

ASSEMBLY, No. 2995

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 20, 2020

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman ADAM J. TALIAFERRO
District 3 (Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem)

SYNOPSIS

Requires four-year institutions of higher education to offer bachelor's degree programs that may be completed in three years.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



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

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

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8 1. a. Subject to the requirements of section 2 of this act, a
9 four-year institution of higher education shall offer baccalaureate
10 degree programs that may be completed in three years. An
11 institution shall offer the three-year degree option in designated
12 majors that the institution, in its discretion, determines are well-
13 suited for an accelerated three-year program. A three-year
14 baccalaureate degree program shall:

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

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

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

22 (4) provide a student with free tuition and free housing during
23 the summer, subject to the prior application of other grants and
24 scholarships against those costs, provided that the student has met
25 the program's academic requirements in the preceding semesters;

26 (5) guarantee a student the availability of courses needed to
27 complete the degree in three years;

28 (6) provide a student with overall cost savings in attaining the
29 degree as compared to completing the degree program in four years;
30 and

31 (7) ensure that any internship requirements for the degree
32 program are incorporated into the accelerated three-year framework.

33 b. A four-year institution of higher education shall offer
34 accelerated three-year baccalaureate degree programs by the
35 beginning of the 2023-2024 academic year, or pursuant to a
36 timeline established under the provisions of section 2 of this act.

37 c. A four-year institution of higher education shall offer
38 support resources, such as advising and academic supports, to assist
39 students in the successful completion of an accelerated three-year
40 baccalaureate degree program.

41 d. A four-year institution of higher education that offers three
42 or fewer undergraduate degree programs may, but is not required to,
43 offer a three-year degree option pursuant to this act.

44
45 2. a. By January 1, 2021, a four-year institution of higher
46 education shall submit a written report to the Secretary of Higher
47 Education identifying the majors for which the institution has
48 determined to offer an accelerated three-year baccalaureate degree

1 program. The report shall include information regarding the
2 requirements and costs of each program, and the anticipated
3 financial impact of the three-year programs on the institution.

4 b. Based on the information submitted by an institution under
5 this section, the secretary shall determine, on a case by case basis,
6 whether it is reasonable for the institution to offer the proposed
7 three-year baccalaureate degree program by the 2023-2024
8 academic year. If the secretary determines that the institution needs
9 more time before offering the program, the secretary shall provide
10 an extension in one-year increments, with a maximum extension of
11 three years.

12 c. After receiving a decision from the secretary under this
13 section, a four-year institution of higher education shall create a
14 task force to develop a detailed plan for implementing the
15 accelerated three-year baccalaureate degree programs within the
16 specified timeline.

17
18 3. a. Notwithstanding the provisions of any law or regulation
19 to the contrary, a student who participates in a three-year
20 baccalaureate degree program may utilize financial aid from State-
21 funded financial aid programs for which the student is eligible,
22 including the Tuition Aid Grant Program and the Educational
23 Opportunity Fund, toward the costs of tuition and housing for the
24 summer sessions.

25 b. The State shall reimburse a four-year institution of higher
26 education for the costs of tuition and housing that are not otherwise
27 covered by grants and scholarships for the summer sessions for
28 students who participate in a three-year baccalaureate degree
29 program.

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31 4. This act shall take effect immediately.
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34 STATEMENT

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36 This bill requires four-year institutions of higher education to
37 offer accelerated baccalaureate degree programs that students can
38 complete in three years. The bill directs each four-year institution
39 to offer a three-year degree option in designated majors that the
40 institution determines to be well-suited for an accelerated three-year
41 program.

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

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

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

- 1 (3) require a student to take courses during the summer for two
2 consecutive summers;
- 3 (4) provide a student with free tuition and free housing during
4 the summer, subject to the prior application of other grants and
5 scholarships against those costs, provided that the student has met
6 the program's academic requirements in the preceding semesters;
- 7 (5) guarantee a student the availability of courses needed to
8 complete the degree in three years;
- 9 (6) provide a student with overall cost savings in attaining the
10 degree as compared to completing the degree program in four years;
11 and
- 12 (7) ensure that any internship requirements for the degree
13 program are incorporated into the accelerated three-year framework.
14 In addition, a four-year institution of higher education will offer
15 support resources, such as advising and academic supports, to assist
16 students in the successful completion of an accelerated three-year
17 baccalaureate degree program.
- 18 Under the bill, a four-year institution of higher education is
19 required to submit a written report to the Secretary of Higher
20 Education by January 1, 2021, which identifies the majors for which
21 the institution has determined to offer an accelerated three-year
22 baccalaureate degree program. The report will include information
23 on the requirements and costs of each program and the anticipated
24 financial impact of the three-year programs on the institution. The
25 bill requires the institutions to offer three-year baccalaureate degree
26 programs by the beginning of the 2023-2024 academic year;
27 however, if the secretary determines on a case by case basis that an
28 institution needs more time before offering a three-year program,
29 the secretary will provide an extension in one-year increments, with
30 a maximum extension of three years.
- 31 The bill provides that a student who participates in a three-year
32 baccalaureate degree program may utilize financial aid from State-
33 funded financial aid programs for which the student is eligible,
34 including the Tuition Aid Grant Program and the Educational
35 Opportunity Fund, toward the costs of tuition and housing for the
36 summer sessions. In addition, the State will reimburse a four-year
37 institution of higher education for the costs of tuition and housing
38 that are not otherwise covered by grants and scholarships for the
39 summer sessions for students who participate in a three-year
40 baccalaureate degree program.
- 41 Lastly, the bill provides an exemption from its requirements for
42 four-year institutions of higher education that offer three or fewer
43 undergraduate degree programs. Such institutions may, but are not
44 required to, offer accelerated three-year degree programs.