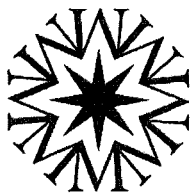


Degree Credit Caps:

Report to the Legislature

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

October, 2012



Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES

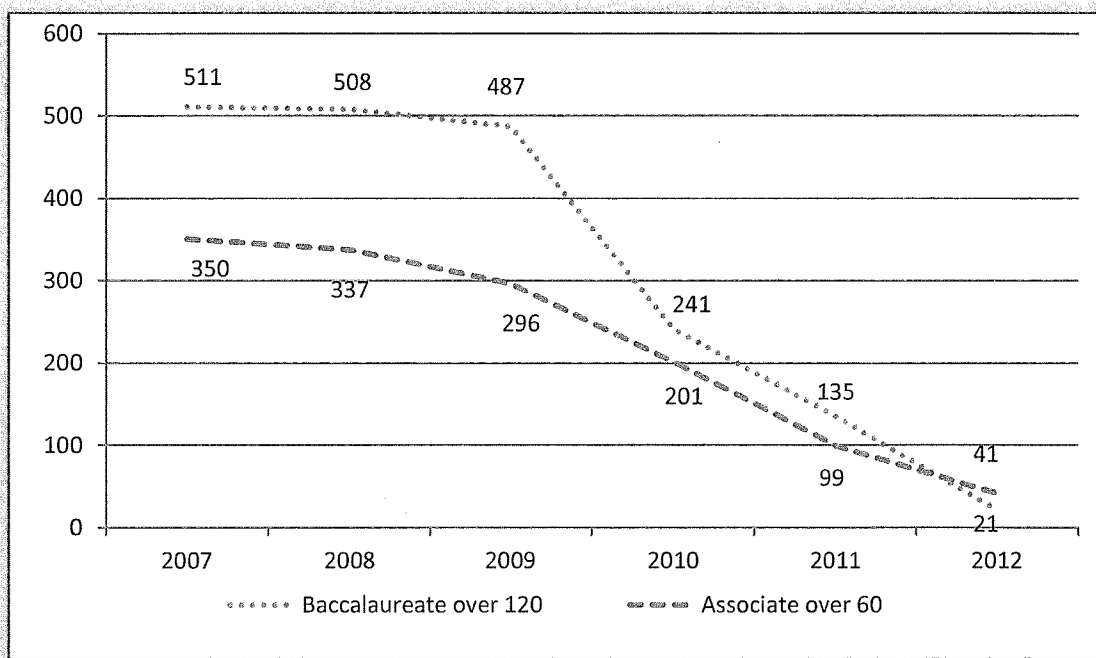
Report Summary

- All system AA, AS, AFA, BS and BA degree programs are in compliance with Minnesota Statutes and Board of Trustees policy and system procedures regarding program credit lengths.
- From 2010 through 2012, eleven single and seven group waivers were approved for 41 associate degree programs and 21 baccalaureate programs.
- The moratorium on reducing the credit lengths of associate in applied science (AAS) degree programs ended July 2, 2012. The 498 AAS degree programs that exceed the 60 credit degree cap will be reviewed by the end of December, 2013.

Academic Program Credit Reduction

Table 1 below summarizes the changes in the number of programs by type of award and credit length over time. From August, 2007 (when 60/120 legislation became effective), through August, 2012, the number of associate degree programs over 60 credits has been reduced to 41; baccalaureate degree programs over 120 credits have been reduced to 21. The remaining 62 programs over the credit limit were granted a waiver based on industry and professional standards.

Table 1: Reduction in Programs that Exceeded Credit Limits



Approved waivers: A total of twenty-five waivers were requested and eighteen were approved (11 single, 7 groups). As shown in Table 1, twenty-one baccalaureate programs (engineering and education) exceed 120 credits and forty-one associate degree programs (nursing, law enforcement, education, dental hygiene and emergency medical services) exceed 60 credits.

FY 2010 Single Waiver Applications:

A total of seven single waiver applications were submitted to the system office in FY 2010. As shown in Table 2, Winona State University submitted an application for the Composite Engineering program. Minnesota State University, Mankato submitted applications for Civil Engineering, Automotive Engineering Technology, Computer Engineering Technology, Electrical Engineering Technology and Manufacturing Engineering Technology. The waiver request from North Hennepin Community College for the Graphic Design associate in science was subsequently withdrawn and the program was reduced to 60 credits.

FY 2011 Single and Group Waiver Applications:

A total of seven waiver applications were submitted in FY 2011. Table 2 lists four single and three group waiver applications. Mankato State University, Mankato and St. Cloud State University submitted group waiver applications for Computer Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering. MSU, Mankato submitted a single waiver application along with a new program application for General Engineering. St. Cloud State University submitted a single waiver application for their Manufacturing Engineering program.

Normandale Community College submitted a single waiver application for the Dental Hygiene associate in science program (AS). There are six system dental hygiene programs but the other five are associate in applied science programs. All six programs are accredited. The Associate in Applied Science (AAS) programs range from 83 – 88 credits. Normandale Community College was granted a waiver for 88 credits.

Winona State University submitted a single waiver application for their Physical Science and Chemistry Teaching degree program. Graduates of the program can be credentialed in both Physical Science and Chemistry by the Board of Teaching. A waiver was granted for 128 credits.

FY 2012 Single and Group Waiver Applications:

A total of eleven waiver applications were submitted in FY 2012. Table 2 lists seven single and four group waiver applications. Minnesota State University Moorhead submitted a single waiver application for the Elementary Inclusive Education teaching program. The program integrates elementary and special education curriculum at the request of area superintendents. A waiver was granted for 128 credits.

Minneapolis Community and Technical College submitted six waiver applications that were subsequently withdrawn and the programs were reduced to 60 credits.

Inver Hills Community College and Rochester Community and Technical College submitted a group waiver application for the Emergency Medical Services, Intensive Paramedic associate in science. Rochester Community and Technical College subsequently made the decision to close its program.

Table 2. Disposition of Waiver Applications

FY 2010 Single Applications		
College/University	Program	Disposition
Winona	BS, Composite Engineering	Granted waiver - 128 credits
Mankato	BS, Civil Engineering	Granted waiver - 128 credits
Mankato	BS, Automotive Engineering Technology	Granted waiver - 128 credits
Mankato	BS, Computer Engineering Technology	Granted waiver - 128 credits
Mankato	BS, Electrical Engineering Technology	Granted waiver - 128 credits
Mankato	BS, Manufacturing Engineering Technology	Granted waiver - 128 credits
North Hennepin Community College	AS, Graphic Design	Reduced to 60 credits.
FY 2011 Single and Group Applications		
Normandale CC	Dental Hygiene	Granted waiver – 88 credits
Mankato St. Cloud State	BS, Computer Engineering (2 baccalaureate)	Granted waiver - 128 credits
Mankato St. Cloud State	BS, Electrical Engineering (2 baccalaureate)	Granted waiver - 128 credits
Mankato	BS, General Engineering	Granted waiver - 128 credits
Mankato St. Cloud State	BS, Mechanical Engineering (2 baccalaureate)	Granted waiver - 128 credits
St. Cloud State	BS, Manufacturing Engineering	Granted waiver - 128 credits
Winona State	BS, Physical Science/Chemistry Teaching	Granted waiver - 128 credits
FY 2012 Single and Group Applications		
Minneapolis Community & Technical College	Addiction Counseling	Reduced to 60 credits
	Cinematography	Reduced to 60 credits
	Directing and Producing	Reduced to 60 credits
	Editing and Post Production	Reduced to 60 credits
	Screenwriting	Reduced to 60 credits
	Sound Arts	Reduced to 60 credits
Inver Hills RCTC	Emergency Medical Services (2 associate)	Granted waiver – 75 credits
Moorhead	Elementary Inclusive Education	Granted waiver – 128 credits
Group Application	Law Enforcement (12 associate)	Granted waiver – 68 credits
Group Application	Music Education (5 baccalaureate; 4 associate)	Granted waiver – 136 credits
Group Application	Nursing (22 associate)	Granted waiver – 64 credits

Inver Hills requested an extension to prepare and resubmit a single waiver application. After more discussion and collaboration with Mayo Clinic, Rochester Community and Technical College decided to rejoin the group waiver. The Inver Hills Community College and RCTC Paramedic, Emergency Medical Technician AS programs were granted a waiver for 75 credits.

The Law Enforcement group waiver application was submitted by the twelve programs approved by the Peace Officer Standards and Training Board. The POST Board worked with the programs to reach consensus on curriculum design. The waiver was approved for 68 credits.

The Music Education group waiver application was submitted by five baccalaureate programs and four associate programs. The waiver request was based on the music education accreditation criteria and teacher licensing standards. The associate degree programs waiver was approved for 68 credits and the baccalaureate programs waiver was approved for 136 credits.

The Nursing group waiver application was submitted by twenty-two college nursing programs. The Board of Nursing worked with the programs to reach consensus on curriculum design and advanced standing for licensed practical nurses. The waiver was approved for 64 credits.

Waiver application files are available for review upon request by contacting Margie Takash Margie.takash@so.mnscu.edu.

Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) and the Minnesota State College Student Association (MSCSA) Report to the Legislature:

Session law in 2009 modified the 2007 legislation by 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 (Appendix A).

Additionally, the 2009 session law directed the Minnesota State College Faculty and the Minnesota State College Student Association to present a joint report by January 2, 2012, on a process for reviewing the credit requirements for an associate of applied science degree. The Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) and the Minnesota State College Student Association (MSCSA) submitted their recommendations to the legislature in December, 2011.

MSCF and MSCSA met with Minnesota State College and University (MnSCU) staff February 7, 2012, to discuss the process for reviewing the credit length of Associate in Applied Science degree programs. All parties agreed that the process for reviewing AAS program credit lengths could be handled through revisions to the procedures instead of legislation. Revised Procedure 3.36.1 Academic Programs was approved by the MnSCU Policy Council and the chancellor in July, 2012 (Appendix B).

Plans for FY 2013

Over the coming year, system colleges will be reviewing the 498 associate in applied science (AAS) degree programs that are over 60 credits. The reviews will focus on industry and professional standards and required learning outcomes. It is anticipated that the AAS review process will be completed by December 2013.

APPENDIX A

Related Legislation

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 amended policy 3.36 Academic Programs and the chancellor approved the related 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 Statutes § 136F.301

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

APPENDIX B

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System Procedure 3.36.1, Academic Programs

Part 3 Authorized Academic Awards

Subpart C. Program Credit Length Waivers for Associate and Baccalaureate Degrees.

1. **Authority.** The system office determines the approval or disapproval of all requests for waivers to exceed program credit length limitations.
2. **Criteria for Granting Waivers.** Credit length waivers may be granted when determined necessary to ensure that the degree provided meets industry or professional standards. Waivers shall be granted only when a need for a longer program credit length is demonstrated by one or more of the following:
 - a. **Industry Standards**
 - (1) National or international program certification,
 - (2) National or international standards, including skill standards,
 - (3) Standards recommended by a primary employer or multiple employers within a program service area.
 - b. **Professional Standards**
 - (1) National specialized program accreditation,
 - (2) State licensure requirements,
 - (3) National practices or standards.
3. **Waiver Process for Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Associate in Fine Arts and Baccalaureate degrees.** The following process shall be followed to request a waiver:
 - a. Preparation of a waiver application for submission to the system office shall be consistent with accepted college or university curriculum approval processes. Waiver requests for similar academic programs may be pursued on a multi-college/university basis when recommended by faculty consistent with accepted processes at each participating college or university.
 - b. Academic program advisory committees may provide recommendations on learning requirements. Program advisory committee recommendations that support the standards may be submitted with the waiver request. Board policy requires student representation on college academic program advisory committees as specified in Policy 2.3 and Procedure 2.3.1.
 - c. Waiver applications will be distributed for review and comment to statewide student associations, faculty union leadership, and college and university administrators.
 - d. The system office will act on the waiver application and notify the applicant.

- e. Appeals related to waiver decisions will be processed through the vice chancellor for academic and student affairs.
 - f. Public information regarding the waiver process, review criteria, rationale for decisions, and decisions reached will be available on the system office website.
4. **Waiver Process for Associate in Applied Science degrees.** The following process shall be followed to request a waiver:
- a. Preparation of a waiver application for submission to the system office shall be consistent with accepted college or university curriculum approval processes.
 - b. An associate in applied science waiver application shall compare and contrast credit lengths of comparable programs and provide a program analysis describing learning outcomes not found in shorter programs.
 - c. Academic program advisory committees shall provide recommendations on learning requirements. Board policy requires student representation on college academic program advisory committees as specified in Policy 2.3 and Procedure 2.3.1.
 - d. Waiver applications shall document the approval of the college curriculum committee, the program advisory committee, and the college student representative on the program advisory committee. If there was no college student representative on the program advisory committee, the college student association shall review and comment on the waiver application.
 - e. Waiver applications will be distributed for review and comment to state student associations, faculty union leadership, and college and university administrators.
 - f. The system office will act on the waiver application and notify the applicant.
 - g. Appeals related to waiver decisions will be processed through the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs.
 - h. Public information regarding the waiver process, review criteria, rationale for decisions, and decisions reached will be available on the system office website.
 - i. Associate in Applied Science programs approved to exceed 60 credits shall include an explanation of why the program is longer than similar programs in the catalog description.