, students can be informed of benefits such as increased likelihood of bachelor degree completion, heightened earning potential, and potential tuition cost savings. In addition to the dedicated reverse transfer team, training all advisors and coaches who engage with transfer students on the importance and processes of reverse transfer should also be a priority. Ongoing communication and training is needed to maintain momentum in serving students.

Stop-Out Engagement

Advisors often serve as early alert systems within institutions for at-risk students. Though they frequently engage with students and offer targeted support towards completion, some students

stop-out of their degree program due to various barriers. Reverse transfer is not only beneficial for currently enrolled four-year students but those who have stopped-out as well. With the growing population with some college-no degree, reverse transfer offers an option for students who have earned college credits but don't have a clear pathway towards degree completion. With enrollment as essential priority for all institutions of higher education, targeted outreach to stopped-out students offers a non-traditional pathway to enrollment. Just as institutions set earned credit benchmarks for currently enrolled students' eligibility for reverse transfer, stop-out outreach efforts can also be filtered to identify students who stop-out after earning a specified number of credits. Come back themed marketing campaigns have been successful across the country in re-engaging stop-out students (Taylor & Bragg, 2015). Goals for stop-out engagement can be made at the regional and state level and should be considered an extension of reverse transfer eligibility outreach.

Student Support Services
Identifying and reducing barriers to student completion are key priorities for Virginia institutions of higher education and other institutions throughout the country. Using data from the College and University Basic Need Insecurity report, the most common barriers to student completion include housing and food insecurity and financial instability (Goldrick-Rab et al.,2019). Through the chancellor's Power of Possibilities taskforce, the Virginia Community College System has identified financial instability, housing and food insecurity, as well as mental health as priorities for targeted intervention development in support of students across the state. New partnerships are being established with state and local support agencies such as departments of social services, community service boards, and departments of health in support of student well-being and degree completion.

At its core, reverse transfer is a student support initiative. Through comprehensive partnership agreements, coordinated degree auditing, and targeted student advising, reverse transfer aims to increase the amount of students with postsecondary degrees. Students with degrees are more likely to earn a living wage, have access to stable housing options, and live in areas with adequate food resources.

Reverse Transfer Advising
Advisors at the two- and four-year institutions have multiple touch points with students who are potential candidates for reverse transfer. Empowering faculty and advisors with knowledge and strategies for helping students understand reverse transfer will increase student engagement with their options.
- Intake advising at 4 years: Train faculty and advisors who do initial advising and course selection with students upon transfer to identify student eligibility for reverse transfer.
- Outreach to transfer students within the first semester of enrollment at senior institution if associate degree was not earned to raise awareness about reverse transfer.

- Advising at 2 years: Train faculty and advisors who work with students directly so that when a student indicates early transfer the advisor can provide information on benefits of an associate degree and information and electronic consent form for reverse transfer.
- Develop advising partnerships for joint outreaching and advising efforts by senior institutions and 2-year colleges.

ACTION ITEMS
- Develop a student outreach plan.
- Develop and implement training for advisors and student support staff.

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS
- Identify students potentially eligible for reverse transfer at exit points of two-year institutions and entrance points of four-year institutions.

Evaluate your plan and set goals for increasing student attainment.

As with most regional and state initiatives, evaluation should be a formal and ongoing process. Reverse transfer and student engagement goals should be set for each institution, regional partnership collaborative, and/or state. A review of relevant data, including student equity in attainment gaps, should guide benchmarking efforts and the establishment of specific goals. It is important to set goals that are realistic and relevant to each institution, region, or state. While other states can provide examples for us to reference, Virginia's reverse transfer and related goals should be guided by population data, a commitment to educational equity, and the economic and workforce vitality of the Commonwealth.

Institutional or regional- benchmarking and establishing of goals.

When establishing benchmarks around reverse transfer, institutions should consider the following metric perspectives:

- Institutional characteristics such as programmatic distribution, urbanicity, and socioeconomic status of its students for both 2-year degree-granting institutions and 4-year receiving institutions.
- Student characteristics such as gender, enrollment intensity, and income.

Upon review of the defined metrics, goals and resulting strategies should focus on serving those most disadvantaged populations. This approach creates attainment for all populations as more promising populations are also served by the strategies developed for those most at risk.

Evaluating success of both process and degree attainment

Evaluation of reverse transfer efforts should also include an analysis of the process and not just the number of degrees attained. Because reverse transfer requires a coordination of efforts between multiple departments and institutions, the process should be routinely

reviewed for efficiency and sustainability. Ongoing training and capacity building are essential components of evaluation and should be fully endorsed by institutions, regions, and state entities.

As you assess your success with Reverse Transfer, additional opportunities for expanding your work can be considered. Implementation of such programs as Stop Out campaigns, degree or credential reclamation, and credit for prior learning assessments can increase student completion.

ACTION ITEMS

- Review relevant data, including student equity gaps in attainment, before setting reverse transfer goals
- Routinely evaluate the process as well as your benchmarks to insure continuous improvement and sustainability

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish policy guidelines for evaluation and benchmarking
- Provide strategic support and oversight of statewide evaluation metrics

References:

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Taylor, J.L. (2015) The Potential value of reverse transfer associate degree: Diverse values & perspectives. Champaign, IL: Office of Community College Research & Leadership.

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Wright, J. (2013). Some College, No Degree: U.S. Cities that Lag (and Excel) in Degree Attainment. Analyst Report. EMSI Strada Education Network.

Appendices:
Appendix 1: Resources and Links
Appendix 2: Virginia - University and VCCS MOA Template
Appendix 3: Samples – Student Consent
Appendix 4: Sample - Advising Tools (Consent Website)
Appendix 5: Sample – Reverse Transfer Infographic Template
Appendix 6: Sample – Reverse Transfer Tracking in Banner

Appendix 1: Resources and Links

The Reverse Transfer Implementation Guide:
https://studentclearinghouse.info/onestop/wp-content/uploads/ReverseTransferImplementationGuide.pdf

Cyber security white paper:
https://studentclearinghouse.info/onestop/portfolio-item/cybersecurity-why-it-matters/?utm_medium=referral&utm_source=blog&utm_campaign=cybersecurity-white-paper-sept2019%20

Complementary Quick Start Guide:
https://studentclearinghouse.info/onestop/wp-content/uploads/QuickStartGuide.pdf

Transfer & Mobility Report:
https://nscresearchcenter.org/signaturereport15/?hilite=%27transfer%27%2C%27and%27%2C%27mobility%27

Some College, No Degree Report:
https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/SCND_Report_2019.pdf

Tracking Transfer Report:
https://nscresearchcenter.org/signaturereport13/

Reverse Transfer Student Handout Template:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cQBoAtYb0WEu1QGuN7AthYB8pEiI9IAA/view?usp=sharing

Appendix 2: Virginia - University and VCCS MOA Template

University
Logo

VIRGINIA REVERSE TRANSFER MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

I.   INTRODUCTION

THIS MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT, dated _____, 20__ is by and between the [VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM] AND [SPECIFY INSTITUTIONAL NAME/TYPE_____];who have elected to participate in the exchange of information that provides a seamless transfer process for students who meet identified criteria for the completion of their approved associate degree. This collaboration contains the fundamental elements necessary for Reverse Transfer between institutions with the recommended support of the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). Each individual VCCS college will define its level of participation in regard to harvesting and processing the available student data.

II.   REVERSE TRANSFER

REVERSE TRANSFER assists students who earned credits that applied towards an associate degree while enrolled at a community college but who did not complete sufficient credits to earn their associate degree. These students then pursued their education at a four-year institution. This agreement is designed to allow these students to transfer credits earned at four-year institutions back to the community college to complete their associate degree.

REVERSE TRANSFER AGREEMENTS:
Reverse transfer agreements are not mandated by code. However, institutions that opt to develop reverse transfer agreements are subject to the general transfer agreement provisions of the Public Higher Education Policy Guidelines for the Development of Transfer Agreements in addition to the reverse transfer specific terms below.

- Reverse transfer agreements will retroactively apply the benefits of a transferable associate degree as identified in this Agreement and the State Policy on College Transfer to students having completed a minimum of 45 credits prior to transfer. Four-year institutions may elect to apply the same benefits to any reverse transfer student completing an associate degree. These include, but are not limited to, awarding satisfaction of lower-division general education requirements and qualification for transfer-specific state-level financial aid.

- Institutions opting to develop reverse transfer agreements should consult the Virginia Reverse Transfer Tool Kit and Resource Guide and apply given recommendations whenever possible to promote consistent application of reverse transfer and maximize the number of students served.

- Participating institutions shall sign a REVERSE TRANSFER PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT with The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). The NSC will assign each institution the profile of a host or degree granting institution (DGI). NSC will uphold FERPA compliant communications and data exchange.

- Student consent will be obtained prior to any data exchange. This will facilitate a high touch outreach from colleges inviting students to reverse their credit and receive an associate degree. Participating institutions will sign an agreement with NSC that authorizes them to receive files containing specific transfer information via a secured file transfer process. These files will then be distributed to the appropriately assigned institution to be used to award an associate degree. Specifics concerning file lay-out, technical specifications, and delivery are clearly outlined in NSC guide for participants.

III.   TERMINATION

AT ANY TIME A PARTICIPATING INSTITUTION MAY TERMINATE THIS AGREEMENT UPON NINETY DAYS WRITTEN NOTICE TO ALL OTHER INSTITUTIONS. If the agreement is terminated during an academic term, four-year institutions must complete their student data uploads scheduled for that academic year. Currently enrolled students will be allowed to finish the coursework required to complete their associate degree under this agreement, by submitting an individual request for transcripts to be shared.

In the event of termination of this agreement, the participating institution will cease the gathering of student consent and modify all documents such as websites and/or articulation agreements that may market or apply reverse transfer strategies.

IV.   FORMAL AGREEMENT CONSENT

THE INDIVIDUALS EXECUTING THIS AGREEMENT ON BEHALF OF EACH INSTITUTION ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THEY ARE DULY AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE THIS AGREEMENT. ALL PARTIES HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THEY HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS AGREEMENT.

V.   PRINCIPAL CONTACTS

The Principal Contacts for each one of the organizations is:
University Partner:
     [NAME OF PRINCIPAL CONTACT]
     [TITLE]
     [ADDRESS]
     [TELEPHONE]

Virginia Community College System:
        [NAME OF PRINCIPAL CONTACT]
        [TITLE]
        [ADDRESS]
        [TELEPHONE]

Such Principal Contacts may be changed in writing from time to time by their respective Partners.

VI.   INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

The relationship between the parties is that of independent contractors. Nothing contained herein shall be construed as constituting any other relationship between the VCCS and [the other party].

VII.   EFFECTIVE DATES, AMENDMENTS, & SIGNATURES

THIS MOA SHALL TAKE EFFECT UPON SIGNING BY BOTH PARTIES. NEITHER PARTY MAY ASSIGN OR TRANSFER ALL OR ANY PORTION OF THIS MOA WITHOUT THE PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT OF THE PARTY.

 The provisions of this MOA may only be amended or waived by mutual written agreement by both Parties.

The individuals signing this MOA on behalf of their respective entities represent and warrant (without personal liability therefore) that upon the signature of each, this MOA shall have been duly executed by the entity each represents.

FOR [FULL NAME OF PARTNER]   FOR [FULL NAME OF PARTNER]

[NAME]   [NAME]
[TITLE]   [TITLE]

Date: _____   _____
                                       Attorney   Date

To Expire: _____   OR

                                       Approved by _____

Witness   Date   Witness   Date

Witnes   Date   Witness   Date

Appendix 3: Sample – Student Consent Forms
These are sample forms used by institutions. Additional opportunities should be considered such as transcript requests and transfer applications to simplify the process and gain consent. As forms are developed, please apply the comprehensive set of consent items as described within the toolkit.

Reverse Transfer Opt-In

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Name: _____   Email: _____
G Number: _____

In order for George Mason University (GMU) to assist you with the reverse transfer process, please submit the form below approving the university to use your student data appropriately.

Reverse transfer refers to a situation in which students have transferred to GMU from a two-year institution without earning an associate degree. Transfer students who attended a VCCS institution and earned at least 45 credits from enrollment at GMU are transferred back to the two-year institution for evaluation and, if applicable, to confer an associate degree prior to the student earning a four-year degree.

We respect your privacy and require your online opt-in decision by completing the form below.

By opting in, you give GMU permission to share your academic records with your other previously attended VCCS institutions for the purposes of credit evaluation. The credit evaluation will be used to determine your eligibility to receive an associate degree or other credential awarded by that institution. Eligible associate degrees or other credentials will be awarded.

I understand that, by submitting this form, I am authorizing George Mason University to work with my academic records accordingly.

By giving consent to participate in Reverse Transfer, I understand the following actions will be taken on my behalf.

* ☐ I give consent for GMU to share my academic information with my 2-year college
* ☐ I give consent for my information to be shared using the National Student Clearinghouse Reverse Transfer tool
* ☐ I give consent for my 2-year college to award me my associate degree when all requirements are met
* ☐ I give consent for my 2-year college to apply completed work to the requirement of a standard transfer degree instead of my more specialized transfer degree if it best supports my completion
* ☐ I give consent for my 2-year college to share my academic information back to GMU to confirm degree completion

Student Signature _____ Date: _____

UMW Reverse Transfer Program: Opt-In/Opt-Out

Reverse transfer refers to a situation in which students have transferred to the University of Mary Washington from a two-year institution without earning an associate's degree. Transfer students who attended GCC and earned at least 45 credits earned from enrollment at UMW are transferred back to the two-year institution for evaluation and, if applicable, will be used for an associate degree conferral prior to the student earning a four-year degree.

We respect your privacy and require your opt-in or opt-out decision in writing by completing the form below.

· By opting in, you agree to allow UMW to share your academic records with other previously attended academic institutions for the purposes of credit evaluation to determine your eligibility to receive an associate degree awarded by the previously attended institution.

· By opting out, your FERPA-protected academic records will not be shared with other academic institutions you attended for the purposes of credit evaluation. Please indicate your selection by initialing one of the options below.

Once the form is completed, please return this form to the Office of the Registrar at UMW.

❑Opt In - I authorize the release of my academic records from UMW to a previously attended community college for the purposes of credit evaluation to determine my eligibility to receive an associate degree awarded by the community college.

❑Opt Out - I do not authorize the release of my academic records from UMW to a previously attended community college for the purposes of credit evaluation to determine my eligibility to receive an associate degree awarded by the community college.

VCU Reverse Transfer Program: Consent

FERPA Statement: Consistent with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, I authorize the release of my transcript and any other relevant academic records from Virginia Commonwealth University to my former community college for the purposes of transfer credit evaluation and the awarding of any earned Associate's Degree. I understand that I have the right to rescind this release of my academic records to the community college at any time by notifying the Registrar at Virginia Commonwealth University. In such an event, VCU will make no further disclosure of my academic record to the community college without my consent. I have read the FERPA statement and authorize the release of the student records described above from VCU to the community college.

Virginia Commonwealth University is excited to partner with participating community colleges in Virginia in an effort to increase the number of students earning postsecondary degrees. Reverse transfer allows students to enhance their academic credentials by earning their associate's degree while pursuing a bachelor's degree program at Virginia Commonwealth University. It ensures that they receive all available credentials enhancing their subsequent opportunities in the workforce.

With your approval, VCU will send a copy of your VCU transcript to your community college. Your community college will then evaluate your VCU coursework to determine whether credits earned at VCU will fulfill any of your outstanding associate's degree requirements. Just fill out the following online Reverse Transfer Form and you're on your way!

Appendix 4: Sample Website for Gathering Student Consent (draft)

Reverse Transfer Opt-In

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Name:		Email:	
G Number:			

In order for George Mason University (GMU) to assist you with the reverse transfer process, please submit the form below approving the university to use your student data appropriately.

Reverse transfer refers to a situation in which students have transferred to GMU from a two-year institution without earning an associate degree. Transfer students who attended a VCCS institution and earned at least 45 credits from enrollment at GMU are transferred back to the two-year institution for evaluation and, if applicable, to confer an associate degree prior to the student earning a four-year degree.

We respect your privacy and require your online opt-in decision by completing the form below.

By opting in, you give GMU permission to share your academic records with your other previously attended VCCS institutions for the purposes of credit evaluation. The credit evaluation will be used to determine your eligibility to receive an associate degree or other credential awarded by that institution. Eligible associate degrees or other credentials will be awarded.

I understand that, by submitting this form, I am authorizing George Mason University to work with my academic records accordingly.

By giving consent to participate in Reverse Transfer, I understand the following actions will be taken on my behalf.

* ☐ I give consent for GMU to shree my academic information with my 2-year college
* ☐ I give consent for my information to be shared using the National Student Clearinghouse Reverse Transfer tool
* ☐ I give consent for my 2-year college to award me my associate degree when all requirements are met
* ☐ I give consent for my 2-year college to apply completed work to the requirement of a standard transfer degree instead of my more specialized transfer degree if it best supports my completion
* ☐ I give consent for my 2-year college to share my academic information back to GMU to confirm degree completion

Student Signature _____ Date:_____

How it works	Frequently Asked Questions	Why should I?

What is Reverse Transfer?

The National Student Clearinghouse's Reverse Transfer platform is the first national automated solution that enables course and grade data to be transferred from a four- or two-year institution to any two-year institution in order to award associate degrees to eligible students.

In Reverse Transfer, the two parties exchanging course and grade data are known as the host institution (the institution where the student is currently enrolled) and degree-granting institution or DGI (the institution that will be awarding the degree). A host institution can be either a four- or two-year institution.

Does the degree-granting institution need to obtain an official transcript from the host institution before awarding an associate degree to an eligible student?

Reverse Transfer's course and grade data exchange provides all the necessary student data directly from the host to facilitate credit evaluation and awarding the degree without an official transcript. The Clearinghouse, however, is not involved in the DGI's decision, which may or may not also require an official transcript.

How many credits do students need to be eligible for Reverse Transfer?

The typical minimum number of credits for an associate degree is 60. DGI's can filter total earned credit hours for students they receive in their Reverse Transfer files. Some schools prefer to evaluate student who have not earned less credits so they can advise them on the appropriate equivalent course work required at the host to further foster Reverse Transfer degree completion. Other DGI's prefer to increase the limit as they have found a greater percentage of degrees have been awarded to records evaluated at a higher credit threshold than the typical 60.

How do institutions determine that students are eligible for Reverse Transfer?

Eligibility requirements for reverse transfer degrees are handled between the institutions exchanging course and grade data. The host institutions only send student information via the course and grade data exchange platform.

Do I need to enroll in my previous college?

No. This initiative is not asking students to re-enroll or take more courses at their previous institution. The intention is for you to use what you have already completed toward the degree. Courses that you are planning to complete in the future at your current university may be applied later to the degree at your previous college.

Why should I be interested in getting an associate degree when I'm already at GMU?

By taking courses at GMU you may have already earned enough credits, coupled with your two-year institution credits, to get an associate degree and you should get credit for it. While you may have the best intentions to complete a bachelor's degree, having another credential is a good "insurance policy".

Why earn an Associate's Degree?

Earning an associate's degree is an important milestone in a student's academic career, as well as an important credential to have that can boost a student's resume and assist in landing better job opportunities. Many employers value the associate degree as a demonstrated commitment to achieving both educational goals and long-term career success.

In addition, a student transferring from a Virginia public community college with an earned associate's degree may have completed general education at GMU, except for any upper-level requirements and the number of credits required to complete general education. An official transcript from the transfer institution must be received by the GMU with a notation the associate's degree was awarded, in order to be reviewed for that waiver.

Graduation Rates

On average, students that complete associate degrees at community colleges graduate from four-year institutions at a rate 10% higher than their peers who do not earn associate degrees. Associate degrees are considered a pivotal milestone for students and can serve as a motivational factor towards bachelor degree completion.

Workforce Participation

The associate degree credential adds value to student profiles as they pursue co-curricular real work experiences and as they enter the workforce. Having both an associate and bachelor degree is enticing to employers because it provides a broad view of educational training and related professional experiences.

Earnings Potential

Students with associate degrees earn more over their lifespan than students with some college but no degree. Additionally, current students with associate degrees are better positioned for paid internships and higher paying jobs which can offset tuition costs that are often barriers to completion.

Appendix 5: Reverse Transfer Infographic Template

Link to download:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cQBoAtYb0WEu1QGuN7AthYB8pEiI9IAA/view?usp=sharing

THE REVERSE TRANSFER STUDENT ADVANTAGE

What is Reverse Transfer?

Reverse transferring is defined as the process of retroactively awarding associate degrees to students who did not complete the requirements for an associate degree before transferring from a two-year community college to a four-year institution (National Student Clearinghouse, 2020).

Reverse transfers can be awarded through joint degree auditing efforts between community colleges and four-year institutions. Some students will be eligible for degree conferment without any additional coursework. Others may need to transfer credits back from the four-year institution to the community college for degree completion. Specifically in Virginia, reverse transfer agreements will retroactively apply the benefits of a transferable associate degree to students having completed a minimum of 45 credits prior to transfer. Some four-year institutions may apply the same benefits to any reverse transfer student completing an associate degree. These include, but are not limited to, awarding satisfaction of lower-division general education requirements and qualification for transfer-specific state-level financial aid.

Benefits of Reverse Transfer

Graduation Rates

On average, students that complete associate degrees at community colleges graduate from four-year institutions at a rate 10% higher than their peers who do not earn associate degrees. Associate degrees are considered a pivotal milestone for students and can serve as a motivational factor towards bachelor degree completion (Carnevale Rose, & Cheah, 2011 & Taylor, 2015).

Earning Potential

Students with associate degrees earn more over their lifespan than students with some college but no degree. Additionally, current students with associate degrees are better positioned for paid internships and higher paying jobs which can offset tuition costs that are often barriers to completion (Carnevale,Rose, & Cheah, 2011 & Taylor, 2015)

If you are interested in Reverse Transfer, schedule an appointment with your adviser and go to your university reverse transfer portal to sign the student consent form. Use the link below!

Student's who receive associate degrees through reverse transfer may be eliglibe for additional university perks including transfer grant funding and course waivers. Review your transcript and contact and adviser today to explore your options.

Add your university logo and tagline here

University RT Website:
www.bellowscollege.com

Contact:
555-555-5555

Email:
someone@example.com

Appendix 6: Sample – Reverse Transfer Tracking in Banner

Reverse Transfer tracking option in Banner

I created two codes, one for tracking when a student opts-in and then for when they hopefully have their Associates conferred by the 2-year institution.

Applying to the student record in SHANCRS:

Codes created in STVNCRQ: