



KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

POLICY TITLE:

KYSU Online Academic Calendar, Terms, and Subterms Policy

VOLUME, SECTION & NUMBER:

1.3.4

ENTITIES AFFECTED:

Online Faculty & Students

Staff

Administration

ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY:

Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs

Department of Finance & Business Affairs

Office of Human Resources

APPROVED BY:

The Kentucky State University Board of Regents

Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs

EFFECTIVE DATE:

7/1/2024

REVISED FROM:

Academic Calendar Policy (1.1.1)

PURPOSE:

The *KYSU Online Academic Calendar, Terms, and Subterms Policy* (1.3.4) supplements the *Academic Calendar Policy* (1.1.1) of Kentucky State University by providing guidance specific to programs and courses offered in the online modality. This policy describes the relationship between KYSU Online’s nonstandard subterms and the standard semesters of the residentially-based academic programs.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Department of Education requires that “[e]very eligible program must have a defined academic year.”¹ For the purposes of Federal Student Aid, “the academic year is defined in weeks of instructional time and credit or

¹ 2023-2024 Federal Student Aid Handbook, Vol 3. “Academic Year Requirements.”



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clock hours.” An academic year must include at least 30 weeks of instructional time for programs offered in credit hours.

- A week of instructional time is any period of seven consecutive days which includes at least one day of regularly scheduled instruction or examination.
- In distance education (involving asynchronous coursework), a week of instructional time is any period of seven consecutive days in which the school makes available instructional materials and instructor support and in which the school expects the student to demonstrate academic engagement.

The calendar system is “the method by which an institution structures most of its courses for the academic year.”² Kentucky State University operates according to a standard term calendar system consisting of two semesters and a summer session. An academic semester is a period of time that shall consist of no fewer than fifteen (15) calendar weeks and no more than eighteen (18) calendar weeks of instructional time. The inclusion of breaks or holidays within any particular semester shall be at the discretion of the institution so long as the institution is in compliance with the criteria for awarding semester credit hours.³

Kentucky State University’s fall semester runs from the middle of August until the end of December.⁴ The spring semester runs from the beginning of January until the middle of May. The summer session runs from the middle of May until early August.⁵ Each semester is a standard term consisting of *at least 15 weeks* of academic engagement. These are defined in the Catalog as “academic terms.”⁶

With the launch of KYSU Online programs and courses in the 2024-25 academic year, the academic calendar will incorporate online subterms into the standard term academic calendar. Each subterm is roughly half the length of a semester; it consists of no more than nine (9) and no less than 7.5 weeks of instructional time. KYSU Online’s subterms are eight (8) weeks long.

On the one hand, these online subterms can be considered nonstandard terms. Generally, nonstandard terms are terms that are not semesters, trimesters, or quarters. For example, a 5-week term or a 23-week term would be considered a nonstandard term because no standard term can be fewer than nine (9) weeks or greater than 21 weeks in length. However, “[i]n a program using a standard term academic calendar you may combine two or more consecutive shorter nonstandard terms (often called modules) and treat them as a single standard term such as a semester or quarter.”⁷ Therefore, for financial aid purposes, since the nonstandard terms run consecutively within the delimitations of Kentucky State University’s standard term semesters, they will be treated as a single standard term.

² IPEDS 2023-24 Data Collection System Glossary. “Calendar System.” Accessed 11/27/2023. <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossary>

³ Academic Calendar Policy (1.1.1)

⁴ See the Academic Calendar Policy (1.1.1) for more specific details.

⁵ <https://www.kysu.edu/academics/registrar/academic-calendar/index.php>

⁶ See Chapter 2, “Section 1. Definitions” in the 2022-23 Undergraduate Catalog. <https://kysu-public.courseleaf.com/undergraduate/admissions/>

⁷ <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/fsa-handbook/2024-2025/vol3/ch1-academic-years-academic-calendars-payment-periods-and-disbursements>



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The courses offered in 8-week subterms are measured in credit hours (34 CFR 600.2 “Credit hour”). In general, an asynchronous online course occurring within an 8-week subterm is a compressed version of a semester-length version of the same asynchronous course. However, this might not be the case if the modality of the courses is different (e.g., a subterm course in the online modality might not be just a compressed version of a semester course in the virtual or traditional modality). Nevertheless, there must be parity between courses and programs offered in multiple modalities. The content, assignments, assessments, learning outcomes, and curricular value of the course credit hours are the determining factors in the relationship between courses delivered in various modalities and timeframes.⁸

KYSU Online courses offered in subterms are eight (8) weeks long and contain study modules. As such, a module corresponds to a calendar week within the subterm. If the course were offered in an academic semester term over 16 weeks, for example, each of the eight modules would span more than a calendar week.

A module is a discrete collection of learning activities that focuses on elements of the course topics and learning outcomes. Each module provides students with opportunities for academic engagement with the course and instructor. Modules organize the course learning activities into a logical progression that facilitates a scaffolded approach to student learning in an asynchronous course.

The academic calendar, consisting of two semesters and a summer session, is depicted below, along with academic terms and subterms for the online programs. The fall is in the top third of the image; the spring is in the middle. The summer is in the bottom third. Since the summer session is shorter than a typical semester, subterms B and C overlap.

Fall	Part of Calendar	<i>Fall (mid-August to late-December)</i>																			
	Online AY weeks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20																			
	Term	Fall Semester / Fall A																			
	Term weeks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17																			
	Subterm	Fall B								Fall C											
Subterm weeks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8								1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8												
Spring	Part of Calendar	<i>Spring (early-January to early-May)</i>																			
	Online AY weeks	21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38																			
	Term	Spring Semester / Spring A																			
	Term weeks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17																			
	Subterm	Spring B								Spring C											
Subterm weeks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8								1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8												
Summer	Part of Calendar	<i>Summer (early-May to mid-August)</i>																			
	Online AY weeks	39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52																			
	Term	Summer Session																			
	Term weeks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8																			
	Subterm	Summer B								Summer C											
Subterm weeks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8								1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8												

⁸ [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-600#p-600.2\(Credit%20hour\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-600#p-600.2(Credit%20hour))



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Term A

Term A is a semester-length online term. As shown in the image above, term A runs in parallel with the traditional semester for residential programs. In the fall, this is referred to as Fall A; in the spring, it is called Spring A. There is no term A in the summer. The separate online term helps differentiate semester-length online course offerings from residential, hybrid, and virtual course offerings for the residentially-based programs. The separate online term also helps with enrollment processes and data management by distinguishing online course sections from those offered in other modalities. Internships and dissertations for online students might be listed in term A, depending on program needs.

Subterm B

Subterm B is the first 8-week interval of a traditional academic semester or term. In the fall, this is referred to as Fall B. In the spring, it is referred to as Spring B. In the summer, this is referred to as Summer B.

Subterm C

Subterm C is the second 8-week interval of a traditional academic semester or term. In the fall, this is referred to as Fall C. In the spring, this is referred to as Spring C. In the summer, this is referred to as Summer C. Since the summer session is shorter than a semester, Summer B and Summer C overlap.

SUBTERM RATIONALE

A student-centered school is mindful of the different needs of residential and online students. Sub-terms occurring within the delimitations of the standard terms of an academic year, such as semesters, are beneficial for online programs in several ways.

For student recruiting and enrollment, subterms reduce the time between start dates for new students, which can be attractive to prospective students.

Focusing on fewer courses at once can be helpful for students who are in a career or shouldering more substantial domestic responsibilities than a typical 18- to 22-year-old residential undergraduate student. Subterms enable students to consolidate their efforts on fewer courses at once while allowing them to complete the same number of courses within an academic term/semester.

Full-time students can frontload or backload their course schedule across the subterms while remaining full-time. For example, a full-time residential student would carry 12 credit hours or four courses per semester. The equivalent credits for a full-time online student could be achieved in several configurations:

- Two courses in subterm B and two courses in subterm C
- Three courses in subterm B and one course in subterm C
- One course in subterm B and three courses in subterm C.⁹

RELATED PROCEDURES:

See the “Procedures” section in the *Academic Calendar Policy* (1.1.1).

⁹ Students should be limited to a maximum of 3 courses per sub-term apart from rare exceptions.



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DEFINITIONS:

Academic Year: Academic year means a period of time that is at least thirty (30) weeks in length, counting periods of time (terms) that begin on the first day of classes (instruction) and end on the last day of classes (instruction) or examinations.¹⁰

Instructional Days: Instructional days mean any weekday, Monday through Friday, in which classes are in session.¹¹

Instructional Week Time: A week of instructional time for purposes of the definition of academic semester and academic year, a week of instructional time is 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 examination occurs.¹²

Semester: Semester is a synonym for an academic term or period, either of the two usually eighteen (18) week periods of instruction into which an academic year is often divided at a college or university.¹³

Semester Length: An academic semester means a period of time that shall consist of no fewer than fifteen (15) calendar weeks and no more than eighteen (18) calendar weeks of instructional time. The inclusion of breaks or holidays within any particular semester shall be at the discretion of the institution so long as the institution is in compliance with the criteria for awarding semester credit hours.¹⁴

Summer session: Summer session is the period in the academic calendar between the spring and the fall semesters.¹⁵

Subterm: Each subterm is roughly half the length of a semester; it consists of no more than nine (9) and no less than 7.5 weeks of instructional time. KYSU Online's subterms are eight (8) weeks long.

See the "Definitions" section of the *Academic Calendar Policy* (1.1.1) for more definitions.

RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS:

1.1.1 Academic Calendar Policy

1.1.7 Credit Hour Policies

1.3.9 KYSU Online Course Registration Policy

1.3.14 KYSU Online Course Modality Policy

STATUTORY OR REGULATORY REFERENCES:

¹⁰ Academic Calendar Policy (1.1.1)

¹¹ Academic Calendar Policy (1.1.1)

¹² Academic Calendar Policy (1.1.1)

¹³ Academic Calendar Policy (1.1.1)

¹⁴ Academic Calendar Policy (1.1.1)

¹⁵ Academic Calendar Policy (1.1.1)



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Department of Education

FSA Handbook Guidance

Volume 3, Chapter 1

- Every eligible program must have a defined academic year.
- For FSA purposes, the academic year is defined in weeks of instructional time and credit or clock hours.
- For both undergraduate and graduate programs, the law and regulations require an academic year to include a minimum number of weeks of instructional time.
 - For a program offered in credit hours, the academic year must include at least 30 weeks of instructional time.
 - For a program offered in clock hours, the academic year must include at least 26 weeks of instructional time.
- For all FSA programs, a week of instructional time is any period of seven consecutive days in which –
 - 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 scheduled day of study for examinations occurs. OR
 - In a program offered using asynchronous coursework through distance education or correspondence courses, the school makes available the instructional materials, other resources, and instructor support necessary for academic engagement and completion of course objectives; and
 - In a program using asynchronous coursework through distance education, the school expects enrolled students to perform educational activities demonstrating academic engagement during the week.
- [I]n a program using a standard term academic calendar you may combine two or more consecutive shorter nonstandard terms (often called modules) and treat them as a single standard term such as a semester or quarter.

Nonstandard terms. Generally, nonstandard terms are terms that are not semesters, trimesters, or quarters. For example, a 5-week term or a 23-week term would be considered a nonstandard term because no standard term can be fewer than nine weeks or greater than 21 weeks in length.

The school defines an FSA academic year. It must meet the regulatory minimums for both credit hours and weeks of instructional time.

IPEDS 2023-24 Data Collection System Online Glossary

The IPEDS online glossary includes definitions relevant to the data collection system:

Academic year

“The period of time generally extending from September to June; usually equated to 2 semesters or trimesters, 3 quarters, or the period covered by a 4-1-4 calendar system.”



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Semester (calendar system)

“A calendar system that consists of two sessions called semesters during the academic year with about 15 weeks for each semester of instruction. There may be an additional summer session. Note: the standard term length range is defined by the Office of Postsecondary Education. More information can be found at: <https://ifap.ed.gov/electronic-announcements/110519RevisionGuidelinesApplicableStandardTerms>.”

Calendar System

“The method by which an institution structures most of its courses for the academic year.”

Credit Hour

“A unit of measure representing the equivalent of an hour (50 minutes) of instruction per week over the entire term. It is applied toward the total number of credit hours needed for completing the requirements of a degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential.”

34 CFR 668.3

According to the Department of Education, an “academic year” is defined as follows:

“(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” (34 CFR 668.3(a)).¹⁶

Furthermore, the Department of Education defines “weeks” with reference to distance education:

(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” (34 CFR 668.3(b)).¹⁷

See also 34 CFR 668.2 “Full-time student.”¹⁸

¹⁶ [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-668/section-668.3#p-668.3\(a\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-668/section-668.3#p-668.3(a)); See also the definition of “Academic year” in the glossary for the 2023-24 IPEDS Data Collection System (<https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossary>).

¹⁷ [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-668/section-668.3#p-668.3\(b\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-668/section-668.3#p-668.3(b))

¹⁸ [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-668/section-668.2#p-668.2\(Full-time%20student\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-668/section-668.2#p-668.2(Full-time%20student))



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34 CFR 600.2 “Credit hour”

The Department of Education defines credit hours with reference to the length of courses that occur in divisions of the academic year:

“Credit hour: Except as provided in 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l), a credit hour is an amount of student work defined by an institution, as approved by the institution’s accrediting agency or State approval agency, that is consistent with commonly accepted practice in postsecondary education and that—(1) Reasonably approximates not less than— (i) 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 period of time; or (ii) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1)(i) 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; and (2) Permits an institution, in determining the amount of work associated with a credit hour, to take into account a variety of delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels” (34 CFR 600.2 “Credit hour”).¹⁹

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See *Chapter 1: Academic Years, Academic Calendars, Payment Periods, and Disbursements* for other relevant guidance.²⁰

SACSCOC

See the SACSCOC Policy Statement: *Credit Hours*.²¹

SACSCOC clarifies the degree of flexibility in interpreting the federal definition of a credit hour:

“An institution is responsible for determining the credit hours awarded for coursework in its programs in accordance with the definition of a credit hour for Federal program purposes. The definition does provide some flexibility for institutions in determining the appropriate amount of credit hours for student coursework.

- The institution determines the amount of credit for student work.
- A credit hour is expected to be a reasonable approximation of a minimum amount of student work in a Carnegie unit in accordance with commonly accepted practice in higher education.
- The credit hour definition is a minimum standard that does not restrict an institution from setting a higher standard that requires more student work per credit hour.
- The definition does not dictate particular amounts of classroom time versus out-of-class student work.

¹⁹ [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-600#p-600.2\(Credit%20hour\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-600#p-600.2(Credit%20hour))

²⁰ <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/fsa-handbook/2023-2024/vol3/ch1-academic-years-academic-calendars-payment-periods-and-disbursements>

²¹ <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/Credit-Hours.pdf>



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- In determining the amount of work the institution’s learning outcomes will entail, the institution may take into consideration alternative delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels.
- To the extent an institution believes that complying with the Federal definition of a credit hour would not be appropriate for academic and other institutional needs, it may adopt a separate measure for those purposes.
- Credits may be awarded on the basis of documentation of the amount of work a typical student is expected to complete within a specified amount of academically engaged time, or on the basis of documented student learning calibrated to that amount of academically engaged time for a typical student” (SACSCOC Policy Statement: Credit Hours).²²

See also the SACSCOC Policy Statement: Distance Education and Correspondence Courses.²³

POLICY OWNER/INTERPRETING AUTHORITY:

The Office of Online Education

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²² <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/Credit-Hours.pdf>

²³ <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/07/DistanceCorrespondenceEducation.pdf>