

## CHAPTER 93

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

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

C.18A:62-56 Number of credits required for baccalaureate degree; exceptions.

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

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

- (1) the degree program is defined as a five-year degree program;
- (2) professional accreditation requires a greater number of credit hours or requires course work that cannot be completed in 120 credits; or
- (3) certification requirements result in a need for credit hours in excess of 120.

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

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

C.18A:62-57 Associate degree, number of credits required; exceptions.

2. a. Notwithstanding the provisions of any section of law to the contrary and except as otherwise provided pursuant to subsection b. of this section, beginning with students who initially enroll in an associate degree program in the fall semester of 2019, the standard number of credit hours required for the award of an associate degree from a county college is 60 credit hours.

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

- (1) the degree program is defined as more than a two-year degree program;
- (2) professional accreditation requires a greater number of credit hours or requires course work that cannot be completed in 60 credits; or
- (3) certification requirements result in a need for credit hours in excess of 60.

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

(2) Within 180 days of the effective date of this act, a county college that uses a nontraditional course credit system shall submit a written request to the secretary for permission to comply with the credit hour limit in accordance with the standards established by the secretary pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection. The request shall provide

information on why the county college is not able to comply with the requirements of subsection a. of this section and shall include such other information as the secretary deems necessary. Within 60 days of the submission of the request, the secretary shall advise the county college on whether it may meet the credit hour limit in accordance with the standards established by the secretary.

C.18A:62-58 Approval of additional exceptions.

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

C.18A:62-59 Report.

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

5. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved August 17, 2018.