

CORRECTED COPY
P.L. 2018, CHAPTER 93, *approved August 17, 2018*
Senate, No. 1265

1 **AN ACT** concerning associate and baccalaureate degree programs
2 and supplementing chapter 62 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

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5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

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8 1. a. Notwithstanding the provisions of any section of law to
9 the contrary and except as otherwise provided pursuant to
10 subsection b. of this section, beginning with students who initially
11 enroll in a baccalaureate degree program in the fall semester of
12 2019, the standard number of credits required for the award of a
13 baccalaureate degree from a four-year public institution of higher
14 education is 120 credit hours.

15 b. The standard number of credit hours established pursuant to
16 subsection a. of this section shall not apply if:

17 (1) the degree program is defined as a five-year degree program;

18 (2) professional accreditation requires a greater number of credit
19 hours or requires course work that cannot be completed in 120
20 credits; or

21 (3) certification requirements result in a need for credit hours in
22 excess of 120.

23 c. (1) The Secretary of Higher Education shall establish
24 standards for the purposes of complying with the credit hour limit
25 established by this section for institutions of higher education that
26 use nontraditional course credit systems.

27 (2) Within 180 days of the effective date of this act, a four-year
28 public institution of higher education that uses a nontraditional
29 course credit system shall submit a written request to the secretary
30 for permission to comply with the credit hour limit in accordance
31 with the standards established by the secretary pursuant to
32 paragraph (1) of this subsection. The request shall provide
33 information on why the institution is not able to comply with the
34 requirements of subsection a. of this section and shall include such
35 other information as the secretary deems necessary. Within 60 days
36 of the submission of the request, the secretary shall advise the
37 institution on whether it may meet the credit hour limit in
38 accordance with the standards established by the secretary.

39
40 2. a. Notwithstanding the provisions of any section of law to
41 the contrary and except as otherwise provided pursuant to

1 subsection b. of this section, beginning with students who initially
2 enroll in an associate degree program in the fall semester of 2019,
3 the standard number of credit hours required for the award of an
4 associate degree from a county college is 60 credit hours.

5 b. The standard number of credit hours established pursuant to
6 subsection a. of this section shall not apply if:

7 (1) the degree program is defined as more than a two-year
8 degree program;

9 (2) professional accreditation requires a greater number of credit
10 hours or requires course work that cannot be completed in 60
11 credits; or

12 (3) certification requirements result in a need for credit hours in
13 excess of 60.

14 c. (1) The Secretary of Higher Education shall establish
15 standards for the purposes of complying with the credit hour limit
16 established by this section for institutions of higher that use
17 nontraditional course credit systems.

18 (2) Within 180 days of the effective date of this act, a county
19 college that uses a nontraditional course credit system shall submit
20 a written request to the secretary for permission to comply with the
21 credit hour limit in accordance with the standards established by the
22 secretary pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection. The request
23 shall provide information on why the county college is not able to
24 comply with the requirements of subsection a. of this section and
25 shall include such other information as the secretary deems
26 necessary. Within 60 days of the submission of the request, the
27 secretary shall advise the county college on whether it may meet the
28 credit hour limit in accordance with the standards established by the
29 secretary.

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31 3. The governing board of a public institution of higher
32 education, in consultation with the Secretary of Higher Education,
33 may approve exceptions to the credit hour requirements in addition
34 to those established pursuant to subsection b. of sections 1 and 2 of
35 this act.

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37 4. Within 60 days of the effective date of this act and annually
38 thereafter, the secretary shall submit a report to the Governor, and
39 to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164
40 (C.52:14-19.1), on the number of four-year public institutions of
41 higher education and county colleges that are in compliance with
42 the provisions of this act.

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44 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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49 This bill provides that the standard number of credits required

1 for the award of a baccalaureate degree by a public institution of
2 higher education, beginning with students who initially enter the
3 institution in the fall semester of 2019, will be 120 credit hours, and
4 in the case of the award of an associate degree by a county college,
5 60 credit hours.

6 The bill stipulates that the standard number of credit hours will
7 not apply if the degree program is defined as a five-year degree
8 program in the case of a four-year institution or more than a two-
9 year degree program in the case of a county college. The standard
10 number of credit hours also will not apply if professional
11 accreditation requires a greater number of credit hours or requires
12 course work that cannot be completed within those credit hours, or
13 if certification requirements result in a need for additional credit
14 hours.

15 The bill requires the Secretary of Higher Education to establish
16 standards for the purposes of complying with the credit hour limits
17 established by the bill for institutions of higher education that use
18 nontraditional course credit systems. Within 180 days of the bill's
19 effective date, a four-year public institution or a county college that
20 uses a nontraditional course credit system is required to submit a
21 written request to the secretary for permission to comply with the
22 credit hour limit in accordance with the standards established by the
23 secretary. Within 60 days of the written request, the secretary will
24 advise the institution on whether the institution may meet the credit
25 hour limit in accordance with those standards.

26 The bill authorizes the governing board of a public institution, in
27 consultation with the secretary, to approve additional exceptions to
28 the bill's standard credit hour requirements.

29 The bill directs the secretary to submit a report, within 60 days of
30 the bill's effective date and annually thereafter, to the Governor and
31 the Legislature on the number of four-year institutions of higher
32 education and county colleges that are in compliance with the bill's
33 provisions.

34 The bill is scheduled to take effect immediately upon enactment.
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39 Provides that no more than 120 credits will be required for
40 baccalaureate degree awarded by public institution and no more
41 than 60 credits for associate degree.