

BOARD OF REGENTS
BRIEFING PAPER
Handbook Revision: University Degree Requirements

BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

Current Board policy (*Title 4, Chapter 16, Section 17*) provides that a minimum of 124 credits is required for a bachelor's degree at the universities. Additional credit requirements for graduation must be defined by the institution and published in the institution's catalog. Based on a recommendation of the Academic Affairs Council, staff recommends revising the credit requirement for a bachelor's degree from 124 credits to 120 credits.

120 credits for a bachelor's degree aligns with the requirements of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (accrediting agency) and is also consistent with credit requirements in other states.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

Amend Title 4, Chapter 16, Section 17 to provide that a minimum of 120 credits is required for a bachelor's degree at a university. (See attached Policy Proposal.)

If the proposal is adopted, existing programs with greater than 120 credits for a degree will not need to be reduced to 120 as the proposed change is for the *minimum* number of credits for a bachelor's degree.

IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

This is brought forward at this time based on a recommendation of the Academic Affairs Council.

BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

120 credits for a bachelor's degree

- aligns with the accreditation requirements of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities;
- is consistent with degree requirements in other states;
- will improve graduation rates

POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

None have been brought forward.

ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:

Maintain the current policy requiring 124 credits for a bachelor's degree.

8. COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

- Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title #____ Chapter #____ Section #____
- X Amends Current Board Policy: *Title 4, Chapter 16, Section 17*
- Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter #____ Section #____
- Other:_____
- Fiscal Impact: Yes____ No____
Explain:_____

POLICY PROPOSAL
TITLE 4, CHAPTER 16, SECTION 17
Credit Requirements for a Bachelor's Degree

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

Section 17. University Requirements for Graduation

1. A student enrolled at a university may elect to graduate under the catalog of the year of enrollment in a baccalaureate-level program or the year of graduation.
2. A university student who changes his or her major must choose the catalog of the year of the latest change of major or the year of graduation.
3. The catalog selected for the purpose of university graduation may not be more than 10 years old at the time of graduation.
4. Exceptions to this policy may be made on a case-by-case basis for NSHE transfer students as determined by the appropriately designated university official.
5. A minimum of [~~124~~] ***120*** credits is required for a bachelor's degree. Additional credit requirements for graduation shall be defined by the institution and published in the catalog.