



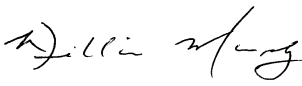
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

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**To:** Presidents/CEOs of NYS Independent Colleges and Universities

**From:** William P. Murphy 

**Subject:** Amendment of Section 145-2.4 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Relating to the Deferment of the Declaration of a Major by Matriculated Students for State Financial Aid Purposes

Section 145-2.4(f) of the Commissioner's regulations provides that students who are enrolled in a two-year or four-year college program leading to an associate's or bachelor's degree may defer the declaration of their major course of study if approved by the school. This allows students to remain enrolled in one or more of an institution's approved programs.

For state financial aid purposes, however, two-year degree students must declare a major within 30 days of the end of the institution's add/drop period of the sophomore year. Similarly, four-year degree students must declare a major within 30 days of the end of the institution's add/drop period of the junior year of a baccalaureate program. This is designed to ensure that students are able to complete the major course of study requirements for the degree within the timeframe specified in the academic program.

Students participating in early college high school initiatives who graduate from high school with both a high school diploma as well as a substantial number of college credits often matriculate with enough college credits such that the matriculating institution classifies them as a sophomore or junior upon entry. At the February 2023 Board of Regents meeting, section 145-2.4(f) of the Commissioner's regulations was [amended](#) to provide students who have successfully earned college credits while still in high school and have enrolled in a two-year or four-year college program, with an additional semester, if needed, to declare a major so as not to jeopardize their state financial aid.

Under the amendment, two-year degree students who reach sophomore year status upon enrollment in accordance with the institution's policies would be required to declare a major within 30 days of the end of the institution's add/drop period in the semester *after* first-time enrollment. Additionally, four-year degree students who reach junior year status upon enrollment in accordance with the institution's policies would be required to declare a major within 30 days of the end of the institution's add/drop in the semester *after* first-time enrollment.

In both such cases, while the student is granted a deferment of an additional semester to declare a major, a major must be declared within 30 days of the end of the add/drop period of the next semester after reaching their sophomore year or junior year status, respectively. In all instances, the regulations expressly provide that the student is free to subsequently change his or her major during their enrollment.

This amendment became effective on March 1, 2023. Please share this information with relevant offices at your institution. For questions about financial aid for New York State college students, please see the [Higher Education Services Corporation](#) website. Questions about this amendment can be sent to the Office of Postsecondary Access, Support and Success at [kiap@nysed.gov](mailto:kiap@nysed.gov).