



# Approval of Bachelor's Degrees Exceeding 120 Credits

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UTAH  
SYSTEM OF  
HIGHER  
EDUCATION

# Bottom Line Up Front

The Commissioner is recommending that the Board authorize some bachelor's degree programs to exceed the 120-credit hour requirement based on one or more of the statutorily authorized exceptions.

# Background

## *Bachelor's Degree Credit Limits*

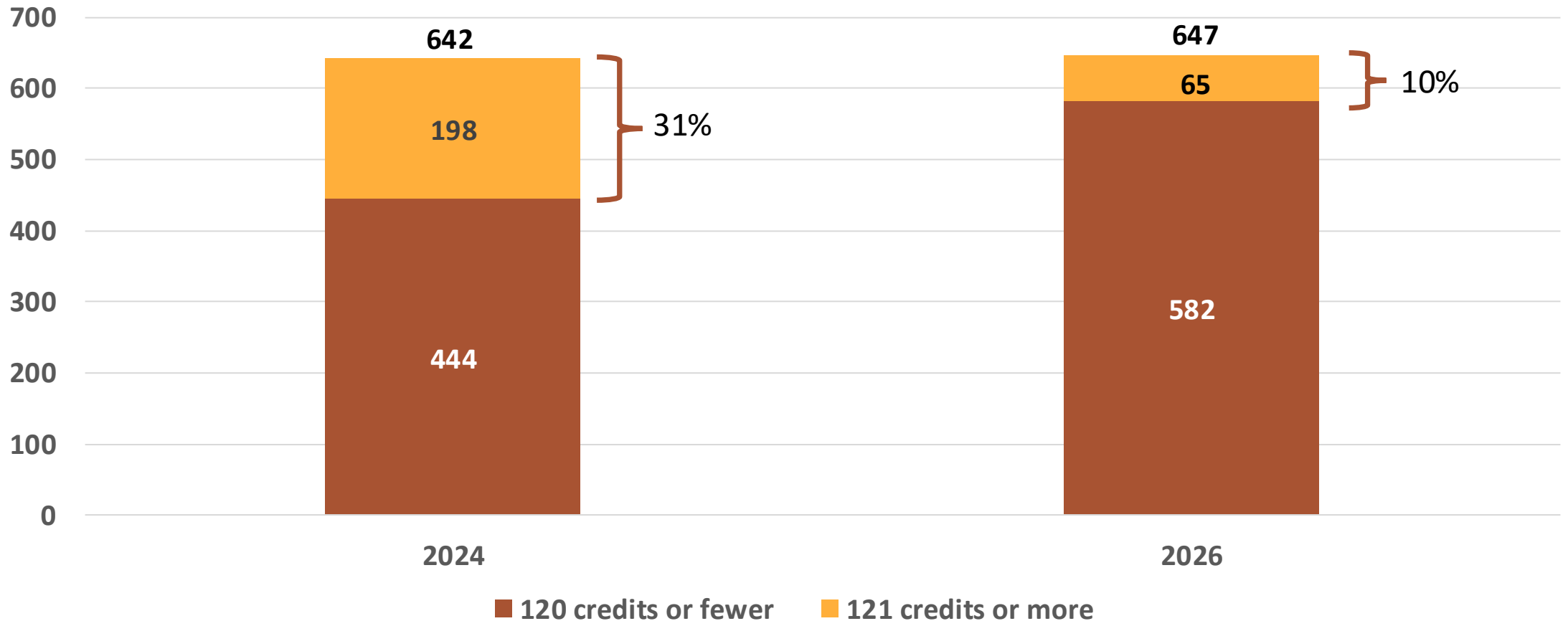
- Longstanding upper limit of 126 credits in Board Policy R402
  - In 2025, the Legislature acted to:
    - Impose an upper limit of 120 credits for all bachelor's degrees; and
    - Authorize the Board to approve a degree program exceeding 120 credits if required to satisfy:
      - Professional licensure requirements;
      - Specialized accreditation standards; or
      - Protection of health, safety, and welfare of the public
- See Utah Code § 53H-3-603(5)(a)(i) and (ii)*

# Implementation Timeline

## *Reducing Degrees to 120 or Fewer Credits*

- **May 2025:** HB 265 became effective and Board approved amendments to Policy R402 to align
- **Summer 2025:** Data submitted by the institutions to the Commissioner's office in August 2025 reflected significant decline in number of programs exceeding 120 credits
- **Fall 2025:** Commissioner's office staff worked with institutions to reduce credits for additional programs and identified a limited number of programs that need authority from the Board to exceed 120 credits based on a statutory exception
- **March 2026:** Commissioner is recommending that the Board authorize 65 bachelor's degree programs (of 650 total) in three main disciplines to exceed 120 credits. This is a decrease from nearly 200 programs exceeding 120 credits in 2024.

# Bachelor's Degrees By Credit Requirements



# Requested Approvals to Exceed 120 Credits

## *Four Main Disciplines*

- **Education – 30 programs**
  - **Statutory Exception:** Professional Licensure
  - Educator licensing and endorsement standards set by USBE necessitate exceeding 120 credits for many teacher preparation programs.
- **Healthcare – 11 programs**
  - **Statutory Exceptions:** Professional Licensure and Accreditation
  - Specialized accreditation and licensure standards set by the state and professional oversight bodies require some programs to exceed 120 credits.

# Requested Approvals to Exceed 120 Credits

## *Four Main Disciplines*

- **Engineering – 21 programs**
  - **Statutory Exception:** Accreditation
  - Specialized accreditation standards to ensure engineers are prepared for roles that affect public safety require some programs to exceed 120 credits.
- **Other Professional Practice – 3 programs**
  - **Statutory Exceptions:** Professional Licensure and Accreditation
  - Professional licensure requirements and accreditation standards for Architecture and two Forensic Science degrees require these programs to exceed 120 credits.