

DEGREE CREDIT CAPS

A Report Prepared for

Senate Education Committee
and
House Higher Education and Workforce
Development, Finance and Policy Division

October 1, 2009

For Review by the
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities
Board of Trustees & Leadership Council
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Note to readers

Readers who are already familiar with the background, requirements, processes and current status of degrees regarding the credit cap legislation can move directly to last section of this report: Credit Length Waiver Applications (page 15).

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Session laws in 2007, 2008 and 2009 affect the credit length of selected degree programs. Session law in 2007¹ directs the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees to set the maximum number of semester credits required for a baccalaureate degree at 120 credits, and for an associate degree at 60 credits. The law permits the Board of Trustees to grant waivers for specific degree programs in which industry or professional accreditation standards require a greater number of credits. In January 2009 the Board of Trustees adopted policy and the Chancellor approved procedure to guide the system's response to this legislation.

Legislation in 2008, below, requires the Board of Trustees to annually report to the house and senate higher education committees regarding waivers that have been requested and granted.

MAXIMUM CREDIT FOR GRADUATION; WAIVER REPORTING.

The board must annually by October 1 report to the chairs of the house of representatives and senate committees with primary jurisdiction over higher education policy on the board's current policy setting the maximum number of semester credits required for a baccalaureate and an associate of arts degree at 120 and 60 semester credits or their equivalent, respectively, as required by Laws 2007, chapter 144, article 1, section 4, subdivision 3, paragraph (b). The report must specifically identify requests in the previous academic year for waivers from the policy and the requests granted. The specific identification must include, among other things, the program and the campus for which a request was made and for which a waiver was granted.

EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective January 1, 2009.²

Session law in 2009, below, modifies the 2007 legislation by (a) directing that, until July 2, 2012, associate of applied science degree programs be exempt from the 60 credit length limit set by Board of Trustees policy and (b) permitting additional waiver review criteria for emerging or innovative programs.

MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES DEGREE REQUIREMENTS.

Until July 2, 2012, an associate of applied science degree offered by a college in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system is exempt from the 60-semester credit length limit for an associate degree specified in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policy number 3.36, part 3, subpart C. The chancellor may consider criteria for waiving the credit length limits under this board policy for emerging or innovative programs. By January 2, 2012, the Minnesota State College Faculty and the Minnesota State College Student Association must present a joint report to the house of representatives and senate committees with jurisdiction over higher education policy on process for reviewing the credit requirements for an associate of applied science degree.

EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective the day following final enactment and applies to associate of applied science degrees whether first offered before, on, or after that date.³

¹ Minnesota Session Laws 2007 Chapter 144, article 1, section 4, subdivision 3, paragraph (b)

² Minnesota Statute, 136F.301

³ Minnesota Session Laws 2009, Chapter 95, article 2, section 44

BACKGROUND

Prior to January 2009, chancellor's procedure set academic program credit lengths with the following limits: associate degrees could range from 60 to 64 credits except for associate in applied science degrees that could be up to 72 credits and baccalaureate degrees could range from 120 to 128 credits. The procedures allowed individual academic programs to exceed these limits when criteria were met. (There was no expectation that similar programs at different colleges and universities would adopt a standard credit length.)

The motivation to set lower credit length limits for associate and baccalaureate degrees did not emanate from an academic policy initiative. Rather, the impetus came from student concern about debt load variations based on their observation that credit lengths of seemingly similar programs varied across colleges and universities.

Legislation, cited above, resulted in revised Board of Trustees policy and Chancellor's procedure. These revisions, which considered recommendations from a statewide taskforce, were approved in January 2009.

Statewide Taskforce

A taskforce on Degree Credit Caps was established in the fall of 2007 by the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, with representatives from the Academic and Student Affairs Leadership Council, college and university academic administrators, Inter Faculty Organization (IFO), Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF), Minnesota State College Student Association (MSCSA), Minnesota State University Student Association (MSUSA), Administrative and Service Faculty (ASF, formerly MSUAASF), and the Office of the Chancellor.

The taskforce charge was to recommend policy and procedure related to statutory requirements for credit limitations on associate and baccalaureate degree programs within the system. The final report included recommendations on (1) applicability to degree program categories, (2) program waiver processes, (3) program-length waiver criteria for all awards, (4) timelines, and (5) policy language. The [full report](#)⁴ is available on the Web.

Examples from Other States

Several other states have implemented credit length caps: Florida, Georgia, Ohio, Texas and Wisconsin. The CUNY system in New York and the California State University System have also implemented policies addressing credit length limits and degree program comparability.

In 1995 the state of Florida undertook a national survey of 75 universities regarding common practices in baccalaureate programs.⁵ The study found that programs clustered in three groups: disciplines with low credit hour requirements, 120-124 credits; disciplines of moderate length, 124-126; and disciplines at 128 credits and

⁴ <http://www.academicaffairs.mnscu.edu/academicprograms/index.html>

⁵ Hours to Graduation: A National Survey of Credit Hours Required for Baccalaureate Degrees, 1995.

a few exceeding 128. Florida subsequently reduced 506 of 614 baccalaureate programs to 120 credit hours.

A California State University system report noted that “. . . three-fourths of the programs now require 120 total semester units. About 85% have lowered their total unit requirement.” At the College of DuPage (the largest community college in Illinois), most associate of applied science programs are 64 credits (consistent with the Illinois Community College System policy). Florida’s community college system has established a formal list of approved program credit lengths. Programs may not exceed the approved limits.

Revenues and Expenditures

Reducing the credit length of programs affects revenues and expenditures of colleges and universities. The impact on revenue is easier to estimate than it is for expenditures.

Revenue from student tuition, which accounts for approximately half of system revenue, will decline in proportion to the full year equivalent student enrollment eliminated as a result of course credits being dropped from academic programs. Some academic programs will be granted a waiver to exceed the 60 or 120 credit length limits, which would lessen revenue losses.

Colleges and universities have several options for reducing expenditures. Expenditures may be reduced when courses or course-sections in the major are no longer offered. Workloads may be adjusted and reductions in other budget categories may occur. Expenditures on new courses, sections or programs may lessen the impact of reduced tuition revenue.

Timeframe

Listed below are key dates and activities related to system response for the degree credit cap legislation. Overall, development and implementation processes will take about three and one-half years, that is, from January 2009 when policy and procedure were approved until July 2012. By the fall of 2012, degree programs should be reduced to 60 or 120 credits or be granted a waiver for a longer credit length.

Date	Activity
2007	Session law on degree credit caps.
2008 – March	Taskforce report completed
2008	Statute requires annual reporting
2008 – Nov	Proposed policy and procedure: First reading November 2008
2009 – Jan	Approved policy and procedure: Second reading January 2009
2009 – Jun	Deadline for notice of intent to file a waiver application
2009 – Oct	First report to the legislature
2009 to 2011	Development and submission of waiver applications
2011 – Dec	Waiver submission deadline
2012 – July	Implementation

Status of Academic Programs⁶

As of July 17, 2009, as shown in Table 1 below, a total of 1,103 academic programs lead to an associate⁷ or baccalaureate degree. Of these programs, 310 (28 percent) have a length of 60 or 120 credits and 793 (72 percent) exceed these limits. Of the 793 degree programs above the legislated credit length limit, 294 are offered by colleges and 499 are offered by universities.

Table 1: Count of programs at and over credit limits

	At limit	Over limit	Total
COLLEGES			
Associate	101	293	394
Bachelors ⁸	0	1	1
College subtotal	101	294	395
UNIVERSITIES			
Associate	3	14	17
Bachelors	206	485	691
University subtotal	209	499	708
Associate Total	104	307	411
Bachelors Total	206	486	692
Grand Total	310	793	1,103

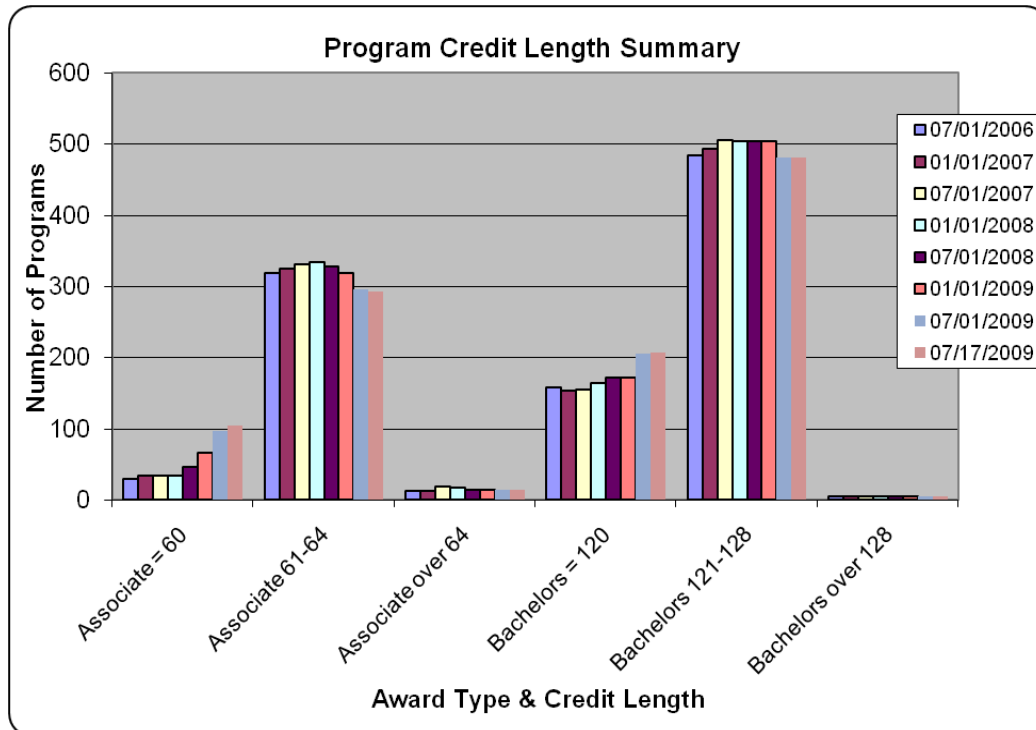
Trend data indicate that program credit lengths are being reduced. Table 2, below, summarizes the number of programs by type of award and credit length over time. From January 2008 until July 17, 2009 the number of programs over 60 credits has declined 13 percent from 351 to 307 associate degree programs (a decrease of 44 programs) and for programs over 120 credits, has decreased 5 percent from 509 to 486 baccalaureate degree programs (a decrease of 23 programs).

⁶ Unless otherwise noted, degree programs are counted at each location where they are offered to maintain consistency with standard practice. This method overstates the number of programs that may need to change their credit length at a particular college or university because a program offered by a multi-campus college will have a consistent credit length at all locations where it is offered.

⁷ Associate degrees include Associate in Arts, Associate in Science and Associate in Fine Arts. Because 2009 legislation exempts associate of applied science degree programs from credit length caps, these programs are excluded from analyses presented in this report.

⁸ Authorized by legislation, one baccalaureate degree program in teacher education has been approved for Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College but has not enrolled students.

Table 2: Count of Programs by Award Type and Credit Length



For colleges, Table 4 shows that the percent of associate degree programs above 60 credits varies from zero to 100 percent. Of the 30 colleges, five have fewer than half of their programs over 60 credits. Fifteen colleges have between 50 and 90 percent of their programs over 60 credits. And, 10 colleges have more than 90 percent of their programs over 60 credits.

Table 4: Associate Degree Program Credit Lengths

College	Associate Degrees (AS, AFA, AA)		
	Equal to 60 credits	Over 60 credits	Percent over 60 credits
Alexandria	0	9	100%
Anoka	0	0	NA
Anoka Ramsey	10	30	75%
Century	0	13	100%
Central Lakes	0	7	100%
Dakota County	3	5	63%
Fond du Lac	6	8	57%
Hibbing	4	6	60%
Hennepin	0	2	100%
Itasca	1	8	89%
Inver Hills	15	6	29%
Lake Superior	5	8	62%
Minneapolis	6	18	75%

Table 4: Associate Degree Program Credit Lengths

College	Associate Degrees (AS, AFA, AA)		
	Equal to 60 credits	Over 60 credits	Percent over 60 credits
Mesabi Range	1	4	80%
Minnesota State College, Southeast Technical	4	3	43%
Minnesota State Community and Technical College	6	18	75%
Minnesota West	0	22	100%
Northland	1	11	92%
North Hennepin	5	15	75%
Normandale	4	10	71%
Northwest – Bemidji	0	2	100%
Pine	1	6	86%
Ridgewater	0	17	100%
Riverland	0	16	100%
Rochester	14	21	60%
Rainy River	4	0	0%
South Central	4	7	64%
Saint Cloud	2	1	33%
St. Paul	4	8	67%
Vermilion	1	12	92%
TOTAL	101	293	74%

Variation exists among universities for the percent of baccalaureate degrees that exceed 120 credits. As shown in Table 5, Metropolitan State University (at 18 percent) and Saint Cloud State University (at 20 percent) have the lowest percent of baccalaureate degrees over 120 credits. Minnesota State University Moorhead has 58 percent of its baccalaureate degree programs above 120 credits. Nearly all baccalaureate degree programs at the remaining four universities are above 120 credits.

Table 5: Baccalaureate Degrees

University	Equal to 120 credits	Over 120 credits	Percent over 120 credits
Bemidji State University	0	93	100%
Metropolitan State University	55	12	18%
Minnesota State University, Mankato	3	125	98%
Minnesota State University Moorhead	35	48	58%
Saint Cloud State University	112	28	20%
Southwest State University	1	101	99%
Winona State University	0	78	100%
TOTAL	206	485	70%

Program Credit Length Consistency

Program credit lengths for similar programs vary across colleges and universities because previous procedure allowed program credit lengths to fall within ranges. For example, an associate in science degree, which is designed to transfer, was limited to 60 to 64 credits. Bachelor degrees were permitted to range from 120 to 128 credits.

Tables 6 through 8 illustrate examples of variation in program credit lengths in three program areas: nursing, business administration and management, and fine/studio arts.

Tables 6 – 8: Program Credit Lengths for Selected Programs

Award	Credits	No. of Programs
AS	60	1
	61	1
	63	1
	64	25
	65	2
	73	6
BS	120	3
	126	1
	128	5

Award	Credits	No. of Programs
AS	60	4
	61	1
	64	18
	120	13
BS	124	1
	128	24

Award	Credits	No. of Programs
AFA	60	6
	61	1
	63	1
	64	2
BFA	120	1
	128	1

The waiver process includes faculty review of program learning outcomes in determining if some or all related programs offered by two or more colleges/universities should have a common credit length.

When program learning outcomes are different, credit lengths may vary within a broad program area. For example, it may be that two programs that appear similar, such as Applied Technology: Management and General Business Management may be sufficiently different from each other to justify different credit lengths.

CREDIT LENGTH WAIVERS

Program credit lengths may exceed limits set in procedure only with approval of the Office of Chancellor. Revised policy 3.36 and chancellor's procedures 3.36.1, approved in January of 2009, are being implemented.

Applications for program credit length waivers are initiated on college and university campuses using their agreed upon curriculum review processes. After systemwide review, waiver applications are confirmed by colleges and universities and then submitted to the office of the chancellor.

Guidelines have been developed to assist with the preparation of a waiver request.

Waiver Criteria

Credit length waivers may be granted when determined necessary to ensure that the degree provided meets industry or professional standards. Program advisory committee recommendations that support the standards may be submitted with the waiver request. Proposed waiver criteria include:

1. Industry standards
 - a. National or international program certification
 - b. National or international standards, including skill standards
 - c. Standards recommended by a primary employer or from multiple employers within a program service area
2. Professional standards
 - a. National specialized program accreditation
 - b. State licensure requirements
 - c. National practices or standards

Waiver Rationale and Evidence

Colleges and universities must provide supportive documentation which demonstrates that the proposed program credit length is justified by externally established standards or guidelines. Documentation may include specific credit length requirements established by accrediting or certification bodies, evidence of state licensure requirements, research literature which supports industry skill standards or national practices, and letters of support from employers attesting to the need for specific skills requiring longer programs.

Program Analysis Guidelines

An in-depth program analysis is required for all programs seeking a waiver request, except when industry or professional standards set a specific minimum program credit length above 60/120 and the program meets those standards or is designed to be consistent with those standards.

A detailed program analysis must discuss how the program meets industry or professional standards and how it compares in credit length to similar programs within the system.

Programs determined to be similar will have the same program credit length. Program similarity is based on the extent to which there are similar program learning outcomes. Curriculum design and course requirements can be different.

Articulation Agreements

Where applicable, articulation agreements must be revised and submitted as part of the waiver request. Colleges and universities complete an [articulation agreement table](#)⁹ that is reviewed to confirm that all courses in the associate degree program transfer and count toward completion of a specific baccalaureate degree program.

⁹ <http://www.academicaffairs.mnscu.edu/academicprograms/>

Waiver Process

The process for requesting a waiver to exceed approved credit lengths is described below. The process, which begins on college and university campuses and follows the institution's academic curriculum approval process, has six steps. The quick steps are followed by a flowchart that graphically displays this six step sequence.

STEP 1. Decide to reduce program credit length OR seek a waiver

Faculty members initiate the decision-making through their college or university academic curriculum approval process.

A decision is made to A) reduce program credit lengths to 60 or 120 credits; or B) submit a Notice of Intent to file a waiver application.

All forms and instructions can be found at the [Academic Programs](#) website¹⁰.

STEP 2. Complete an appropriate application for each degree program

A. Reduce to 60/120 Credits. If the college or university decides to reduce credit lengths to 60 or 120 credits, complete the REDESIGN: Change Program and/or Emphasis Credit Length form and submit it to the Office of the Chancellor by December 31, 2011. No further action will be necessary unless the program becomes involved in a statewide group waiver application. The Office of the Chancellor will use the [Degree Credit Caps](#)¹¹ Web site to inform colleges and universities of programs that have been reduced to 60 or 120 credits.

— Or —

B. Seek a Waiver. Complete a Notice of Intent: 60/120 Credit Waiver form and submit electronically (subject: WAIVER INTENT) to Margie.takash@so.mnscu.edu by June 30, 2009. The Office of the Chancellor will post the Notice of Intent to the Waiver Listserv as an information item. Notices of Intent will be used for statewide planning.

STEP 3. Assess for Similarity and Complete a Waiver Application

Prior to completing any waiver application, colleges and universities assess whether their program is similar to other programs in the state. Colleges and universities can begin the process of comparing programs by reviewing the system [program inventory](#)¹² and finding other programs that are grouped in the same CIP code¹³. A comparison of catalog descriptions of program requirements may also be helpful. Other comparisons might include data from national or state studies.

A. Single Waiver Application. If the program does not appear to be similar to other programs, consult with the Office of the Chancellor and then, if appropriate, complete the SINGLE: 60/120 CREDIT WAIVER application and submit it electronically (subject: SINGLE WAIVER) to Margie.takash@so.mnscu.edu by December 31, 2009. The Office of the Chancellor determines if a single application is appropriate or if the program should be considered as part of a group application.

¹⁰ <http://www.academicaffairs.mnscu.edu/academicprograms/index.html>

¹¹ <http://www.programreview.project.mnscu.edu>

¹² <http://www.programreview.project.mnscu.edu>

¹³ CIP is the acronym for the national Classification of Instructional Programs

- B. Group Waiver Application. If similarity is likely, faculty should begin communicating with faculty at other institutions. Consult with the Office of the Chancellor and then, if appropriate, complete the GROUP: 60/120 CREDIT WAIVER application and submit it electronically (subject: GROUP WAIVER) to Margie.takash@so.mnscu.edu by December 31, 2011. The Office of the Chancellor determines if the group application is appropriate.

STEP 4. Completed applications posted to listserv for comment

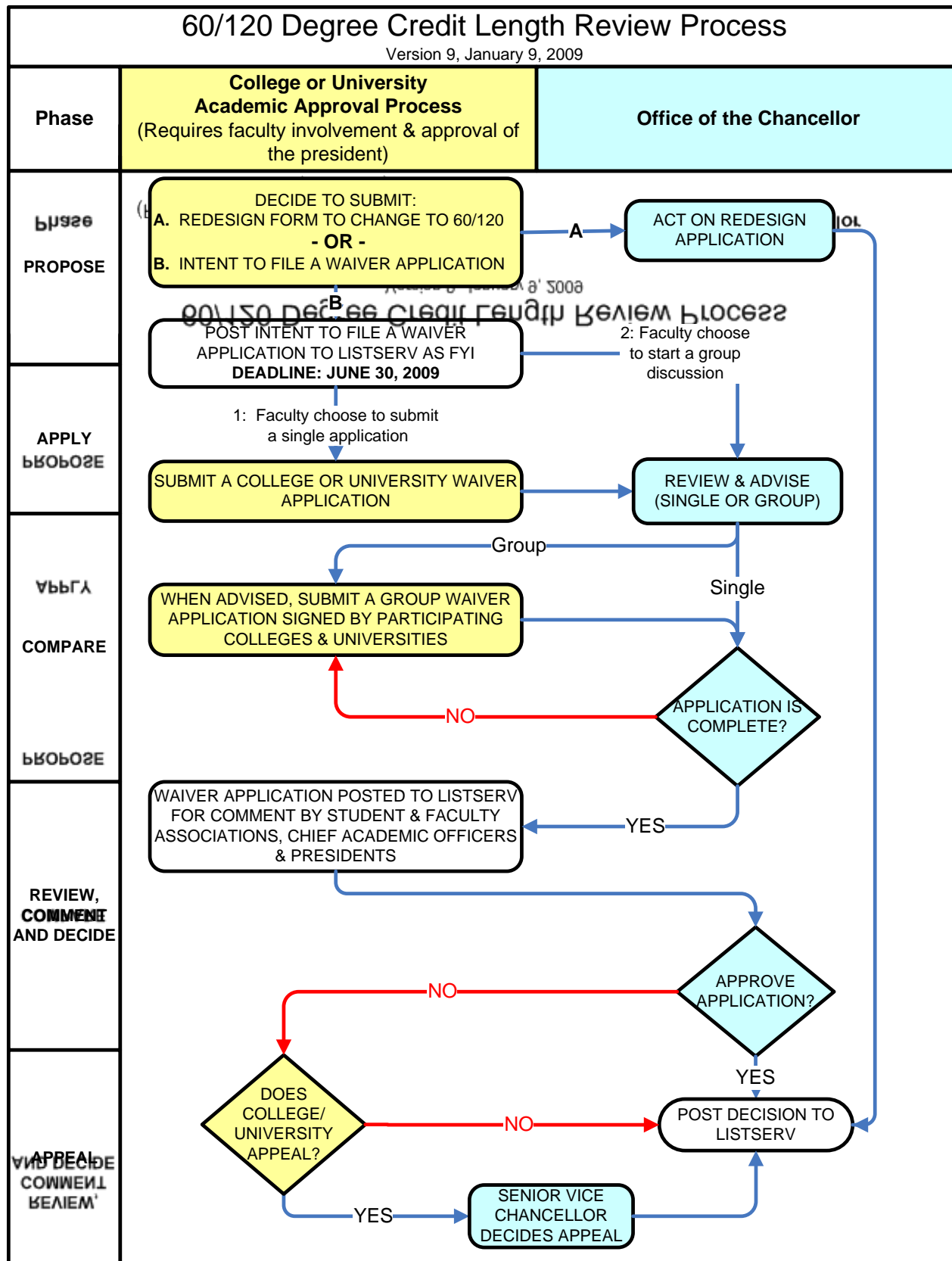
Applications will be posted to the Waiver Listserv for 30 business days. Members of the listserv (Presidents, Chief Academic Officers, Student and Faculty Associations) will have an opportunity to review the application and submit comments to the listserv. Comments posted to the listserv, including applicants' responses, will be considered by the Office of the Chancellor when reviewing the application.

STEP 5. Accept or reject waiver application

Decisions will be posted to the listserv. Program credit length will be changed in the official program inventory for single and group waiver applications that have been approved.

STEP 6. Appeal

Waiver requests that are not approved may be appealed to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs. Submit appeals in writing within 30 business days to Margie.takash@so.mnscu.edu.



Additional Resources

Two Web sites, mentioned above, provide additional information. The [degree credit caps](#)¹⁴ Web site contains supporting documents including an overview of the waiver process, contact information, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), links to forms and instructions, support materials and the records of the Task Force on Degree Credit Caps 2007-2008. The [academic programs](#)¹⁵ Web site contains forms and instructions and staff contacts.

¹⁴ <http://www.programreview.project.mnscu.edu/>

¹⁵ <http://www.academicaffairs.mnscu.edu/academicprograms/index.html>

CREDIT LENGTH WAIVER APPLICATIONS

This section of the report describes applications that have been received in the previous academic year (FY2009) and actions that have been taken on these applications.

As described in the process above, colleges and universities were directed to submit a Notice of Intent to Seek a Waiver application by June 30, 2009. While there was no requirement for colleges and universities to submit a single- or group-waiver application during FY2009, a few were received. Some of these single and group applications, reported here as Notices of Intent, may proceed to the next step of the review process.

Having reviewed their degree programs, colleges and universities decided to either (a) reduce programs to the 60/120 credit limit or (b) submit a Notice of Intent to Seek a Waiver application. Due to a lack of time or other reasons, it is possible that decisions to reduce credits to the 60/120 credit limits or submit a waiver application for some programs have not yet been made. Single or group waiver applications are due by December 2011.

As of June 30, 2009 a total of 163 Notices of Intent to Seek a Waiver were submitted to the Office of the Chancellor. Table 9 indicates the number of waiver applications filed by program area. Most of the Notices of Intent were concentrated in eight program areas. Appendix A lists these programs by college/university.

A Notice of Intent to Seek a Waiver was not submitted for an additional 396 programs that are similar to these 163 programs. Collectively, the 163 and the 396 programs (a total of 559 programs) will be reviewed so that a standard credit length can be determined where programs are considered to be similar.

Program Area	Number
1. Business Administration & Management	5
2. Engineering (various disciplines)	15
3. Filmmaking & Screenwriting	4
4. Law Enforcement	6
5. Medical Technology/Clinical Lab Science	5
6. Music	7
7. Nursing	22
8. Teaching (various disciplines)	62
9. Other program areas (fewer than four related programs per area)	37
Total	163

¹⁶ NOTE: Table 1, at the beginning of this report, indicated that there were 793 degree programs that exceeded credit length limits and could potentially apply for a credit length waiver. Following standard practice, this number of programs was derived by counting programs in all locations where they are offered. For purposes of waiver applications, however, programs are counted only once per college/university. This latter approach to counting programs is used because a college/university will be expected to set a single credit length for any program offered at multiple locations.

Plans for FY2010

Beginning in FY2010, colleges and universities will develop a single- or group-waiver application for programs that have submitted a Notice of Intent to Seek a Waiver. Single-waiver applications are appropriate for programs that are the only one of its kind within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. Group-waiver applications are appropriate when two or more colleges and universities offer a program with similar learning outcomes.

APPENDIX A: NOTICES OF INTENT (as of June 30, 2009)

<i>Notices of Intent to Seek a Waiver Application</i>						
	<i>ID</i>	<i>CIP</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Award</i>	<i>Current Credits</i>	<i>Proposed Credits</i>
<i>Alexandria Technical College</i>						
1	14938	51.160100	Nursing	AS	64	64
<i>Anoka-Ramsey Community College</i>						
2	14890	50.090100	Music	AFA	64	68
3	14939	51.160100	Nursing	AS	64	64
<i>Bemidji State University</i>						
4	15796	03.010300	Environmental Studies	BS	128	127
5	15839	13.130200	Art Education	BS	128	130
6	15846	13.130500	English Education	BS	128	129
7	15857	13.130900	Technology Education	BS	128	128
8	16169	13.131200	Music Education	BS	132	136
9	15874	13.131600	Science Education	BS	128	128
10	15881	13.131800	Social Studies Education	BS	128	128
11	16984	15.000000	Engineering Technology	BS	128	137
12	16115	51.100500	Clinical Laboratory Science	BS	128	134
<i>Central Lakes College</i>						
13	14640	14.010100	Engineering	AS	64	64
14	14929	51.160100	Nursing	AS	65	65
<i>Century College, A Community and Technical College</i>						
15	14763	43.010700	Law Enforcement	AS	64	64
16	16992	50.090100	Music	AFA	64	64
17	14942	51.160100	Nursing	AS	64	64
<i>Dakota County Technical College</i>						
18	14885	50.060500	Photography	AS	64	64
<i>Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College</i>						
19	14424	51.160100	Nursing	AS	61	74
20	15027	52.080100	Business/Financial Services	AS	64	64
<i>Hibbing Community College, A Technical and Community College</i>						
21	14928	51.160100	Nursing	AS	64	64
<i>Inver Hills Community College</i>						
22	14764	43.010700	Law Enforcement	AS	64	64
23	14920	51.090400	Emergency Health Services	AS	64	72
24	14937	51.160100	Nursing	AS	64	64
<i>Itasca Community College</i>						
25	14642	14.010100	Engineering	AS	64	64
<i>Lake Superior College</i>						
26	14721	22.030200	Paralegal Studies	AS	64	64
27	15553	51.160100	Nursing	AS	64	64
<i>Metropolitan State University</i>						
28	15762	09.090300	Advertising and Business Management	BAS	124	124
29	15787	13.120200	Urban Elementary Education	BS	126	126
30	15772	52.020101	Organizational Administration	BAS	124	124
31	15774	52.020500	Industrial Management	BAS	124	124
32	15777	52.090100	Hospitality Management	BAS	124	124
33	15779	52.110100	International Commerce	BAS	124	124
34	15785	52.120600	Information Assurance	BAS	125	124
35	15781	52.180100	Sales Management	BAS	124	124

Notices of Intent to Seek a Waiver Application

	<i>ID</i>	<i>CIP</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Award</i>	<i>Current Credits</i>	<i>Proposed Credits</i>
<i>Minneapolis Community and Technical College</i>						
36	14562	10.020300	Sound Arts	AS	64	64
37	14739	26.120100	Biotechnology	AS	64	64
38	14769	43.010702	Law Enforcement	AS	64	64
39	14882	50.050400	Screenwriting	AS	64	64
40	17015	50.060213	Directing and Producing	AS	64	64
41	17016	50.060214	Editing and Post-Production	AS	64	64
42	17017	50.060215	Cinematography	AS	64	64
43	15557	51.160100	Nursing	AS	73	73
<i>Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical</i>						
44	14936	51.160100	Nursing	AS	64	64
<i>Minnesota State Community and Technical College</i>						
45	14891	50.090100	Music	AFA	64	68
46	14923	51.100400	Medical Laboratory Technology	AS	64	64
47	14932	51.160100	Nursing	AS	64	64
<i>Minnesota State University Moorhead</i>						
48	15823	13.100100	Special Education	BS	128	128
49	15827	13.120200	Elementary Education	BS	128	128
50	15837	13.120900	Early Childhood Teacher Education	BS	128	128
51	15841	13.130200	Art Teacher Education	BS	128	128
52	15847	13.130500	English Teacher Education	BS	128	128
53	15865	13.131200	Music Teacher Education	BS	128	132
54	15883	13.131800	Social Studies Teacher Education	BS	128	128
55	15888	13.132200	Life Science Teacher Education	BS	128	128
56	15912	13.133000	Spanish Teacher Education	BS	128	128
57	16112	51.091300	Athletic Training	BS	128	128
58	16116	51.100500	Medical Technology	BS	128	128
<i>Minnesota State University, Mankato</i>						
59	15813	11.010100	Information Systems	BS	128	128
60	15816	11.010105	Computer and Information Technology	BAS	128	128
61	15817	11.010300	Information Technology	BS	128	128
62	15820	11.070100	Computer Science	BS	128	128
63	15826	13.100600	Special Education: Developmental Cognitive Disabilities	BS	128	128
64	15828	13.120200	Elementary Education	BS	128	128
65	15835	13.120900	Early Childhood Education	BS	128	128
66	15920	14.080100	Civil Engineering	BSCE	128	128
67	15922	14.090100	Computer Engineering	BSEC	128	128
68	17005	14.090300	Software Engineering	BS	128	128
69	15923	14.100100	Electrical Engineering	BSEL	128	128
70	15925	14.190100	Mechanical Engineering	BSME	128	128
71	15927	15.030300	Electronic Engineering Technology	BS	128	128
72	15933	15.061300	Manufacturing Engineering Technology	BS	128	128
73	15934	15.080300	Automotive Engineering Technology	BS	128	128
74	15935	15.120100	Computer Engineering Technology	BS	128	128
75	15978	26.120100	Biotechnology	BS	128	128
76	16096	50.090100	Music	BA	128	136
77	16119	51.100501	Clinical Lab Sciences/Medical Technology	BS	128	122
<i>Minnesota West Community and Technical College</i>						
78	14523	01.000000	Agriculture	AS	64	64
79	14527	01.010200	Agriculture Business	AS	64	64
80	14531	01.030100	Agriculture Production Management	AS	64	64
81	14542	01.110200	Plant Science, GIS/GPS	AS	64	64
82	14598	11.080100	Web Development	AS	64	64
83	14615	11.090101	Networking Specialist	AS	64	64
84	14679	15.120200	Computer Applied Technology	AS	64	64
85	17107	24.010100	Liberal Arts and Sciences	AA	64	64

Notices of Intent to Seek a Waiver Application

	<i>ID</i>	<i>CIP</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Award</i>	<i>Current Credits</i>	<i>Proposed Credits</i>
86	14765	43.010700	Law Enforcement	AS	64	75
87	14783	44.000000	Human Services	AS	64	64
88	15554	51.160100	Nursing	AS	73	64
89	14949	52.010100	Business	AS	64	64
90	14981	52.020103	Business Management	AS	64	64
91	14983	52.020104	Business Management - Computer	AS	64	64
<i>Normandale Community College</i>						
92	14892	50.090100	Music	AFA	64	64
93	15596	51.060200	Dental Hygiene	AS	90	90
94	14504	51.160100	Nursing	AS	63	64
<i>North Hennepin Community College</i>						
95	14771	43.010702	Law Enforcement	AS	64	64
96	14876	50.040900	Graphic Design	AS	64	64
97	14933	51.160100	Nursing	AS	64	64
<i>Northland Community and Technical College</i>						
98	14761	43.010400	Criminal Justice	AS	64	64
99	14935	51.160100	Nursing	AS	64	64
<i>Northwest Technical College - Bemidji</i>						
100	14941	51.160100	Nursing	AS	64	64
<i>Pine Technical College</i>						
101	16970	51.160100	Nursing	AS	60	64
102	17032	51.169902	Health Sciences	AS	64	64
103	14520	52.120100	Management Information Systems	AS	63	63
<i>Ridgewater College, A Community and Technical College</i>						
104	14630	13.121000	Early Childhood Education	AS	64	64
105	14921	51.091100	Radiologic Technology	AS	64	85
106	15556	51.160100	Nursing	AS	73	73
<i>Riverland Community College, A Technical & Community College</i>						
107	17115	24.010100	Liberal Arts and Sciences	AA	64	64
108	14756	43.010200	Criminal Justice - Corrections	AS	64	64
109	14767	43.010702	Criminal Justice - Law Enforcement	AS	64	64
110	14880	50.050100	Theatre	AFA	64	66
111	14886	50.070100	Art	AFA	64	64
112	14893	50.090100	Music	AFA	64	68
113	15517	51.160100	Nursing	AS	64	73
114	14950	52.010100	Business	AS	64	64
<i>South Central College</i>						
115	15555	51.160100	Nursing	AS	73	73
<i>Southwest Minnesota State University</i>						
116	15866	13.131200	Music Teacher Education	BS	128	136
<i>St. Cloud State University</i>						
117	15831	13.120200	Elementary/K-8 Education	BS	128	128
118	15840	13.130200	Art Education	BS	128	128
119	15789	13.130500	Communication Arts and Literature	BS	127	127
120	15852	13.130700	Health Education	BS	128	124
121	15858	13.130901	Technology Education	BS	128	128
122	15863	13.131100	Mathematics Teaching	BS	128	128
123	15867	13.131200	Music Teaching	BS	128	128
124	15782	13.131400	Physical Education	BS	125	125
125	15880	13.131613	Earth Sciences	BS	128	128
126	17117	13.131614	Earth and Space Science Education Grades 9-12	BS	128	128
127	15882	13.131800	Social Studies Education	BS	128	128
128	15887	13.132200	Life Science/General Science Education	BS	128	128

Notices of Intent to Seek a Waiver Application

	<i>ID</i>	<i>CIP</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Award</i>	<i>Current Credits</i>	<i>Proposed Credits</i>
			Grades 5-12			
129	16973	13.132201	Life Science Education Grades 9-12	BS	128	128
130	15895	13.132300	Chemistry/General Scienc Education Grades 5-12	BS	128	128
131	16974	13.132301	Chemistry Education Grades 9-12	BS	128	128
132	15898	13.132500	French	BS	128	128
133	15902	13.132600	German	BS	128	128
134	15907	13.132900	Physics/General Science Education Grades 5-12	BS	128	128
135	16975	13.132901	Physics Education Grades 9-12	BS	128	128
136	15911	13.133000	Spanish	BS	128	128
137	15921	14.090100	Computer Engineering	BS	128	128
138	15790	14.100100	Electrical Engineering	BS	127	127
139	15791	14.190100	Mechanical Engineering	BS	127	127
140	15926	14.360100	Manufacturing Engineering	BS	128	128
141	15770	50.090301	Music	B.Mus	124	124
142	15793	51.160100	Nursing	BS	126	122
<i>St. Cloud Technical College</i>						
143	14483	19.070805	Child and Adult Care and Education	AS	63	63
<i>Winona State University</i>						
144	15825	13.100100	Special Education	BT	128	128
145	15832	13.120200	Elementary Education (Teaching)	BT	128	128
146	15844	13.130200	Art (Teaching)	BT	128	128
147	15845	13.130300	Business Education	BT	128	128
148	15849	13.130500	Communication Arts and Literature (Teaching)	BT	128	128
149	15855	13.130700	School and Community Health	BT	128	128
150	16168	13.131100	Mathematics: Secondary Teaching	BT	130	128
151	16172	13.131200	Music (Teaching)	BT	148	136
152	15872	13.131400	Physical Education (Teaching)	BT	128	128
153	15875	13.131600	Physical Science (Teaching)	BT	128	128
154	15877	13.131611	Earth Science (Teaching)	BT	128	128
155	16171	13.131700	Social Science/History	BT	133	123
156	15891	13.132200	Life Science (Teaching)	BT	128	128
157	15896	13.132300	Chemistry (Teaching)	BT	128	128
158	15908	13.132900	Physics (Teaching)	BT	128	128
159	15914	13.133000	Spanish (Teaching)	BT	128	128
160	15917	13.133100	Communication Arts and Literature (Teaching)	BT	128	128
161	17043	13.140100	Teaching English as a Second Language K- 12	BT	128	128
162	15924	14.180100	Composite Materials Engineering	BS	128	128
163	17046	51.100501	Clinical Laboratory Science	BS	128	126

Addendum: Degree Credit Caps

September 2009

At their September 2009 meeting, Board of Trustee members asked for more information following discussion of the report on degree credit caps. The report was prepared in response to a legislative reporting requirement.

As requested, Table 1 from that report has been revised to indicate the number of programs for which a Notice of Intent to file a credit length waiver was submitted and the relative number of programs that are/are not affected by legislation that sets credit length limits and waiver criteria for degree programs. The revised table is shown below.

As explained in the Degree Credit Caps report, legislation sets the credit length of degree programs to 60 or 120 credits unless a waiver is granted under specific criteria. This affects associate degrees (except the associate in applied science degree, which was exempted in separate legislation until 2012) and baccalaureate degrees. Table 1 refers to these programs as covered.

For other programs, the credit length of a program is controlled by Chancellor's procedure. Chancellor's procedure includes criteria that allow a program to exceed maximum credit lengths. Chancellor's procedure apply to certificate, diploma, associate in applied science and graduate level programs. Table 1 refers to these programs as not covered.

As of September 17, 2009 the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities offered a total of 4,207¹⁷ academic programs. Indicated in Table 1, Colleges offer 3,114 of these programs for which 2,793 (90 percent) conform to credit length limits as set by either Chancellor's procedure (2,675) or the legislated 60 credit limit (118). Remaining college programs (321 or 10 percent) exceed credit length limits as permitted by Chancellor's procedure (47) or the legislated 60 credit limit (274) and must submit a waiver request to exceed the limit or reduce their credit length to 60 credits.

Universities offer 1,093 programs of which 592 (54 percent) are within credit length limits set by either Chancellor's procedures (381) or the legislated 120 credit limit (211). Remaining university programs (501 or 46 percent) exceed credit length limits as permitted by Chancellor's procedure (5) or the legislated 60 credit limit (496) and must submit a waiver request to exceed the limit or reduce their credit length to 120 credits.

¹⁷ Programs are counted at each location where they are offered.

Colleges and universities were asked to submit a Notice of Intent to file a Waiver application when the college/university believed the program would meet waiver criteria and qualify to exceed the legislated 60/120 degree credit limits. A total of 163 Notices of Intent applications were received. This represents four percent of all programs and 21 percent of the 770 programs that currently exceed the legislated credit length limits of 60/120 credits. It is assumed that most degree programs that did not submit a Notice of Intent to file a Waiver will reduce their credit length to 60 or 120 credits.

Table 1: Count of Programs Covered and Not Covered by 60/120 Degree Credit Cap Legislation*

Applicability of degree credit cap legislated requirement	Award	Within credit length limit ¹⁸	Over credit length limit ¹⁹	Total number of programs	Submitted a Notice of Intent to file a Waiver
COLLEGES					
Not Covered	Certificate & Advanced Technical Certificate	1,170	1	1,171	na
	Diploma	773	12	785	na
	Associate in Applied Science (AAS) ²⁰	732	34	766	na
	Subtotal – Not Covered	2,675	47	2,722	na
Covered	Associate (AA, AS, AES, AFA)	118	273	391	69
	Bachelors ²¹	0	1	1	0
	Subtotal - Covered	118	274	392	69
College subtotal (percent of total programs)		2,793 (90%)	321 (10%)	3,114	69 (2%)
UNIVERSITIES					
Not Covered	Certificate & Graduate	381	5	386	na
	Subtotal – Not Covered	381	5	386	na
Covered	Associate (AA, AS, AES, AFA)	4	13	17	0
	Bachelors	207	483	690	94
	Subtotal - Covered	211	496	707	94
University subtotal (percent of total programs)		592 (54%)	501 (46%)	1,093	94 (9%)
Total – Not Covered		3,056	52	3,108	0
Total - Covered		329	770	1,099	163
Grand Total (percent of total programs)		3,385 (80%)	822 (20%)	4,207	163 (4%)

*Data for table 1 is current as of September 17, 2009.

¹⁸ Credit length limits are set by Chancellor's procedure for certificates, diplomas, associate of applied science and graduate programs. Legislation sets credit length at 60 or 120 credits for associate degrees (AA, AS, and AFA) and baccalaureate degrees.

¹⁹ Chancellor's procedures allow programs that are not subject to legislated credit limits to exceed credit length limits set by Chancellor's procedure when criteria have been met.

²⁰ Associate in Applied Science degrees are exempt from the 60/120 credit length requirement until July 2, 2012.

²¹ Authorized by legislation, one baccalaureate degree program in teacher education has been approved for Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College but has not enrolled students.

Practices in Neighboring States

The Degree Credits Caps report describes practices in a few states. Board of Trustee members requested credit length policy information for states adjacent to Minnesota.

Iowa

Iowa has three public four-year universities, 15 two-year college districts and 45 independent, not-for-profit institutions. The Iowa Board of Regents governs the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, and the University of Northern Iowa. Board of Regents policy does not set minimum or maximum credit lengths for programs.

The Iowa Association of Community College Trustees support and facilitate the mission of Iowa's 15 community colleges, which are governed by locally elected boards of directors. Each college district determines credit length requirements for its degrees. Colleges set minimum credit lengths for associate degrees that typically range from 60 to 64 credits.

North Dakota

The North Dakota University System is made up of eleven public colleges and universities governed by the State Board of Higher Education. The North Dakota University System is composed of two doctoral-granting institutions, two master's-granting institutions, two universities that offer baccalaureate degrees and five campuses that offer associate and trade/technical degrees.

State Board of Higher Education policy 409 – Degrees Offered, which applies to the North Dakota University System, sets minimum program credit lengths. Associate degree programs require a minimum of 60 credits and baccalaureate degree programs require a minimum of 120 credits.

South Dakota

In South Dakota six public universities are governed by a Board of Regents and four public technical institutes are governed by the Department of Education.

The Board of Regents has the constitutional responsibility for governing the Unified System of Public Higher Education in South Dakota that consists of six state universities and two special schools. Board of Regents policy does not specify a minimum or maximum number of credits for a degree program.

The Office of Curriculum, Career and Technical Education within the South Dakota Department of Education advocates for career and technical education programs, administers the Perkins program and works closely with the state's four technical institutes. The four technical institutes are governed by local school districts. The minimum and maximum number of credits for an associate degree program is not specified in policy.

Wisconsin

Higher education in Wisconsin is delivered through the University of Wisconsin System, technical colleges, and private colleges and universities.

The University of Wisconsin System, governed by a Board of Regents, is made up of 13 four-year universities, 13 freshmen-sophomore University of Wisconsin college campuses, and statewide University of Wisconsin Extension. The Board of Regents has not set minimum or maximum credit lengths for academic programs in its system regent policies. Each college/university in the University of Wisconsin System sets its own policy regarding the credit length of programs.

Wisconsin has 16 locally supported technical college districts governed by a 13 member Wisconsin Technical College System state board, appointed by the governor, that establishes statewide policy and standards for education program and services. By policy, associate degree occupational programs (associate degree in applied arts or applied sciences) require a minimum 60 credits and may exceed 70 credits with written approval. Transfer liberal arts programs (associate in arts and associate in science) require a minimum of 64 credits.