

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/HB 153 Excess Credit Hour Surcharges
SPONSOR(S): Postsecondary Education Subcommittee; Mariano and others
TIED BILLS: None **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 1462

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Post-Secondary Education Subcommittee	13 Y, 0 N, As CS	McAlarney	Bishop
2) Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee	12 Y, 0 N	deNagy	Lloyd
3) Education Committee			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Currently, a state university student must pay an excess hour surcharge for each credit hour in excess of the number of credit hours required to complete the baccalaureate program in which the student is enrolled.

The bill exempts from the surcharge first-time-in-college students who complete the requirements for their baccalaureate degree program within 4 years. Also, credit hours earned in upper-division-level courses that must be repeated to meet the requirements for a baccalaureate degree in a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics discipline are not calculated as hours required to earn a baccalaureate degree.

The bill will have a positive fiscal impact for students who are first-time-in-college students who complete their requirements for their baccalaureate degree within 4 years. The bill would result in a loss of revenue for institutions from students who take excess credit hours beyond the requirements for a baccalaureate degree program. See FISCAL SECTION.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation

Currently, state university students must pay an excess hour surcharge for credit hours exceeding baccalaureate degree program completion requirements.¹ The Legislature's intent is to encourage each undergraduate student who enrolls in a state university to complete the student's respective baccalaureate degree program in the most efficient way possible while providing for access to additional college coursework. Therefore, a policy was enacted that provides incentives for efficient baccalaureate degree completion.²

Specifically, the excess hour surcharge is effective for students who enter a state university for the first time and maintain continuous enrollment as follows:³

- For the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 academic years, an excess hour surcharge equal to 50 percent of the tuition rate for each credit hour in excess of 120 percent.⁴
- For the 2011-2012 academic year, an excess hour surcharge equal to 100 percent of the tuition rate for each credit hour in excess of 115 percent.⁵
- For the 2012-2013 academic year and thereafter, an excess hour surcharge equal to 100 percent of the tuition rate for each credit hour in excess of 110 percent.⁶

All credit hours taken at the state university from which the student is enrolled are included when calculating the number of hours taken by a student, including:⁷

- Failed courses.⁸
- Courses that are dropped after the university's advertised last day of the drop and add period.⁹
- Courses from which a student withdraws, except as provided in subsection (4).¹⁰
- Repeated courses, except repeated courses for which the student has paid the full cost of instruction as provided in s. 1009.285, F.S.¹¹

In addition, all credit hours earned at another institution and accepted for transfer by the state university and applied toward the student's baccalaureate degree program are included in the calculation.¹²

¹ 1009.286, F.S.

² 1009.286 (1), F.S.

³ 1009.286 (2), F.S.

⁴ 1009.286 (2) (a), F.S.

⁵ 1009.286 (2) (b), F.S.

⁶ 1009.286 (2) (c), F.S.

⁷ 1009.286 (3) (a), F.S.

⁸ 1009.286 (3) (a) 1., F.S.

⁹ 1009.286 (3) (a), 2., F.S.

¹⁰ 1009.286 (3) (a), 3., F.S.

¹¹ 1009.286 (3) (a), 4., F.S.

¹² 1009.286 (3) (b), F.S.

Credit hours earned under the following circumstances are not calculated as hours required to earn a baccalaureate degree:¹³

- College credits earned through an articulated accelerated mechanism identified in s. 1007.27, F.S.¹⁴
- Credit hours earned through internship programs.¹⁵
- Credit hours required for certification, recertification, or certificate programs.¹⁶
- Credit hours in courses from which a student must withdraw due to reasons of medical or personal hardship.¹⁷
- Credit hours taken by active-duty military personnel.¹⁸
- Credit hours required to achieve a dual major taken while pursuing a baccalaureate degree.¹⁹
- Remedial and English as a Second Language credit hours.²⁰
- Credit hours earned in military science courses that are part of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program.²¹

Each state university and Florida College System institution must implement a process for notifying students regarding the excess credit hour surcharge and the notice must be provided upon a student's initial enrollment in the institution. Additionally, the notice must be provided a second time by a state university when a student has earned the credit hours required to complete the baccalaureate degree program in which the student is enrolled. The notice must include a recommendation that each student who intends to earn credit hours at the institution in excess of the credit hours required for the baccalaureate degree program in which the student is enrolled meet with his or her academic advisor.²²

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill exempts from the surcharge first-time-in-college students who complete the requirements for their baccalaureate degree program within 4 years. Also, credit hours earned in upper-division-level courses that must be repeated to meet the requirements for a baccalaureate degree in a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics discipline are not calculated as hours required to earn a baccalaureate degree.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Amends s. 1009.286, F.S., exempting first-in-time college students completing their baccalaureate degree within 4 years from paying excess hour surcharges, and removing credit hours earned in upper-division-level courses that must be repeated to meet the requirements for a baccalaureate degree in a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics discipline from the calculation of hours required to earn a baccalaureate degree.

Section 2. Provides an effective date of July 1, 2017.

¹³ 1009.286 (4), F.S.

¹⁴ 1009.286 (a), F.S.

¹⁵ 1009.286 (b), F.S.

¹⁶ 1009.286 (c), F.S.

¹⁷ 1009.286 (d), F.S.

¹⁸ 1009.286 (e), F.S.

¹⁹ 1009.286 (f), F.S.

²⁰ 1009.286 (g), F.S.

²¹ 1009.286 (h), F.S.

²² 1009.286 (5), F.S.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

See fiscal comments.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

The bill would result in a positive economic impact for students who are first-time-in-college students who complete their requirements for their baccalaureate degree within 4 years. Also, it would result in a positive economic impact for students who must repeat upper-division-level courses for a baccalaureate degree in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics discipline.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The bill would result in a loss of revenue for institutions from students who take excess credit hours beyond the requirements for a baccalaureate degree program.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

None.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

On March 8, 2017, the Postsecondary Education Subcommittee adopted one strike-all amendment and reported the bill favorably as a committee substitute. The strike-all amendment provides an exemption from the excess credit hour surcharge for first-time-in-college students who complete the requirements for their baccalaureate degree program within 4 years. Also, credit hours earned in upper-division-level courses that must be repeated to meet the requirements for a baccalaureate degree in a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics discipline are not calculated as hours required to earn a baccalaureate degree. The bill analysis is drafted to the committee substitute as passed by the Postsecondary Education Subcommittee.