



FAIRMONT STATE
UNIVERSITY

Regents Bachelor of Arts (RBA)
Degree Program Handbook

2022-2023

About the RBA Degree Program

The Regents Bachelor of Arts (RBA) Degree Program is a flexible, nontraditional program designed for adults in the belief that they are distinctly different from traditional undergraduates in their educational needs. This program can be personalized to fit the lifestyles of those who require a degree for career advancement, those who have an associate degree in a field in which there is no corresponding bachelor's degree available, or those who seek intellectual development and personal fulfillment. The RBA degree has particular appeal for persons who have completed some college work but did not obtain a degree.

ADMISSION INFORMATION

Students who have graduated from high school at least four years ago and who have not completed a bachelor's degree are eligible for admission to the RBA program. Individuals with high school equivalency certificates may be admitted four years after their high school class graduated.

Admission to the RBA Degree Program requires submission of a completed standard application to Fairmont State University, which is available online at <https://www.fairmontstate.edu/apply>. All other admissions criteria — such as submission of official high school and/or college transcripts and immunization records — required for admission to Fairmont State are also required for RBA program admission.

Applicants must also meet the minimum grade point average requirements for admission to the program.

Acceptance into the RBA program does not provide for automatic admission to other programs at Fairmont State. Any RBA student must reapply and meet all admissions requirements when changing from the RBA Degree Program to any other degree program at Fairmont State University. Furthermore, students may not be enrolled simultaneously in the RBA program and another baccalaureate degree program.

There is no fee for admission to the RBA program.

ACADEMIC AND FINANCIAL AID ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

After admission to the RBA program, students are subject to the established institutional academic and retention requirements, to the general grading practices as outlined in the Fairmont State University catalog, as well as Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) guidelines established by the Office of Financial Aid.

TRANSFER CREDITS

Policies established by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WVHEPC) regarding transfer of credit between institutions apply to students in the RBA program. In transferring credits from accredited institutions of higher learning to the RBA program, all passing grades are accepted. Credits earned through college-equivalent credit/prior learning assessment shall be transferable to the RBA Degree Program.

The maximum credit hours accepted from a junior or community college accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools or other regional accrediting association will not exceed 72 semester hours.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The RBA degree is comprised of 120 credit hours:

- 36 hours of General Studies courses as follows:
 - Communications (6 hours),
 - Social Sciences (6 hours),
 - Natural/Physical Sciences (3 hours),
 - Humanities (6 hours),
 - Mathematical Sciences or Computer Applications (3 hours),
 - Natural/Physical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, or Computer Applications (3 hours),
 - Other General Studies (9 hours)
- 30 hours of upper-division (3000-4999 level) courses
- 54 free elective hours (any college-level courses at the 1000 level or higher)

While the RBA degree does emphasize flexibility in meeting program requirements, the RBA program encourages students to follow the Core Curriculum course options adopted by Fairmont State.

Developmental course credit and duplicate course credit will not count toward meeting graduation requirements in any category.

To qualify for graduation, candidates must earn a total of 120 semester hours of college-level credit with minimum institutional and overall grade point averages of at least 2.00.

F-FORGIVENESS POLICY

If an applicant has previous college credit, failing grades of F received four years or more before first admission to the RBA program are disregarded from grade point

average calculations. While the Fs will always remain on the student's academic history, they will not be calculated into the student's final grade point average.

While enrolled, the Fs will calculate into the grade point averages, but will be removed from the final calculation at time of graduation from the RBA Degree Program.

AREAS OF EMPHASIS AND MINOR OPTIONS

The RBA Degree Program at Fairmont State University does not offer an Area of Emphasis option. Rather, the RBA degree is an interdisciplinary degree with no specified concentration. Furthermore, due to the flexible nature of the program, the RBA degree does not require that any specific courses be completed.

A minor field of study may be declared but is not required. Any minor currently existing at Fairmont State can be pursued. Students need to officially declare the minor area by submitting a Major/Minor/Concentration Update Form — which has been signed and approved by the Director of the RBA Degree Program — to the Registrar's Office. Minor areas will not appear on a student's diploma but will be listed on the official university transcript.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

In order to graduate from the RBA program, at least 24 semester hours must be taken in the West Virginia Public Higher Education System and at least 12 of those credit hours must be completed at Fairmont State. Classes completed virtually through Fairmont State will meet residency requirements.

GRADUATION FROM THE RBA DEGREE PROGRAM

RBA students are subject to the same application procedures, fees, and deadlines as other Fairmont State University students. Graduation information can be found at <https://www.fairmontstate.edu/studentservices/registrar/graduation-information>

Degree audits, however, will be conducted by the Director of the RBA Degree Program and not the Graduation Office.

Commencement ceremonies are held at the end of each Spring and Fall semester. August graduates are invited and encouraged to attend the Fall Commencement ceremony. Awarded diplomas will be mailed to graduates approximately 6-8 weeks after their final semester classes end.

Please note: DegreeWorks can be used to unofficially track progress toward graduation, but you must verify with the RBA Degree Program Director that your audit report includes all waivers and substitutions. Do not assume the audit report is accurate unless verified.

Alternative Methods of Earning College-Level Credit



ONLINE, ASYNCHRONOUS, COMPRESSED COURSE OPTIONS

Students enrolled in the RBA Degree Program at Fairmont State University are eligible to register for courses offered via the West Virginia Remote Online Collaborative Knowledge System (WVROCKS) portal, which provides access to courses taught at colleges and universities across West Virginia. These courses, listed with the RBAS prefix at Fairmont State, are all 3 credit hours, online, compressed (8-weeks), asynchronous, and available only to RBA and BSSL students.

These WVROCKS/RBAS courses are an option for RBA and BSSL students and not a requirement. Students can instead choose to take any courses either virtually or within a classroom.

A master list of WVROCKS course options, along with descriptions and required textbook information, can be accessed at <https://wvrocks.org/course-catalog>

The courses offered by Fairmont State each semester can be viewed on the online Class Schedules web page at <https://webfors.fairmontstate.edu/schedule.htm>



COLLEGE-EQUIVALENT CREDIT/PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

A unique feature of the RBA program is the College-Equivalent Credit/Prior Learning Assessment option, which allows *enrolled* students the possibility to receive credit for documented and demonstrated college-level knowledge and skills

that have been learned in environments and agencies outside the traditional higher education classroom.

College credit will be awarded only for *learning*, not for experience.

Allowing students to apply prior knowledge toward their current curricular requirements will ensure that they are not retaking courses for which they already have competency.

All requests for credit based on learning other than college course work must be applicable to meeting RBA degree requirements.

Academic credit will only be awarded to students who are admitted to and currently enrolled in the RBA Degree Program. Students, however, cannot be awarded college-equivalent credit during their first or final semesters in the RBA program.

➤ **Standardized Credit Awards**

Professional, state, or national licenses or certifications can be reviewed to determine if students would be eligible to receive credit based on previously evaluated and approved credit recommendations.

There is no fee required for review of related documentation within this category. Copies of licenses (front and back) and certificates must be submitted to the Director of the RBA Degree Program to begin the review process.

Credit awarded via standardized credit will be posted on the student's academic history upon verification of credit award.

Please note: Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are not awarded any college-level credit.

➤ **Portfolio Review for College-Level Learning**

Knowledge and skills gained through work, training, or life experiences may translate to college credit if students can document and demonstrate knowledge of learning outcomes and objectives equivalent to our courses.

Students must be able to demonstrate at least 70% knowledge of learning outcomes or objectives of a related college course, which most often includes theoretical or conceptual knowledge as well as application of subject-specific principles.

All requests for credit based via portfolio review must be applicable to meeting RBA degree requirements.

To develop a portfolio for review, the first step would be to identify the college course or courses for which college-level learning can be documented and demonstrated and to obtain the course syllabi and learning outcomes and objectives to help structure the portfolio development.

Portfolio work must be tied to specific courses currently taught at Fairmont State University or at another institution in the West Virginia Public Higher Education System. Portfolio evaluations will be completed by the faculty members who teach the courses for which credit is sought.

Please note: Not all existing courses are eligible for credit petition via portfolio development. The ability to petition a course for credit is at the discretion of the faculty member teaching the course.

The portfolios should be submitted prior to semester midterm to ensure that sufficient time is available for the evaluation.

The fee for portfolio evaluation is \$300 (per portfolio submission) regardless of whether or not credit is awarded. If credit is awarded, then an additional \$10 per credit hour processing fee is required to transcript the credit.

➤ **Additional Methods of Earning College-Level Credit**

College credit can also be earned in the following ways:

- Advanced Placement (AP) Exams
- American Council on Education (ACE) Guides
- College Level Examination Program (CLEP) Exams
- DANTES Subject Standardized Test (DSST)
- Excelsior College Examination (ECE) Program
- Institutional Course Challenge Examination Credit
- International Baccalaureate (IB) Program
- Institutional Evaluation of Industry and Workforce Training (i.e., apprenticeships, certifications, licensure not yet standardized as listed above)
- Prior Military Training Credit
- Review of Credly and Acclaim transcripts

Please note: Credit earned via standardized credit awards, portfolio review, or other assessment methods does not count toward meeting the state or institutional residency requirements for the RBA program.

Administrative Oversight

The Regents Bachelor of Arts (RBA) Degree Program was established by the state of West Virginia in 1975. Continuation of the program is administratively overseen by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WVHEPC).

Biannually, the WVHEPC convenes meetings of the statewide RBA Coordinators to discuss RBA policies, procedures, and guidelines and to ensure the academic integrity of the program.

To ensure the academic integrity of the RBA Degree Program at Fairmont State University, the Registrar's Office, as well as academic deans and chairs, faculty members, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and relevant committees provide institutional counsel for the program, as needed.