

ASSEMBLY, No. 3090

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 24, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman JOHN F. MCKEON

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

SYNOPSIS

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

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/5/2020)

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.

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

7
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 2023-
11 2024 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, except that a student shall be permitted to opt
23 out of this requirement if the student can demonstrate that he is able
24 to meet the degree requirements without taking courses in one or
25 both of the summer sessions;

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

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

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

34 c. A four-year institution of higher education that offers three
35 or fewer undergraduate degree programs shall not be required to
36 offer a three-year degree option pursuant to this act. The Secretary
37 of Higher Education shall take appropriate action to encourage
38 these institutions to implement a three-year baccalaureate degree
39 program in accordance with this act.

40 d. A four-year institution of higher education that does not
41 operate a summer session shall not be required to offer a three-year
42 degree option pursuant to this act. The Secretary of Higher
43 Education shall take appropriate action to encourage these
44 institutions to implement a three-year baccalaureate degree program
45 in accordance with this act.

46
47 2. Notwithstanding the provisions of any law or regulation to
48 the contrary, a student who participates in a three-year

1 baccalaureate degree program may utilize financial aid from any
2 State-funded financial aid programs for which the student is
3 eligible, including the Tuition Aid Grant Program and the
4 Educational Opportunity Fund, toward the costs of tuition and
5 housing for the summer sessions.

6
7 3. a. By January 1, 2021, a four-year institution of higher
8 education shall submit a written report to the Secretary of Higher
9 Education identifying the majors for which the institution has
10 determined to offer an accelerated three-year baccalaureate degree
11 program. The report shall include information regarding the
12 anticipated financial impact of the three-year programs on the
13 institution.

14 b. (1) If an institution, based on financial concerns, is not
15 prepared to offer a three-year baccalaureate degree program by the
16 beginning of the 2023-2024 academic year, the institution's report
17 to the secretary under subsection a. of this section may contain a
18 petition for an extension. An extension petition shall include
19 information demonstrating that launching a three-year degree
20 program by the 2023-2024 academic year would have a significant
21 and cost-prohibitive financial impact on the institution, and that the
22 institution has made a good faith effort to identify majors that are
23 well-suited for a three-year degree program. The extension petition
24 shall also include an implementation plan that comports with the
25 petition for an extension.

26 (2) Based on the information submitted in an extension petition
27 and on a case by case basis, the secretary shall determine within 90
28 days of receipt of the petition, whether it is reasonable for the
29 institution to offer a three-year baccalaureate degree program by the
30 2023-2024 academic year. If the secretary determines that the
31 institution needs more time before offering the program, the
32 secretary shall provide an extension in one-year increments, with a
33 maximum extension of three years.

34
35 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

36 37 38 STATEMENT

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

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

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

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

4 (3) require a student to take courses during the summer for two
5 consecutive summers, except that a student will be permitted to opt
6 out of this requirement if he can demonstrate that he is able to meet
7 the degree requirements without taking courses in one or both of the
8 summer sessions;

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

11 (5) ensure that any internship requirements for the degree
12 program are incorporated into the accelerated three-year framework.
13 In addition, a four-year institution of higher education will offer
14 support resources, such as advising and academic supports, to assist
15 students in the successful completion of an accelerated three-year
16 baccalaureate degree program.

17 The bill provides an exemption from the requirement to offer a
18 three-year degree program for: (1) four-year institutions of higher
19 education that offer three or fewer undergraduate degree programs;
20 and (2) four-year institutions of higher education that do not operate
21 a summer session. The Secretary of Higher Education, however,
22 will take appropriate action to encourage these institutions to
23 implement three-year degree programs.

24 The bill specifies that a student who participates in a three-year
25 baccalaureate degree program may utilize financial aid from any
26 State-funded financial aid programs for which the student is
27 eligible, including the Tuition Aid Grant Program and the
28 Educational Opportunity Fund, toward the costs of tuition and
29 housing for the summer sessions.

30 Under the bill, a four-year institution of higher education is
31 required to submit a report to the Secretary of Higher Education by
32 January 1, 2021. The report must identify the majors for which the
33 institution has determined to offer an accelerated three-year
34 baccalaureate degree program and include information regarding
35 the anticipated financial impact of the three-year programs on the
36 institution.

37 The bill requires four-year institutions of higher education to
38 offer three-year degree programs by the beginning of the 2023-2024
39 academic year. However, if an institution, based on financial
40 concerns, is not prepared to offer a three-year program by that date,
41 the institution's report to the secretary may contain a petition for an
42 extension. An extension petition must include information
43 demonstrating that launching a three-year program by the 2023-
44 2024 academic year would have a significant and cost-prohibitive
45 financial impact on the institution, and that the institution has made
46 a good faith effort to identify majors that are well-suited for a three-
47 year degree program. The extension petition will also include an

1 implementation plan that comports with the petition for an
2 extension. Based on the submitted information, the secretary within
3 90 days will determine, on a case by case basis, whether it is
4 reasonable for the institution to offer a three-year degree program
5 by the 2023-2024 academic year. If the secretary determines that
6 the institution needs more time, the secretary will provide an
7 extension in one-year increments with a maximum extension of
8 three years.