

ASSEMBLY, No. 1384

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman WILLIAM F. MOEN

District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)

SYNOPSIS

Requires four-year institutions of higher education to offer accelerated three-year baccalaureate degree programs.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** concerning degree programs offered by four-year
2 institutions of higher education and supplementing chapter 62 of
3 Title 18A of the New Jersey 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. A four-year institution of higher education shall offer
9 baccalaureate degree programs that may be completed in three
10 years. The programs shall be offered by the beginning of the 2020-
11 2021 academic year, or pursuant to a timeline established under the
12 provisions of section 3 of this act. An institution shall offer the
13 three-year degree option in designated majors that the institution, in
14 its discretion, determines are well-suited for an accelerated three-
15 year program. A three-year baccalaureate degree program shall:

16 (1) establish eligibility criteria for students who wish to
17 participate in the program;

18 (2) require a student to complete the same number of credits and
19 other academic requirements as are required for the four-year
20 program in that major;

21 (3) require a student to take courses during the summer for two
22 consecutive summers;

23 (4) guarantee a student the availability of courses needed to
24 complete the degree in three years; and

25 (5) ensure that any internship requirements for the degree
26 program are incorporated into the accelerated three-year framework.

27 b. A four-year institution of higher education shall offer
28 support resources, such as advising and academic supports, to assist
29 students in the successful completion of an accelerated three-year
30 baccalaureate degree program.

31 c. A four-year institution of higher education that offers three
32 or fewer undergraduate degree programs shall not be required to
33 offer a three-year degree option pursuant to this act.

34 d. A four-year institution of higher education that does not
35 operate a summer session shall not be required to offer a three-year
36 degree option pursuant to this act.

37
38 2. Notwithstanding the provisions of any law or regulation to
39 the contrary, a student who participates in a three-year
40 baccalaureate degree program may utilize financial aid from any
41 State-funded financial aid programs for which the student is
42 eligible, including the Tuition Aid Grant Program and the
43 Educational Opportunity Fund, toward the costs of tuition and
44 housing for the summer sessions.

45
46 3. a. By January 1, 2018, a four-year institution of higher
47 education shall submit a written report to the Secretary of Higher
48 Education identifying the majors for which the institution has

1 determined to offer an accelerated three-year baccalaureate degree
2 program. The report shall include information regarding the
3 anticipated financial impact of the three-year programs on the
4 institution.

5 b. (1) If an institution, based on financial concerns, is not
6 prepared to offer a three-year baccalaureate degree program by the
7 beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year, the institution's report
8 to the secretary under subsection a. of this section may contain a
9 petition for an extension. An extension petition shall include
10 information demonstrating that launching a three-year degree
11 program by the 2020-2021 academic year would have a significant
12 and cost-prohibitive financial impact on the institution, and that the
13 institution has made a good faith effort to identify majors that are
14 well-suited for a three-year degree program.

15 (2) Based on the information submitted in an extension petition
16 and on a case by case basis, the secretary shall determine within 90
17 days of receipt of the petition, whether it is reasonable for the
18 institution to offer a three-year baccalaureate degree program by the
19 2020-2021 academic year. If the secretary determines that the
20 institution needs more time before offering the program, the
21 secretary shall provide an extension in one-year increments, with a
22 maximum extension of three years. An institution that is granted an
23 extension shall submit an implementation plan to the secretary that
24 complies with the extension timeline.

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26 4. This act shall take effect immediately.
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29 STATEMENT

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31 This bill requires four-year institutions of higher education to offer
32 accelerated baccalaureate degree programs that students can complete
33 in three years. The bill directs each four-year institution to offer a
34 three-year degree option in designated majors that the institution
35 determines are well-suited for an accelerated three-year program.

36 Under the bill, a three-year baccalaureate degree program must:

37 (1) establish eligibility criteria for students who wish to participate;

38 (2) require a student to complete the same number of credits and
39 other academic requirements as are required for the four-year program
40 in that major;

41 (3) require a student to take courses during the summer for two
42 consecutive summers;

43 (4) guarantee a student the availability of courses needed to
44 complete the degree in three years; and

45 (5) ensure that any internship requirements for the degree program
46 are incorporated into the accelerated three-year framework.

47 In addition, a four-year institution of higher education will offer
48 support resources, such as advising and academic supports, to assist

1 students in the successful completion of an accelerated three-year
2 baccalaureate degree program.

3 The bill provides an exemption from the requirement to offer a
4 three-year degree program for: (1) four-year institutions of higher
5 education that offer three or fewer undergraduate degree programs;
6 and (2) four-year institutions of higher education that do not operate a
7 summer session.

8 The bill specifies that a student who participates in a three-year
9 baccalaureate degree program may utilize financial aid from any State-
10 funded financial aid programs for which the student is eligible,
11 including the Tuition Aid Grant Program and the Educational
12 Opportunity Fund, toward the costs of tuition and housing for the
13 summer sessions.

14 Under the bill, a four-year institution of higher education is
15 required to submit a report to the Secretary of Higher Education by
16 January 1, 2018. The report must identify the majors for which the
17 institution has determined to offer an accelerated three-year
18 baccalaureate degree program and include information regarding the
19 anticipated financial impact of the three-year programs on the
20 institution.

21 The bill requires four-year institutions of higher education to offer
22 three-year degree programs by the beginning of the 2020-2021
23 academic year. However, if an institution, based on financial
24 concerns, is not prepared to offer a three-year program by that date, the
25 institution's report to the secretary may contain a petition for an
26 extension. An extension petition must include information
27 demonstrating that launching a three-year program by the 2020-2021
28 academic year would have a significant and cost-prohibitive financial
29 impact on the institution, and that the institution has made a good faith
30 effort to identify majors that are well-suited for a three-year degree
31 program. Based on the submitted information, the secretary within 90
32 days will determine, on a case by case basis, whether it is reasonable
33 for the institution to offer a three-year degree program by the 2020-
34 2021 academic year. If the secretary determines that the institution
35 needs more time, the secretary will provide an extension in one-year
36 increments with a maximum extension of three years. An institution
37 that is granted an extension is required to submit an implementation
38 plan to the secretary that complies with the extension timeline.