



# CREDIT

*when it's due*

# Georgia

## STATE PROFILE



State Funder: Lumina Foundation

### About Credit When It's Due

The Credit When It's Due (CWID) initiative is funded by six foundations and is supporting 15 states to develop reverse transfer programs and policies. Reverse transfer enables students to receive an associate's degree when students meet associate's degree requirements after transfer to a 4-year college or university.

### State Implementation Context

The University System of Georgia (USG) consists of 30 public colleges and universities. Of these, 19 institutions award associate's degrees (these are primarily in the sector now known as "state colleges"). Georgia initially worked with three regional groups of "sending" and "receiving" institutions. One of these, a group with one sending and two receiving institutions, is ready for a pilot using the new technology described below. It is expected that this group will go from "pilot" to "scale" during summer 2015, and that reverse transfer at the remaining USG institutions will go to scale in fall 2015.

### Key Implementation Strategies

**Expand and Enhance Reverse Transfer Processes.** Early in the grant period, USG worked with three regional institutional partnerships (13 total institutions) to develop reverse transfer processes to uncover barriers to reverse transfer and to develop processes that will facilitate reverse transfer. These processes will be refined

and expanded to all USG institutions so similar processes and protocols are in place throughout the system.

**Eliminate Policy Barriers.** A key element of the USG's strategy to support reverse transfer was to identify and eliminate policy barriers at the system and institutional levels. Several institutional policies have been addressed through this effort such as eliminating graduation applications and fees, eliminating transcript processing fees, eliminating the requirement that students be currently enrolled at the 2-year institution in order to graduate, and changing the limit on the number of credits that can be transferred back after the student leaves the 2-year institution. At the system level, the degree requirements for the Associate Degree in General Studies were modified to allow more students to qualify for the degree.

**Enhance Data Systems to Support Reverse Transfer.** USG partnered with Parchment to develop a technology solution to automate the exchange of information among institutions for the purpose of reverse transfer. The technology is used for obtaining consent from students and exchanging electronic transcripts.

**Increase Program Awareness.** A key strategy of USG's CWID grant is to increase awareness of reverse transfer among key stakeholders such as faculty, staff, and students. Communication materials are being developed and disseminated such as model communications to students regarding reverse transfer eligibility and the benefits of an associate's degree. USG also has plans to integrate reverse transfer into state and institutional websites and to develop a public campaign about reverse transfer.

### Reverse Transfer Process

Based on a review of implementation across CWID states, OCCRL developed a framework for the reverse transfer process that consists of five broad processes, and Georgia's process is applied to this framework below. At least three pilot institutions are applying the process below in Spring 2015.

- 1. Student Identification:** Receiving institutions run an SQL query against Banner records to generate a list of student names and emails of students who appear to be eligible for awarding of associate degrees via reverse transfer.
- 2. Consent:** The receiving institution sends potentially eligible students an email directing them to a site maintained by Parchment where students will give consent to transcript exchange and associate's degree conferral (if eligible) via an opt-in process. In future terms, students completing the Georgia online common admission's application or paper application for freshman admission or transfer will have the opportunity to opt-in to reverse transfer.

### Implementation Timeline

**February 2014:** Representatives from East Georgia State College, Georgia Regents University, and Georgia Southern University met with a system representative to discuss reverse transfer.

**July 2014:** Representatives from 13 USG institutions, constituting three regional transfer groups, met with system representatives to discuss reverse transfer.

**October 2014:** USG Council on General Education approved revised requirements for the Associate Degree in General Studies to allow more students to qualify for awarding of an associate degree, and this was approved by the Regents Advisory Committee on Academic Affairs in February 2015.

**March 2015:** Signed contract with Parchment to provide transcript and consent services for reverse transfer across all 30 USG institutions.

**Spring 2015:** Working on revisions to Georgia online common application and institutional paper applications to include opt-in consent to award degrees and to exchange information for reverse transfer.

**Summer 2015:** Pilot use of Parchment services for reverse transfer followed by full scaling at the three pilot institutions.

**Fall 2015:** Full scaling of Parchment services for reverse transfer at all 30 USG institutions.



**Credential Type(s):** Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science



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- 3. Transcript Exchange:** Parchment sends a request to the receiving (current) institution to upload the transcripts, which will then be transmitted securely (along with the identifying information and record of consent) to the associate's degree (sending) institution for evaluation; a designated person at the sending institution downloads the transcripts.
- 4. Degree Audit:** The associate's degree institution manually enters the reverse transferred courses into the Banner student information system and then conducts a manual audit to determine whether students have met associate's degree requirements.
- 5. Degree Conferral and Advising:** If the student meets degree requirements, the associate's degree institution notifies students, awards the degree, and sends a transcript documenting award of the degree back to the student's current institution. If the student does not meet associate's degree requirements, the associate's degree institution will contact the student to inform them of remaining requirements for the degree.

### Implementation Successes and Challenges

**Successes:** USG changed the requirements for the Associate Degree in General Studies, which will permit the reverse transfer award of associate's degrees to more students. Reverse transfer efforts have received strong support from a number of USG institutions and cooperation from most. Policies have been changed at some institutions to support reverse transfer, such as the elimination of graduation fees. The USG is in the process of adding (opt-in) questions to the Georgia common (online) admission's

application that will allow students to consent to the exchange of information and the granting of associate's degrees. The partnership with Parchment will help to streamline the reverse transfer process.

**Challenges:** Although the technology solution developed with Parchment supports reverse transfer, it does not fully automate the transcript exchange and degree audit processes. Receiving institutions report that they are unsure how reverse transfer benefits them and they are hesitant about dedicating large amounts of resources and effort into identifying and contacting students eligible for reverse transfer. As such, the state needs to "prime the pump" with more early successes to communicate the value of reverse transfer and encourage institutional support and commitment.

### Sustainability

The USG and all USG institutions will have an opt-in consent policy in place that will allow for the automatic awarding of degrees when they are earned. Institutional policies that currently create barriers to reverse transfer, including graduation application fees, residency requirements, and limits on the number of credits that can be transferred back once a student is no longer enrolled will have been removed. The development of newer technology to support reverse transfer will simplify and largely automate the process of evaluating student credentials for reverse transfer, making the process less burdensome for institutions. Statewide performance-based funding, once fully implemented (which should be around the time the grant funding ends) will provide financial incentives for institutions to continue the reverse transfer completion work.

## Institutions Participating in Credit When It's Due

### Summer 2015 Pilots

East Georgia State College (sending)  
Georgia Southern University (receiving)  
Georgia Regents University (receiving)

College of Coastal Georgia  
Columbus State University  
Dalton State College  
Dartmouth State College  
East Georgia State College  
Georgia Highlands College  
Georgia Perimeter College  
Georgia Regents University  
Gordon State College  
Middle Georgia State College  
Savannah State University  
South Georgia State College  
University of North Georgia  
Valdosta State University

### Bachelor's-degree-granting institutions

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College  
Albany State University  
Armstrong State University  
Atlanta Metropolitan State College  
Bainbridge State College  
Clayton State University  
College of Coastal Georgia  
Columbus State University  
Dalton State College  
Dartmouth State College  
East Georgia State College  
Fort Valley State University  
Georgia College and State University

Georgia Gwinnett College  
Georgia Highlands College  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Georgia Regents University  
Georgia Southern University  
Georgia Southwestern University  
Georgia State University  
Gordon State College  
Kennesaw State University  
Middle Georgia State College  
Savannah State University  
South Georgia State College  
University of Georgia  
University of North Georgia  
University of West Georgia  
Valdosta State University

### To scale in fall 2015

#### Associate-degree-granting institutions

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College  
Armstrong State University  
Atlanta Metropolitan State College  
Bainbridge State College  
Clayton State University

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