

### § 668.3

### 34 CFR Ch. VI (7–1–25 Edition)

#### § 668.3 Academic year.

(a) *General.* Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, an academic year for a program of study must include—

(1)(i) For a program offered in credit hours, a minimum of 30 weeks of instructional time; or

(ii) For a program offered in clock hours, a minimum of 26 weeks of instructional time; and

(2) For an undergraduate educational program, an amount of instructional time whereby a full-time student is expected to complete at least—

(i) Twenty-four semester or trimester credit hours or 36 quarter credit hours for a program measured in credit hours; or

(ii) 900 clock hours for a program measured in clock hours.

(b) *Definitions.* For purposes of paragraph (a) of this section—

(1) A week is a consecutive seven-day period;

(2) A week of instructional time is any week in which—

(i) At least one day of regularly scheduled instruction or examinations occurs, or, after the last scheduled day of classes for a term or payment period, at least one day of study for final examinations occurs; or

(ii)(A) In a program offered using asynchronous coursework through distance education or correspondence courses, the institution makes available the instructional materials, other resources, and instructor support necessary for academic engagement and completion of course objectives; and

(B) In a program using asynchronous coursework through distance education, the institution expects enrolled students to perform educational activities demonstrating academic engagement during the week; and

(3) Instructional time does not include any scheduled breaks and activities not included in the definition of “academic engagement” in 34 CFR 600.2, or periods of orientation or counseling.

(c) *Reduction in the length of an academic year.* (1) Upon the written request of an institution, the Secretary may approve, for good cause, an academic year of 26 through 29 weeks of instructional time for educational programs

offered by the institution if the institution offers a two-year program leading to an associate degree or a four-year program leading to a baccalaureate degree.

(2) An institution’s written request must—

(i) Identify each educational program for which the institution requests a reduction, and the requested number of weeks of instructional time for that program;

(ii) Demonstrate good cause for the requested reductions; and

(iii) Include any other information that the Secretary may require to determine whether to grant the request.

(3)(i) The Secretary approves the request of an eligible institution for a reduction in the length of its academic year if the institution has demonstrated good cause for granting the request and the institution’s accrediting agency and State licensing agency have approved the request.

(ii) If the Secretary approves the request, the approval terminates when the institution’s program participation agreement expires. The institution may request an extension of that approval as part of the recertification process.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1845–0022)

[67 FR 67071, Nov. 1, 2002, as amended at 71 FR 45693, Aug. 9, 2006; 85 FR 54814, Sept. 2, 2020]

#### § 668.4 Payment period.

(a) *Payment periods for an eligible program that measures progress in credit hours and uses standard terms or non-standard terms that are substantially equal in length.* For a student enrolled in an eligible program that measures progress in credit hours and uses standard terms (semesters, trimesters, or quarters), or for a student enrolled in an eligible program that measures progress in credit hours and uses non-standard terms that are substantially equal in length, the payment period is the academic term.

(b) *Payment periods for an eligible program that measures progress in credit hours and uses nonstandard terms that are not substantially equal in length.* For a student enrolled in an eligible program that measures progress in credit