



Title: Federal Definitions

Policy No.: ADM 4.11

Date: 8/1/12  
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Areas Affected: All BSMCON

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**POLICY STATEMENT:**

The College references the following federal definitions when creating or modifying College policies that require the College to adhere to these definitions.

**FEDERAL DEFINITIONS:**

**Academic Calendar:** The structure of a school's academic year. For purposes of the Federal Student Aid (FSA) programs, there are three basic types of academic calendars: standard term, nonstandard term, and non-term. Note: Clock-hour programs are considered non-term.

**Academic Year:** A period that begins on the first day of classes and ends on the last day of classes or examinations. A measure of the student's period of enrollment used to determine the duration of a student's award eligibility. An academic year for a credit-hour or direct assessment program must be defined as at least 30 weeks of instructional time. The law and regulations set the following minimum standards for coursework earned by a full-time student in an academic year in an undergraduate educational program (including direct assessment programs): 24 semester or trimester credit hours or 36 quarter credit hours for a program measured in credit hours; (34 CFR 668.3).

**Anticipated Completion (Graduation) Date:** The date on which a student is expected to complete an academic program. Reported to National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) as part of enrollment monitoring.

**Application to Participate:** That portion of the Fiscal Operations Reports and Application to Participate (FISAP) through which a school applies for Campus-Based funds.

**Clock hour:** A period of time consisting of—

- (1) A 50- to 60-minute class, lecture, or recitation in a 60-minute period;
- (2) A 50- to 60-minute faculty-supervised laboratory, shop training, or internship in a 60-minute period; or
- (3) Sixty minutes of preparation in a correspondence course.

**Credit Hour:** A unit of measure of educational achievement based on the number of classroom hours a week throughout a period of instruction such as a semester, trimester, or quarter term.

**a) Credit Hours for Credit Hour Programs.** The evaluation of credit hour programs, as defined in 34 CFR 688.8(k)(1), for purposes of financial aid is based on the following federal definition of a

Reference Policy # \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Approved by:</b>            Signature</p> <p><b>Approval History:</b>          Committees and Dates:          Office of Financial Aid -5/21/12, 3/15          Policy Committee – 5/21/12, 3/9/15</p>	<p>Dean of Student Services          Provost/VP          Title</p>	<p><u>8/1/15</u>  <u>8.1.15</u>          Date</p>
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credit hour: Except as provided in 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l), a credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than--

(1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or

(2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

**b) Credit Hours for Programs that are neither Credit Hour nor Clock Hour Programs.** Clock hour programs as defined in 34 CFR 688.8(k)(2) may not assign credit hours for the purpose of awarding federal financial aid. However, undergraduate degree programs of less than two years in length and non-degree programs that are not fully transferrable to degree programs of at least two years in length (with at least two graduates) at the same institution are eligible to convert clock hours to credit hours for purposes of awarding federal financial

aid. In doing so, these programs may seek to combine a minimum number of hours in a range of hours of student work outside of class with a required minimum number hours of instruction alone to meet or exceed a total number of clock hours of instruction. The evaluation of these clock-to-credit hour programs is based upon the following federal conversion formulas:

The institution's student work outside of class combined with the clock hours of instruction meet or exceed the following numeric requirements:

- i. A semester hour must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction;
- ii. A trimester hour must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction; &
- iii. A quarter hour must include at least 25 clock hours of instruction;

And the clock hours of instruction alone meet or exceed the following numeric requirements:

- (A) A semester hour must include at least 30 clock hours of instruction;
- (B) A trimester hour must include at least 30 clock hours of instruction; and
- (C) A quarter hour must include a least 20 hours of instruction.

**Date of Determination(DOD):** In the Return of Title IV Aid, the date that ED (Department of Education) considers a school knew or should have known that a student ceased attendance. The date that begins the time periods in which a school must return funds, provide any required notifications, make post-withdrawal disbursements students who have withdrawn, and make any repayment arrangements.

- a. A student's withdrawal date (resignation date) is one of the following:
  1. The date the student began the institution's official resignation from the College process or the date the College receives a written notification from the student of intent to resign from the College.
  2. For a student who resigns from the College without notifying the College, the date that the College determines is related to the circumstances beyond the student's control or the midpoint of the semester.
  3. The student's last date of attendance, documented by the instructor, of an academically-related activity such as attendance in class or completion and submission of a class assignment, exam, tutorial, or computer-assisted instruction. (34 CFR 668.22).

**Distance Education:** Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (4) of this definition to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include—

- (1) The internet;
- (2) One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
- (3) Audio conferencing; or
- (4) Video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (3) of this definition.

**Nonstandard Terms:** Terms that are not semester, trimester, or quarter terms.

**Non-term:** A program that measures progress in credit hours is considered to be using a non-term calendar if it has: courses that do not begin and end within a set period of time; courses that overlap terms, self-paced and independent study courses that overlap terms, or sequential courses that do not begin and end within a term. If a program measures progress in clock hours, it is always treated as a non-term program.

**Quarter:** A standard of measurement in higher education used to group weeks of instructional time in the academic calendar. A quarter academic term is usually 10 to 12 weeks long, and a traditional quarter calendar generally includes three quarters in the fall, winter, and spring (and often a summer quarter as well). Students successfully completing a course earn quarter credits.

**Semester:** A standard of measurement in higher education used to group weeks of instructional time in the academic calendar. A semester provides 15 to 17 weeks of instruction. Students earn semester credits.

**Standard Terms:** Semesters and trimesters generally contain 15 to 17 weeks of instructional time. Quarters generally contain 10 to 12 weeks of instructional time.

**Trimester:** A standard of measurement in higher education used to group weeks of instructional time in the academic calendar. A trimester academic term provides about 15 weeks of instruction and a traditional trimester program generally consists of fall, spring, and summer terms.

**Week of Instructional Time:** For all FSA programs, any period of seven consecutive days in which at least one day of regularly scheduled instruction, examination, or (after the last day of classes) at least one scheduled day of study for examinations occurs. Instructional time does not include periods of orientation, counseling, homework, vacation, or other activity not related to class preparation or examination. The “number of weeks of instructional time” is based on the period that begins on the first day of classes in the academic year and ends on the last day of classes or examinations.

**Withdrawal (Resignation from the College):** When a student ceases attendance in all classes before the end of the semester, term, or period of enrollment, as applicable.  
Official Withdrawal – • For Return of Title IV Aid Purposes, a student who provides notice in writing (including electronically) or orally to a designated campus official acting in his or her official capacity in the withdrawal process that the student intends to interrupt his or her attendance.

Unofficial Withdrawal – • For Return of Title IV Purposes, a student who withdraws without providing official notification.

**Withdrawal Date (Resignation Date):** The date the student withdraws, as determined by the school.

**References:**

“The Blue Book (2013)”, *Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Publications – Appendix E Glossary*, n.p., 2014 March 10,  
<http://www.ifap.ed.gov/bbook/attachments/2013BlueBookAppendixE.pdf>

“2014-2015 Federal Student Aid Handbook”, *Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Publications*, n.p., 2014 November 12,  
<http://www.ifap.ed.gov/ifap/byAwardYear.jsp?type=fsahandbook&awardyear=2014-2015>