

SENATE, No. 791

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator SANDRA B. CUNNINGHAM

District 31 (Hudson)

Senator NELLIE POU

District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Ruiz

SYNOPSIS

Requires undergraduate students to file degree plan and requires institutions of higher education and certain proprietary institutions to develop pathway systems to graduation.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** concerning college degree completion and supplementing
2 chapter 3B of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

3

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

6

7 1. a. As used in this act:

8 “Degree plan” means a statement of the course of study
9 requirements that an undergraduate student enrolled in an institution
10 of higher education or a proprietary institution must complete to
11 graduate from the institution.

12 “Proprietary institution” means a proprietary institution whose
13 students are eligible to participate in any student financial aid
14 program administered by the Higher Education Student Assistance
15 Authority.

16 b. Except as otherwise provided in subsection c. of this section,
17 an undergraduate student enrolled in a four-year institution of
18 higher education shall file a degree plan with the institution as soon
19 as practicable, but not later than by the completion of 45 credit
20 hours of course work.

21 c. An undergraduate student who transfers to a four-year
22 institution of higher education with at least 45 credit hours of
23 course work shall file a degree plan with the institution during the
24 student’s first semester at the institution.

25 d. A degree-seeking undergraduate student enrolled in a county
26 college or proprietary institution shall file a degree plan with the
27 institution as soon as practicable, but not later than by the
28 completion of 30 credit hours of course work.

29 e. A student who changes his course of study and selects a new
30 academic major or minor, or who experiences such other change in
31 circumstance as defined by the institution, shall file a revised
32 degree plan with the institution.

33 f. A degree plan filed pursuant to this section shall:

34 (1) be developed in consultation with an appropriate academic
35 official in the student’s degree program, or if an appropriate
36 academic official is not available in the student’s degree program,
37 an appropriate academic official at the institution; and

38 (2) follow a pathway to a degree as required pursuant to section
39 2 of this act.

40

41 2. a. An institution of higher education or a proprietary
42 institution shall:

43 (1) develop a pathway system whereby the institution
44 establishes graduation progress benchmarks for each academic
45 major and for the general education program for students who have
46 not declared a major;

47 (2) require the pathway for each first-time degree-seeking
48 student to include credit-bearing mathematics and English courses

1 that are applicable towards degree requirements in the first 24 credit
2 hours of course work; and

3 (3) require the pathway for each degree-seeking student enrolled
4 in a remedial course in mathematics, reading, or English to include
5 the credit-bearing course in mathematics, reading, or English
6 concurrent with or in the semester immediately following
7 completion of the remedial course.

8 b. (1) The graduation progress benchmarks established
9 pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection a. of this section shall
10 specify the credit and course criteria that indicate satisfactory
11 progress toward a degree.

12 (2) The academic departments of an institution of higher
13 education or a proprietary institution shall establish schedules for
14 regular periodic reviews of student progress.

15 (3) A student who is in danger of falling behind the graduation
16 progress benchmarks shall be required to consult with an
17 appropriate academic official prior to course registration.

18

19 3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first be
20 applicable to the first class of students entering a public institution
21 of higher education following the effective date of this act.

22

23

24 STATEMENT

25

26 This bill requires undergraduate students enrolled in four-year
27 institutions of higher education to file a degree plan with the
28 institution. An undergraduate student enrolled in a four-year
29 institution would be required to file a degree plan as soon as
30 practicable, but not later than by the completion of 45 credit hours
31 of course work. An undergraduate student who transfers to a four-
32 year institution with at least 45 credit hours of course work would
33 be required to file a degree plan during the student's first semester
34 at the institution.

35 The bill requires degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled
36 in county colleges or proprietary institutions to file a degree plan as
37 soon as practicable, but not later than by the completion of 30 credit
38 hours of course work.

39 The bill defines "degree plan" as a statement of the course of
40 study requirements that an undergraduate student enrolled in an
41 institution of higher education or a proprietary institution must
42 complete in order to graduate. A student's degree plan must be
43 developed in consultation with an appropriate academic official in
44 the student's degree program, or if such official is not available,
45 with an appropriate academic official at the institution. The degree
46 plan must follow a pathway to a degree.

47 The bill defines a "proprietary institution" as a proprietary
48 institution whose students are eligible to participate in any student

1 financial aid program administered by the Higher Education Student
2 Assistance Authority.

3 In addition, the bill requires institutions of higher education and
4 proprietary institutions to develop pathway systems that establish
5 graduation progress benchmarks for each academic major and for
6 the general education program for students who have not declared a
7 major. The pathway for each first-time degree-seeking student must
8 include credit-bearing mathematics and English courses that are
9 applicable towards degree requirements in the first 24 credit hours
10 of course work. The pathway for each degree-seeking student
11 enrolled in a remedial course in mathematics, reading, or English
12 must include the credit-bearing course in that subject concurrent
13 with or in the semester immediately following completion of the
14 remedial course.

15 Under the bill, the graduation progress benchmarks established
16 by a public institution of higher education must specify the credit
17 and course criteria that indicate satisfactory progress toward a
18 degree. Academic departments at the institution must establish
19 schedules for periodic reviews of student progress, and students
20 who are in danger of falling behind the graduation progress
21 benchmarks will be required to consult with an appropriate
22 academic official prior to course registration.