There are a number of institutional and individual factors governing the amount of time a particular student takes to complete the baccalaureate degree. It is clear that the number of programs requiring more than 120 credits is one factor in extending student enrollment. In an attempt to ensure that students who are enrolled full-time for at least 15 credits per semester can complete their baccalaureate programs within four years, the USM shall adopt the following guidelines for baccalaureate programs.

1. The standard number of credits required for receipt of a baccalaureate degree from a USM institution shall be 120.

2. Exceptions to this 120-credit standard shall be allowed in the following instances:
   a. The program is defined as a five-year baccalaureate program.
   b. Professional accreditation requirements stipulate a higher number of credits or require coursework that cannot be realistically completed within 120 credits.
   c. A program is governed by certification requirements that result in a need for credits in excess of 120 over four years.

3. Institutions with other compelling reasons for exceeding the 120-credit standard may request an exception to this policy to from the Chancellor. On an annual basis, the Chancellor will report approved exceptions to the Board of Regents.

4. Institutions shall be asked to report periodically on the number of credits required by programs in their academic inventory and the rationale for any exceptions to the 120-credit standard.

This policy shall become effective on July 1, 2005.