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# Shepherd

UNIVERSITY

REGENTS BACHELOR OF ARTS  
(R.B.A.)  
DEGREE PROGRAM



STUDENT HANDBOOK

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# SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY

## REGENTS BACHELOR OF ARTS (R.B.A.) DEGREE PROGRAM

### STUDENT HANDBOOK

#### R.B.A. MISSION STATEMENT

The Regents Bachelor of Arts degree is a program designed for adult students. It provides a structured, yet flexible means of pursuing a baccalaureate degree. In addition to regular college coursework, this unique program allows students with diverse life and work experiences to prepare evaluation materials for possible college equivalent credit.

#### OVERVIEW

The R.B.A. program assumes that adults have different needs and goals than traditional undergraduates; time, space, and program requirements are designed to meet the special needs of the adult learner. The program is designed to provide students with a comprehensive general education without the requirement of a major or a minor. It is a flexible, yet structured program that provides incentive for the mature student to return to college studies. It also meets the needs of many adults who have had no previous college work.

The R.B.A. program was created by the West Virginia State Board of Regents in 1975. Although that board no longer exists, the degree program continues in the 10 public colleges and universities in the state: Shepherd University, West Virginia University, Bluefield State College, Concord University, Glenville State College, West Virginia University Institute of Technology, West Liberty University, Fairmont State University, West Virginia State University, and Marshall University.

#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE “VALUE” OF THE REGENTS B.A. DEGREE

*Q. Can I go on to graduate or professional school with a R.B.A. degree?*

A. Yes. R.B.A. graduates go on to a variety of graduate programs both within and beyond West Virginia. They also have succeeded in medical school and law school. Students planning to seek graduate or professional school admission should select courses that meet the admission requirements for those programs.

(Note: In some professional programs, there is an expectation that at least 50 percent of the student’s undergraduate coursework should be in regular, graded courses.)

*Q. Do employers recognize the R.B.A. degree?*

A. The R.B.A. degree is widely recognized by regional employers. Out-of-state employers may not be familiar with the R.B.A., but Regents graduates report few difficulties once employers understand the nature of the program.

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## DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The R.B.A. degree requires students to take a minimum of 36 hours of general education coursework. The general education requirements include:

Humanities	6	Literature, history, philosophy, intro to visual art, music appreciation, foreign languages
Communications	6	English 101, 102 (grade C or better)
Social Science	6	Sociology, psychology, political science, economics, anthropology, geography
Natural Science	6	Biology, chemistry, general science, geology, astronomy, physics, oceanography, selected ENVS courses
General Education	9	General education electives from any of the above areas
Math Sciences	3	Math 101, 105, 106, 108, 154, 314 (with satisfactory placement)

36 TOTAL GENERAL EDUCATION HOURS

The R.B.A. degree requires students to take a minimum of 39 hours of upper-division coursework. Upper-division courses are those offered at the junior and senior levels and are numbered as 300 or 400 level. Upper-division courses can focus on a specific area and may be taken in any subject area or a combination of areas as students wish.

The R.B.A. degree has a residency requirement of 24 hours of coursework taken at public higher education institutions within West Virginia, with a minimum of 12 credits at the host institution.

R.B.A. students must complete a minimum of 120 hours of credit, with a minimum GPA of 2.0 for all college work, as well as a 2.0 average on all Shepherd work, to be eligible for graduation.

In order for R.B.A. students to be considered for honors at graduation, they must have earned a minimum of 80 semester hours for which a traditional grade has been given, with 32 of these hours completed in resident study at Shepherd. Honors will be awarded according to these criteria: highest honors, summa cum laude, 3.850 to 4.000; high honors, magna cum laude, 3.700 to 3.849; and cum laude, 3.500 to 3.699. Academic forgiveness does not pertain to a GPA calculated for special academic recognition such as graduating with honors.

## ADMISSION ELIGIBILITY AND TRANSFER CREDIT

In order to be admitted to the R.B.A. program, a student must have graduated from high school at least four years ago. For example, a student graduating from high school in June 2010 would not be eligible for admission to the Regents program until June 2014.

For admission to the R.B.A. program, students must be high school graduates or have a GED. Eligible students may transfer into the R.B.A. program from other institutions

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or from other majors within Shepherd if they have a 2.0 GPA. Students transferring from other institutions should have official transcripts sent to Shepherd's Office of Admissions or the R.B.A. office.

As of fall 2014, the R.B.A. will have two areas of emphases – business and social issues. Check our website ([www.shepherd.edu/rba/emphases.html](http://www.shepherd.edu/rba/emphases.html)) for details.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ADMISSIONS AND TRANSFER CREDIT

*Q. How do I apply for admission to the R.B.A. program?*

A. You can complete a Shepherd application form, available from the Office of Admissions or at [www.shepherd.edu](http://www.shepherd.edu).

*Q. If I earned a GED recently, do I still have to wait four years?*

A. It depends. The four-years-since-graduation rule would apply to the date when you would have graduated had you completed high school.

*Q. What if my GPA is below 2.0?*

A. Your GPA may be helped by the Regents rule that allows for the disregarding of all failure (F) grades earned more than four years prior to your initial admission to the R.B.A. program. (Your GPA is recalculated with the failures ignored, although they will remain on your transcript.)

*Q. What if I drop out for one or two semesters? Do I have to re-apply to continue?*

A. You do not have to re-apply to Shepherd until you have been out for more than two consecutive semesters. Otherwise, you must re-apply to Shepherd and pay the \$45 application fee.

*Q. How long do I have to complete my R.B.A. degree?*

A. There is no deadline for the degree completion.

*Q. Will my associate degree credits transfer to Shepherd for the Regents program?*

A. Yes, a total of 72 credits can transfer from community colleges.

*Q. Are there credits from other institutions that will not transfer?*

A. Yes, remedial courses do not transfer. CLEP credit will not transfer until the original scores are sent from CLEP to the Office of the Registrar.

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*Q. Can I get credit for military service?*

A. Yes. Four credits are awarded for military physical education. Additional credit will be given for documented specialized military training, which has been assessed by the American Council on Education.

## COLLEGE EQUIVALENT CREDIT

College equivalent credit is given to students for selected work and life experiences that can be equated to college coursework. In a few areas, standardized awards of credit have been determined for specific credentials earned by students. In order to get college equivalent credit, students must write portfolios.

Requesting credit through a portfolio evaluation requires students to pay a portfolio fee of \$300 plus a \$10 per credit posting fee. Remember that portfolio credit cannot be used to meet the residency requirement of 24 semester hours, but may be used to meet some general education and upper division requirements. Portfolio credit may not duplicate credit already on the student's transcript, and portfolio credit may not be transferred to another degree program.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PORTFOLIOS AND STANDARDIZED AWARDS

*Q. What is a portfolio?*

A. A portfolio is a written document justifying and documenting the request for college equivalent credit. Portfolios have four components: (1) Cover Page, including name, address, telephone, e-mail, etc, (2) Chronological Overview, or Table of Contents, (3) Part II, listing all training or non-college courses, and (4) Part III, listing work experience, including volunteer work.

*Q. Who reads the portfolios and determines whether credit is awarded?*

A. Portfolios are sent to the academic departments on campus that offer the requested credits. Faculty in those departments read and determine the credit awards. If Shepherd does not offer the program of study or the specialty courses that are involved, the portfolio is sent to another West Virginia state institution.

*Q. Can I get help in putting my portfolio together?*

A. There are instructions with the portfolio forms, and there are sample portfolios for you to view in the R.B.A. office. The R.B.A. staff is available to give advice and feedback.

*Q. Is there a limit on the amount of college equivalent credit that can be earned?*

A. No. If someone is a full performance air traffic controller, for example, they can

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receive 30 lower division credits, and 30 upper division credits from the R.B.A. standard guidelines; but, on the average, a student can get anywhere from six to 30 credits.

*Q. How do the credits earned through a portfolio evaluation appear on my transcript?*

A. They are designated as college equivalent credits. College equivalent credit is not graded.

*Q. Can you resubmit a portfolio if you don't get all the credit you want?*

A. It is usually possible to resubmit a portfolio for additional credit, especially if faculty evaluators indicate what is needed for full credit. There is no fee for a resubmission, but this must be done in the following semester. If submitted at a later date, another \$300 will be charged.

*Q. What happens to portfolios after they are assessed?*

A. The portfolio copies are kept by the R.B.A. office for one year and then returned to the student or destroyed. The original portfolio and supporting documents can be returned to the student after evaluation. Students must arrange to pick up their portfolios; the R.B.A. office does not mail them.

*Q. Should you submit a portfolio as soon as you enter the R.B.A. program?*

A. That depends. If you are requesting large-credit standardized awards – such as for X-ray technology or nursing – you will probably want to bring in your credits early in order to get the advantage of a higher class rank for earlier registration purposes. If you have very little college experience, you will probably want to wait to submit a portfolio when you are more familiar with how faculty conduct classes and assess academic work.

*Q. How do I find out about standardized awards?*

A. A partial list of standardized awards is given at the back of this handbook. Standardized awards change over time, so it is always wise to check at the R.B.A. office to see if the awards require specific documentation. American Council on Education credit awards are recognized in the R.B.A. program.

## **OTHER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

*Q. What can I do with the R.B.A. degree?*

A. The R.B.A. degree is a recognized, four-year, baccalaureate degree from an accredited university. There is no major or minor, but one can concentrate in a particular field or area of interest. The degree provides a student with resources to pursue graduate studies or to apply their expertise to a post-graduate profession. Some R.B.A. students continue their studies in a traditional degree program. Many students seek the

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R.B.A. degree in order to achieve a promotion at work or just to have the satisfaction and personal reward of holding a baccalaureate degree.

*Q. Are R.B.A. students eligible for financial aid and scholarships?*

A. Yes, R.B.A. students have the same privileges and responsibilities as other Shepherd students. There are no scholarships specifically for R.B.A. students at this time; however, R.B.A. students are eligible for many campus-wide, competitive scholarships. Check with the Office of Financial Aid for scholarship information.

*Q. Are there any accommodations made for students with disabilities?*

A. Yes, Shepherd University is sensitive to a student with special needs. Check with the Office of Multicultural Affairs in the Student Center for more information.



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## SELECTED EXAMPLES OF STANDARDIZED AWARDS

Credential/Certificate	LD Hours	UD hours
Registered Nurse (hospital diploma program)	30	15
Licensed Practical Nurse	15	
X-Ray Technologist (ARRT)	55	
MRI Imaging	3	17
Medical Laboratory Technologist	42	
Emergency Medical Tech (State)	5	
Basic Lifeguarding (Red Cross)	1	
Certified Ophthalmic Tech	30	
Journeyman Air Traffic Controller	30	30
Private Pilot License		3
Commercial Pilot License		3
Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU) diploma	15	15
W.Va. Real Estate Salesperson License	6	
W.Va. Real Estate Appraiser License	3	
W.Va. State Police Cadet Training Course (Training taken after 1977)	13	18
Basic Police Training Course (1980 and later)	20	



For questions and information on the Regents Bachelor  
of Arts (R.B.A.) Program, contact:

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