



Academic Calendar Decision-Making Matrix

Purpose:

This resource outlines the key considerations related to determining the program's academic calendar. Equity considerations are noted throughout. Many of these decisions overlap with other key decisions in the Blueprint and will require input from a number of college decision-makers.

Key Decisions:

- Academic Year Definition
- Term Length and Structure
- Full-Time Academic Year Definition
- Enrollment Flexibility
- Module Overlap and Pacing
- Academic Calendar Type
- Financial Aid Disbursement Capacity
- Technology Support for Calendar Type
- Administrative and Logistical Sustainability

Key Decision	Planning Question	Potential Impact	Equity Considerations	Decision
Academic Year Definition	<i>What is the program's defined academic year, and how does this schedule accommodate diverse student needs and timelines?</i>	Impacts how students plan their academic progress and how financial aid packages and disburses financial aid	Ensure that the definition allows for flexibility in student progression, accommodating both full-time and part-time students.	
Term Length and Structure	<i>What are the term lengths, and how do they impact students with varying personal and professional responsibilities?</i>	Affects students' ability to balance education with other responsibilities, potentially influencing retention and completion rates	Choose term lengths that offer flexibility for working adults, caregivers, and other students who may have busy or irregular schedules.	
Full-Time Academic Year Definition	<i>What is the full-time academic year definition, and how does it support equitable access for all students, including those studying part-time?</i>	Influences financial aid eligibility and student progression, especially for part-time students	Define a full-time academic year in a way that supports students who need to study part-time, ensuring they are not disadvantaged.	

Key Decision	Planning Question	Potential Impact	Equity Considerations	Decision
Enrollment Flexibility	<i>Will enrollment be flexible enough to accommodate students' individual schedules?</i>	Determines how easily students can progress through the program, potentially impacting time-to-completion	Provide flexible enrollment options to allow students to move at their own pace.	
Module Overlap and Pacing	<i>Will modules overlap terms, allowing students to progress at their own pace, or will they be constrained to specific periods?</i>	Affects student progression and the ability to accelerate or decelerate their studies based on personal needs	Allow modules to overlap terms enabling self-paced learning and reducing barriers for students who need flexibility.	
Academic Calendar Type	<i>What academic calendar type provides the greatest flexibility for students, especially those facing historic barriers to education?</i>	Directly impacts students' access to education, financial aid disbursement, and overall program flexibility	Consider how different calendar types (e.g., subscription-based, non-term) could better serve students from historically underserved groups.	

Key Decision	Planning Question	Potential Impact	Equity Considerations	Decision
Financial Aid Disbursement Capacity	Does the financial aid office have the capacity to manage both standard term and subscription-based disbursements?	Impacts the financial aid office's ability to effectively support students in different programs	Ensure the financial aid office can handle multiple disbursement methods without delays or inequities in access to financial aid.	
Technology Support for Calendar Type	Does the current technology system support administration of the desired calendar type?	Determines the feasibility of implementing the chosen calendar type and ensuring equitable access to administrative support	Assess if technology limitations could disproportionately affect certain student populations and plan for necessary upgrades.	
Administrative and Logistical Sustainability	Is the desired academic year sustainable for the college administratively and logistically?	Affects the long-term viability of the program and the ability to maintain quality and equity in service delivery	Ensure that the chosen academic calendar is sustainable and does not strain institutional resources, which could impact the quality of service students receive or capacity for overall equity efforts.	