

## Title

### **Scheduling Guidelines for Academic Programs**

#### **Purpose of the Policy**

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide detailed instructions for academic scheduling that adhere to the policies of the Federal Student Aid Department of the United States Department of Education and the Colorado Department of Higher Education.

#### **Detailed Policy Statement**

As a public institution of higher education in the State of Colorado, the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) will abide by all state and federal legislation including guidelines for the scheduling of courses for academic programs\*. UNC is a certified Title IV institution\* for the distribution of federal financial aid. In addition, UNC is defined as a standard term university\*. As such, the university must comply with established guidelines for standard term universities provided by the US Department of Education. The consequences for lack of compliance range from a mandate to repay inaccurately allocated funds to financial fines and penalties to a loss of status as a certifying institution for the distribution of federal funds.

\*See definitions below for further clarification.

#### **Applicability**

These guidelines apply to all UNC academic degree programs and post-baccalaureate teacher licensure programs. These guidelines are also applicable to any credit-bearing course that could possibly be used to satisfy a student's degree or teacher licensure requirements. Failure to follow the guidelines is a direct violation of Title IV Federal Financial Aid requirements for standard term universities.

#### **Definitions**

##### **2012-2013 Federal Student Aid (FSA) Handbook**

<http://ifap.ed.gov/fsahandbook/1213FSAHandbookCompleteActiveIndex.html>

##### Academic Program Eligibility (2-14 FSA Handbook and UNC's Program Participation Agreement)

At UNC, the academic programs eligible for federal financial aid include bachelor and graduate degrees and non-degree post-baccalaureate teacher licensure programs for elementary or secondary schools in the State of Colorado. Certificate programs are not eligible.

##### Census Date (CDHE Guidelines for COF) [http://highered.colorado.gov/Finance/COF/COFGuidelines\\_100111.pdf](http://highered.colorado.gov/Finance/COF/COFGuidelines_100111.pdf)

The census date is the last date of the registration adjustment period typically calculated at 15% of the term. The census date coincides with UNC's drop date for Fall and Spring Semesters. Data gathered on this date are used for federal and state reporting. The "freeze date", for the purpose of determining federal financial aid eligibility for UNC students, typically coincides with the census/drop date.

##### Course Contact Hours <http://highered.colorado.gov/Publications/Policies/Current/v-partb-Guidelines.pdf>

The Colorado Department of Higher Education has guidelines for the minimum number of student contact hours that must occur per credit hour depending on the type of course (lecture, lab, etc.). The approved minimum contact hours for UNC courses can be found on this link: [http://www.unco.edu/regrec/PDF%20Forms/Instruction\\_Course\\_Types.pdf](http://www.unco.edu/regrec/PDF%20Forms/Instruction_Course_Types.pdf)

### Institutional Eligibility (2-1 FSA Handbook)

Institutional eligibility for awarding federal financial aid monies is granted to public institutions of higher education that offer associate, bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree programs. Additionally, the institution must be accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency.

(2-10 FSA Handbook) The school must have a current Program Participation Agreement signed by the president of the university and an authorized representative of the Secretary of Education. Under this agreement "the school agrees to comply with the laws, regulations, and policies governing the FSA programs."

### Instructional Time (3-2 FSA Handbook)

- Weeks of instructional time in a term begin on the first day of classes in the term and end on the last day of classes or examinations.
- One week is "any period of 7 consecutive days in which at least 1 day of regularly scheduled instruction, examination or (after the last day of classes) at least 1 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."
- Note: Instructional time and course contact time are not the same. See definition for course contact hours above.

### Part of Term Code

- The part of term code indicates start and end dates for each course plus add, drop, and withdrawal deadlines.
- Part of term codes are created by the Office of the Registrar based on course scheduling.
- University schedulers enter the code into Banner.

### Standard Term (3-1 FSA Handbook)

- Typically Fall, Spring, Summer; a 4-week intersession is allowed
- Standard terms are described in "weeks of instructional time" and have an established number of weeks

#### UNC Academic Standard Terms (meets minimal contact time per CO Dept. of Higher Ed.)

- Fall and Spring Terms: 16 weeks of instructional time as indicated by the UNC calendar
- Summer Term: total of 12 weeks of instructional time that may be subdivided as indicated below
  - Full 12-week term as indicated by the UNC calendar
  - First 6-week term begins at the onset of the 12-week session and ends during week six
  - Second 6-week term begins on the 7<sup>th</sup> week of the 12-week session and ends during week 12
  - 8-week term begins three weeks into the scheduled 12-week session and ends one week prior to the end of the 12-week session
- Interim Term: 4 weeks of instructional time as indicated by the UNC calendar

#### Requirements for all standard term universities (3-1 FSA Handbook)

- Courses must begin and end within the respective terms.
- Any course that can be applied to any student's degree or teacher licensure program cannot overlap terms. This includes self-paced and independent study courses.
- Courses cannot be scheduled more than two weeks of instructional time longer than the term.

### Student (1-3 FSA Handbook and UNC's Program Participation Agreement)

To be eligible for Title IV federal financial aid, a student is someone who is enrolled or accepted for enrollment for the purpose of obtaining a degree or post-baccalaureate teacher licensure for elementary or secondary schools in the State of Colorado.

## Implementation Procedures

As academic courses are entered into scheduling templates for future academic terms, adherence to the following guidelines is required.

Standard Terms	
Standard Term Calendar	2012-2016 <a href="http://www.unco.edu/regrec/pdf/Calendar%203yr.pdf">http://www.unco.edu/regrec/pdf/Calendar%203yr.pdf</a>
FALL and SPRING TERMS	Courses must be scheduled to begin and end in concurrence with the UNC standard term calendar of 16 weeks
INTERIM TERM	Courses must be scheduled to begin and end in concurrence with the UNC standard term calendar of 4 weeks
SUMMER TERM	Courses must be scheduled to begin and end in concurrence with the UNC calendar for the four summer term divisions
Scheduling Guidelines for all Standard Terms	
Regularly Scheduled Courses	
	Prior to registration, all courses must have start and end dates entered into Banner
	Courses may not be scheduled to cross over terms
	Enter all courses into Banner by the add date of the term*
	Course dates/times entered into Banner must reflect appropriate course contact hours per State requirements <a href="http://www.unco.edu/regrec/pdf/Course_Types.pdf">http://www.unco.edu/regrec/pdf/Course_Types.pdf</a>
Variable Credit and Self-Paced Courses	
	Includes courses such as internships, practica, clinical, directed study, independent study, thesis, dissertation
	Courses must be scheduled to begin and end within the UNC standard term calendars
	Courses must have start and end dates entered into Banner
	Courses may not be scheduled to cross over terms
	Enter all courses into Banner by the add date of the term*
	By the census (drop) date, enter courses into Banner for the full number of credits the student plans to pursue; credits will not be altered once the student has enrolled in and begun the course**
Scheduling Guidelines for Alternate Part of Term	
	Courses must meet one of the requirements listed under “specialized circumstances” (see below)
	Courses may not be scheduled more than two weeks longer than the associated standard term (max of 18 weeks for Fall and Spring Terms; 14 weeks for Summer Term) AND course must be considered a part of that associated standard term <b>Example:</b> course begins on week 10 of summer term and ends on week 14 (two weeks past standard summer term); that course is a Summer Term course; that course may not extend to week 15
	The Registrar’s office will calculate add, drop, and withdrawal dates for each part of term***
	Prior to registration, courses must have start and end dates entered into Banner
	Courses may not be scheduled to cross over terms
	Enter all courses into Banner by the add date of the term*
	Course dates/times entered into Banner must reflect appropriate course contact hours per State requirements <a href="http://www.unco.edu/regrec/pdf/Course_Types.pdf">http://www.unco.edu/regrec/pdf/Course_Types.pdf</a>
	Guidelines for variable credit and self-paced courses apply (see above)

## Specialized Circumstances for an Alternate Part of Term

These courses must follow the scheduling guidelines for alternate part of term

- Courses that are dependent on an external organization for internship, practicum, and clinical placements and the calendar for the external organization does not coincide with the UNC academic standard term calendar
- Student teaching experiences that rely on the K-12 institutional calendars
- Teacher-focused programs that rely on the K-12 institutional calendars
- Courses that rely on external vendors for instructors and/or course venue such as the Poudre Learning Center
- Courses that rely on specific environmental conditions such as golf classes offered in the spring
- Condensed courses/workshops offered during spring break, interim or summer
- Courses in concentrated/accelerated programs
- Courses scheduled upon completion of auditions/exams

\*Explanation: For a course to be eligible for a student's financial aid, the student must register for the course no later than the freeze date of a term (typically the semester census/drop date). Courses added into a student's schedule after this date are not eligible toward a student's financial aid (mainly Pell grant recipients) but the course will be part of the student's GPA and progress toward degree completion.

**Example:** By the freeze date, an undergraduate student has enrolled in nine credits (fulltime is 12 credits). The student will receive financial aid as a part-time student. After the freeze date, the student enrolls in an additional three credits. The financial aid eligibility for that student cannot be changed to fulltime for this term. Conversely, if the student is enrolled in 12 credits by the freeze date, the student will be eligible for fulltime aid. After the freeze date, the student withdraws from a course and ends up with nine credits. If the instructor can show evidence that the student was academically engaged in the course, the student will be allowed to keep the fulltime aid. Depending on the type of aid awarded, the student will be required to repay a portion of the fulltime aid if the instructor has no evidence of academic engagement.

### Academic Engagement (34 CFR 668.22)

7)(i) "Academic attendance" and "attendance at an academically-related activity"—

(A) Include, but are not limited to—

- ( 1 ) Physically attending a class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students;
- ( 2 ) Submitting an academic assignment;
- ( 3 ) Taking an exam, an interactive tutorial, or computer-assisted instruction;
- ( 4 ) Attending a study group that is assigned by the institution;
- ( 5 ) Participating in an online discussion about academic matters; and
- ( 6 ) Initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course; and

(B) Do not include activities where a student may be present, but not academically engaged, such as—

- ( 1 ) Living in institutional housing;
- ( 2 ) Participating in the institution's meal plan;
- ( 3 ) Logging into an online class without active participation; or
- ( 4 ) Participating in academic counseling or advisement.

(ii) A determination of "academic attendance" or "attendance at an academically-related activity" must be made by the institution; a student's certification of attendance that is not supported by institutional documentation is not acceptable.

\*\*Explanation: Any request to alter credits during and/or after the term has begun or ended has a direct effect on a student's academic progress as defined by financial aid guidelines. (1-8 FSA Handbook)

\*\*\*These dates will not be the same as the standard term dates. Please note that a student's financial aid eligibility will be determined according to standard term dates, so the scheduling of these specialized courses can cause confusion on the part of the student as related to financial aid. For example, if a course does not begin until March 1<sup>st</sup> during spring term, the add/drop/withdrawal dates for that course will be calculated based on the start and end dates of the course. For financial aid purposes, the spring term freeze date (in January) is the date used for financial aid eligibility.

## **Policy Authority**

Provost

## **Contact Information**

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