# WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18B-3D-7

**§18B-3D-7. STAND - Registered apprenticeship to associate in applied science degree program established; definitions; funding; annual reporting.**

(a) Purpose and Intent. – The purpose of this section is to create a comprehensive registered apprenticeship to associate of applied science degree program to be known as the Skilled Trades Apprenticeship Nontraditional Degree (STAND) program to provide apprentices or journeyworkers with the opportunity to obtain associate degrees in applied science while gaining practical skills and on-the-job training through federally recognized apprenticeship programs. The registered apprenticeship to associate of applied science degree program aims to bridge the gap between postsecondary education and the apprenticeship learning experience, fostering a skilled workforce that meets the demands of varied and evolving industries.

(b) Definitions. – As used in this section, unless used in a context that clearly requires a different meaning, the term:

"Apprenticeship" or "apprenticeship program" means an apprenticeship program registered under the federal National Apprenticeship Act, 29 U.S.C. 50, *et seq.*, or another federal apprenticeship program administered by the United States Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship.

"Associate of applied science degree" means an associate-level college degree with a focus on a particular applied science or technical skill designed for students planning to enter the workforce upon degree completion.

"Eligible course" means any class or program of instruction offered at a public community and technical college for which the eligible student receives credit toward the general education requirements that lead to an associate of applied science degree. Applied academics for adult education instruction, developmental education, physical education courses, and recreation and leisure studies courses are not eligible courses for purposes of this program.

"Eligible student" means any person who has graduated from high school or has obtained a general equivalency diploma or other approved equivalency-based test, is 18 years of age or older, and is an apprentice or participating in an apprenticeship program as verified by the registered apprenticeship program who registers to participate in the program. "Eligible student" also includes journeyworkers who have received a certificate recognized by the United States Department of Labor.

"Student-apprentice" means a student who has been accepted into and is participating in the program created in this section.

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(c) Apprenticeship to associate of applied science degree program established. – Under the supervision of the council, the chancellor shall establish the STAND program whereby the state's public community and technical colleges may offer general education courses to eligible students in a manner and on a timeline that will allow the eligible student to earn at least 15 credit hours of general education courses toward an associate of applied science degree.

(1) To be eligible for the STAND program, an individual must be enrolled in an apprenticeship program recognized by the United States Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship or must have received a United States Department of Labor Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship.

(2) An apprentice or journeyworker may apply for enrollment in the STAND program at the next available program offering.

(3) Student-apprentices shall complete and pass all general education coursework within six years from the initial date of enrollment in the STAND program or within two years after completing the apprentice program, whichever is longer. Journeyworkers shall complete and pass all general education coursework within six years from the initial date of enrollment.

(d) Funding. – From appropriations to the council for the purposes of implementing and administering the STAND program established in this section, the council shall pay directly to the participating public community and technical colleges the cost of the tuition and academic fees incurred by eligible students taking courses through the STAND program. This funding may not be used to pay for any of the costs associated with the apprenticeship program or otherwise incurred by the apprenticeship program in conducting such training.

(e) Rulemaking. – The council may propose emergency and legislative rules pursuant to §29A-3A-1 *et seq*. of this code to implement the provisions of this section.

(f) Annual reports. – By December 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, the chancellor shall report to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability on any STAND programs created. The report shall contain, at a minimum, the following information: the number of student-apprentices and journeyworkers participating in the STAND program; the number of associate of applied science degrees earned by students who have participated in the STAND program; projected growth in the STAND program and funding needs for the next year; and any issues with the STAND program reported by students, the registered apprenticeship program, and the community and technical colleges, how these issues are being addressed, and whether the issues require legislative action.

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