

<b>NEOMED ACADEMIC POLICY</b>	<b>Policy No: 3349-AC-265</b>
<b>ACADEMIC POLICY TITLE: Financial Aid Academic Calendar, Academic Year, and Payment Period Policy</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: February 28, 2022</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: Office of Financial Aid</b>	<b>Approval Authority: VPAA Policy Author: Director, Financial Aid</b>

**(A) PURPOSE**

This Policy outlines the standards for, and determinants of academic calendar, academic year, and payment period for financial aid set forth by rules and regulations outlined in the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA). This policy is separate from the academic guidelines set forth by the [University/VPAA – Academic Semester Calendar Policy](#).

**(B) SCOPE**

This policy applies to all academic programs at NEOMED that are approved to participate in programs under the HEA.

Financial aid policies are written and revised with the intent of being compliant with regulations set forth from the United States Department of Education and other agencies from which NEOMED receives funding. In the event new regulations are created or existing regulations are revised or removed, the most up to date regulations will be enforced regardless of whether the process of updating this policy has been completed.

**(C) DEFINITIONS**

- (1) “Academic Calendar” refers to a calendar indicating key dates and deadlines for important academic requirements and/or activities including, but not limited to, the start and end dates of classes, holidays, exam days, and registration dates.
- (2) “Academic Year” refers to the timeframe a student is engaged in a particular year of an academic program, usually beginning with the Fall Term and ending after the Spring Term.
- (3) “Instructional Time” refers to time during which a student is required or expected to be actively engaged in a learning activity that is required for completion of coursework that leads to degree conferral.

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- (4) “Module” refers a course or courses in the program that do not span the entire length of the Payment Period.
- (5) “Payment Period” refers to the period of time for which a student is enrolled, defined as semesters or term. For Federal Student Aid (FSA) purposes, a year-long clinical term is divided into two to three Payment Periods based upon the part of term schedule.
- (6) “Term” refers to a period in which all classes are scheduled to begin and end within a set time frame, and academic progress is measured in credit-hours.

**(D) POLICY STATEMENT**

- (1) Standards for Academic Calendar for FSA purposes
  - (a) For purposes of the Department of Education FSA programs, there are three basic types of Academic Calendars: standard Term, nonstandard Term, and non-Term. For FSA purposes for all NEOMED programs that are eligible for FSA, the Academic Calendar is standard Term. The Office of Financial Aid (OFA) does not offer nonstandard Term or non-Term Academic Calendars for FSA purposes.
    - (i) Administration of Standard Term
      - (a) Semesters contain between 14 and 21 weeks of Instructional Time. A summer Term may contain fewer than 14 weeks. An Academic Calendar that uses semesters or trimesters traditionally has three Terms, one each in the fall, spring, and summer, two of which comprise an Academic Year.

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- (b) Standard Terms need not be of equal length. For example, a college could offer a program using semesters with the Academic Year consisting of a 14-week fall semester and a 20-week spring semester.
- (c) The number of weeks in a standard Term may vary from year to year during a program. For example, a college could offer a two-year program with the first Academic Year consisting of two 15-week semesters, and the second Academic Year consisting of two 20-week semesters.
- (d) A standard Term may contain an occasional class or classes that are longer than the normal Term or that begin or end beyond the normal start or end date of the Term if the class or classes do not overlap another term.
  - (i) If classes routinely extend a week or more beyond the normal **Term** start or end dates, the official length of the **Term** must be revised. If the combined length of the Term and the extended class or classes is greater than the maximum number of weeks allowed for a standard Term, the program is no longer standard Term for FSA program purposes. For example, if a 17-week semester contains a class that does not end until five weeks after the normal semester end date, the program's Academic Calendar is no longer standard Term for FSA program purposes, because the combined length of the Term and the extended class is 22 weeks, which exceeds the maximum 21 weeks permitted for a semester.

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- (e) Standard Term may not overlap within a program. If an extended class overlaps another Term, the program’s Academic Calendar is no longer standard Term for FSA purposes.
- (f) Standard Term may be a combination of two or more Modules treated as a single standard Term.
- (g) A short nonstandard Term may be combined with a preceding or following standard Term and considered to be a single standard Term. These short nonstandard Terms are often called “intersessions;” NEOMED has an intersession called the Maymester.
  - (i) To consider the program as being offered in standard Terms, the intersession must be combined with either the fall or the spring semester and treat the combined intersession and semester as a single Term. With this approach, the same treatment must be applied for all FSA purposes to all students enrolled in the program. In addition, hours taken in the intersession must count toward a student’s enrollment status for the combined Term, and costs for the intersession must be included in the cost of attendance.
  - (ii) In some cases, an intersession may partially overlap one or more standard Terms. If the intersession overlaps just one standard Term, the program is still considered to be offered in standard Terms the overlapping intersession is combined with the

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standard Term and treat that combination as a single Term, as described above.

- (h) Periods of clinical work such as medical and pharmacy program work which is conducted outside the classroom may not be included in a standard Term, unless all the following apply:
  - (i) All students in the program must participate in a practicum or clinical experience and its completion is required for graduates to apply for licensure or authorization to practice the occupation those students intend to pursue;
  - (ii) The school has little or no control over the length or start/end dates of the practicum or clinical experience. This may be due to constraints imposed by outside licensing bodies, or the need to accommodate schedules of entities with which students are being placed (e.g., hospitals); and
  - (iii) Credit hours associated with the practicum or clinical experience must be associated with the Term in which most of the training occurs, even if the starting and ending dates do not exactly align with the Term dates and/or overlap with another Term.
- (i) If the clinical work meets all the above criteria, Terms which include such clinical work are not required to be considered nonstandard, nor are such programs required to be considered non-Term, even if the clinical work overlaps another Term. This flexibility is limited to

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required clinical periods associated with standard Term programs in medicine (allopathic, osteopathic, nursing and veterinary), pharmacy, physical therapy, and student teaching required to obtain a state teaching certificate. NEOMED medicine (MD) and pharmacy (PharmD) clinical training are eligible for this flexibility if the clinical work meets all the aforementioned criteria.

- (2) Standards for Academic Year for FSA purposes
  - (a) The Academic Year must include at least 30 weeks of Instructional Time.
  - (b) The number of weeks of Instructional Time is based on the period that generally begins on the first day of classes in the Academic Year and ends on the last day of classes or the last day of examinations, whichever is later.
  - (c) 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, examination, or (after the last day of classes) at least one scheduled day of study for examinations occurs.
    - (i) Instructional Time does not include periods of orientation, counseling, homework, vacation, or other activity not related to class preparation or examination. Instructional Time does not include course(s) not required for completion of a student's academic program. For example, elective experiences not required for degree conferral. Therefore, the weeks of Instructional Time may be less than the number of calendar weeks that elapse between the first day of classes and the last day of classes or examinations.
    - (ii) Weeks of Instructional Time:

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- (a) Cannot overlap, and a program cannot use a single day of scheduled instruction, exams, or study time to create more than one week of instruction (for example, a program may not end a week of Instructional Time on one day and begin the next week of Instructional Time on the same day);
  - (b) May begin and end on a day other than Monday, provided that each week of Instructional Time comprises a seven consecutive day period (for example, a Wednesday through the following Tuesday) which includes at least one day of scheduled instruction, exams, or study time, as required by the regulations; and
  - (c) May begin up to six days prior to the first day of scheduled instruction or exams in a Payment Period.
- (3) Academic Year defined by program
- (a) The standard structure for Academic Calendars at NEOMED is an optional 12-week summer header, followed by 16-week fall and 16-week spring semesters, with an optional 3-week Maymester.
  - (b) Defined Academic Year by program: Please see Appendix A, Financial Aid Academic Calendar, Academic Year, and Payment Period by Program for information related to Academic Year and Instructional Time usage by program.
- (4) Standards for payment period
- Annually the OFA determines the Payment Periods per program.
- (a) The payment period is the Term.

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- (i) Actual dates of Instructional Time are used to define the Payment Period. For example, if Instructional Time for the Term ends on a Wednesday for a program the Payment Period will end on Wednesday, even if the Master Academic Calendar reflects a Term end date of Saturday. This includes actual dates for Module courses throughout the Payment Period.
- (ii) In cases of clinical training years when student is registered in a single, year long term:
  - (a) OFA determines the Payment Periods based upon the Modules scheduled for the Academic Year. OFA will consider the standard structure for Academic Calendars at NEOMED and attempt to mirror this structure when possible.
- (b) Federal regulations and related guidance governing Title IV student aid programs require schools to report the enrollment of students who receive federal student aid. Payment Periods by program established by OFA are used by University Registrar to complete National Student Loan Data System Enrollment Reporting.
  - (i) Enrollment status must only include registration in course(s) that are required for degree conferral. Credit hours of non-degree required course(s) will be subtracted from total credit hours for the Payment Period. Enrollment status may affect the student's eligibility for certain types of financial aid. Refer to the [Financial Aid Eligibility, Application, and File Verification Policy](#).



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## Appendix A

### Defined Academic Year by Program

*(i)* College of Graduate Studies

1. Master of Science in Health-System Pharmacy Administration Program, Integrated Pharmaceutical Medicine Graduate Program, Master of Art in Medical Ethics and Humanities, Master of Public Health, Masters in Foundations of Medicine, Master of Medical Science in Anesthesia, and Master of Leadership in Health Systems Science defined **Academic Year:**

*(a)* **Academic Year** and **Instructional Time** length: 32 weeks

*(b)* **Academic Year** definition: optional 12-week summer header, followed by 16-week fall and 16-week spring semesters, optional 3-week Maymester. The 3-week Maymester is attached to the 16-week spring semester.

*(ii)* College of Medicine

1. Four-year degree track

*(a)* First and second year of the program defined **Academic Year:**

i. **Academic Year** and **Instructional Time** length: 32 weeks

ii. **Academic Year** definition: optional 12-week summer header, followed by 16-week fall and 16-week spring semesters, optional 3-week Maymester. The 3-week Maymester is attached to the 16-week spring semester.

*(b)* Third year (clinical training) of the program defined **Academic Year:**

i. **Academic Year** and **Instructional Time** length: 52 weeks

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ii. **Academic Year** definition: 22-week fall and 30-week spring semester

(c) Fourth year (clinical training) of the program defined **Academic Year**:

i. **Academic Year** and **Instructional Time** length: 40 weeks

ii. **Academic Year** definition: 20-week fall and 20-week spring semester.

2. Accelerated Family Medicine Track

i. First and second year of the program defined **Academic Year**:

ii. **Academic Year** and **Instructional Time** length: 32 weeks

iii. **Academic Year** definition: optional 12-week summer header, followed by 16-week fall and 16-week spring semesters, optional 3-week Maymester. The 3-week Maymester is attached to the 16-week spring semester.

(b) Third year (clinical training) of the program defined **Academic Year**:

i. **Academic Year** and **Instructional Time** length: 54 weeks

ii. **Academic Year** definition: 20-week summer header, followed by 17-week fall and 17-week spring semester.

(iii) College of Pharmacy

1. First, second, and third year of the program defined **Academic Year**:

(a) **Academic Year** and **Instructional Time** length: 32 weeks

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- (b) **Academic Year** definition: optional 12-week summer header, followed by 16-week fall and 16-week spring semesters, optional 3-week Maymester. The 3-week Maymester is attached to the 16-week spring semester.
  
- 2. Fourth year (clinical training) of the program defined **Academic Year**:
  - (a) **Academic Year** length: 48 weeks
  
  - (b) **Instructional Time** length: 43 weeks
  
  - (c) **Academic Year** definition: 13-week summer header, followed by 13-week fall and 17-week spring semester.