



NSCS Academic Calendar

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Section X:	Academic Calendar
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Contents

1. Purpose & Background	1
2. Definition of Terms for Academic Year Guidelines.....	1
3. Academic Year Calendar Guidelines	2
4. Potential Modifications to Academic Calendar	3
5. NSCS Census Date	4
6. Frequently Asked Questions.....	4

1. Purpose & Background

The NSCS Academic Calendar guidelines are designed to inform the development of the academic calendar, which will be uniformly utilized by the Nebraska State Colleges. The Chancellor will be responsible for making decisions on any matters regarding the academic calendar, pursuant to recommendations from the Presidents. The guidelines include consistent expectations for beginning and start dates, length of terms, academic breaks and recognized holidays.

2. Definition of Terms for Academic Year Guidelines

2.A. Academic Term:

NeSIS includes three academic terms within which academic sessions can be scheduled for course offerings. These include the Fall Term, the Spring Term, and the Summer Term.

2.B. Regular Academic Session:

The primary session offered by the Colleges that constitutes a semester of coursework and generally runs the full length of the Fall and Spring Terms. The regular academic session

AREA GUIDELINE: **Title**

includes the traditional face-to-face on campus courses scheduled to be offered during that term.

2.C. Shorter Academic Session:

A session that is formally established for a specific length of time, within which courses are scheduled to be offered within a given Term. These sessions are shorter in length than a regular academic session and may run from three (3) to eight (8) weeks.

2.D. Federal Financial Aid Instructional Requirements for Face-To Face Courses:

The Federal Financial Aid requirements for instructional time has been set to 12.5 hours of instruction per credit hour of coursework. This equates to 750 minutes of class meeting time per credit hour.

3. Academic Year Calendar Guidelines

- 3.A. Each regular academic session that constitutes a semester of coursework will consist of fifteen (15) weeks of instruction, with the final examination (or similar culminating experience) period occurring during week 16. Shorter academic sessions may be established within the Fall and Spring terms, based upon appropriate credit and time requirements¹.
- 3.B. As a general rule, M/W/F classes will be scheduled to meet for 50 minutes each class meeting, and 45 days of instruction will be scheduled across the regular academic session for Fall and Spring Terms.
- 3.C. As a general rule, T/R classes will be scheduled to meet for 75 minutes each class meeting, and 30 days of instruction will be scheduled across the regular academic session for Fall and Spring Terms.
- 3.D. Each regular academic session offered as part of the Fall Term will generally have a starting date between August 20 and August 27 and will end prior to December 22.
- 3.E. Each regular academic session offered as part of the Spring Term will generally have a starting date between January 7 and January 14 and will end prior to May 15.
- 3.F. Summer academic sessions offered as part of the Summer Term are to be developed to assure comparable contact hours of instruction for credit earned as required for the academic year.
- 3.G. The following holidays will be observed and no classes will be scheduled:
 - 3.G.1. Labor Day (Monday)
 - 3.G.2. Thanksgiving (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday)
 - 3.G.3. Martin Luther King Jr (Monday) – alternative programming offered
 - 3.G.4. Easter (Monday)

¹ USDE Federal Financial Aid requires 12.5 clock hours of instruction per academic course credit. Therefore, a 3-credit course offered face-to-face would require a minimum of 37.5 clock hours, or 2250 minutes of instruction, in order to be eligible for financial aid. <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/reg/hearulemaking/2009/credit.html#credit>

- 3.G.5. Memorial Day (Monday)
- 3.G.6. Juneteenth (varies)
- 3.G.7. Fourth of July (varies)
- 3.H. The following mid-term breaks will be observed:
 - 3.H.1. The mid-term break for the fall semester will be observed and no classes will meet on the Monday and Tuesday of week nine.
 - 3.H.2. The mid-term break for the spring semester will be observed and no classes will meet on the Monday through Friday of week nine.
- 3.I. College Commencements will be scheduled, based on the following:
 - 3.I.1. Fall Commencement will be held on the Friday of the week of final examinations.
 - 3.I.2. Spring Commencement will be held on the Saturday following the week of final examinations.

4. Potential Modifications to Academic Calendar

- 4.A. Should the academic calendar for a given year need to be compressed, the Colleges will follow the guidance outlined in section C of 34 CFR § 668.3² to make that determination following approval from the Chancellor. While academic calendars are generally expected to be a minimum of thirty (30) weeks of instructional time, approval for good cause can be given to shorten the academic calendar to twenty-six (26) to twenty-nine (29) weeks.
- 4.B. Should modifications need to be made to shorten a regular academic session being offered during the Fall or Spring Term, the following alternatives can be implemented:
 - 4.B.1. Specific holidays when classes are not generally held can be included in the academic calendar and classes held. These include the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and the Monday after Easter.

² (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.

AREA GUIDELINE: **Title**

- 4.B.2. Fall and Spring Breaks can be shortened or removed from the academic calendar and classes held during those dates.
- 4.B.3. Class meeting times can be extended and/or class meeting schedules can be modified to allow each class meeting to complete a greater number of instructional minutes and provide for a reduction in the number of days that each course meets.
- 4.B.4. Final examinations can be compressed into fewer than five (5) days.

5. NSCS Census Date

The official date for enrollment reporting, or census date, for courses shall be October 15. Instructional load and enrollment reports for the previous academic year will be prepared by each College and submitted to the System Office every November depicting headcount and FTE enrollments, using the established census date.

6. Frequently Asked Questions

- 6.A.1. TBD