

ACCELERATED MASTERS (4+1) POLICY

An accelerated graduate degree creates an opportunity for exceptional undergraduate students to obtain both their undergraduate and graduate degrees by completing some undergraduate course requirements at the graduate level leading to a substantial savings in time and money. The graduate credit hours that satisfy undergraduate degree requirements also reduce the credit hours needed for the graduate degree and are typically referred to as double counting or credit sharing. Accelerated programs that rely on double counting to reduce time-to-degree are often referred to as “4+1 accelerated masters”.

Double counting

The maximum number of graduate level credits that can be counted toward an undergraduate degree program is 16 credit hours in an accelerated program. Each double counted course will apply to the graduate degree in total credit hours (e.g. a 3 credit course has to be counted at 3 credits) and not split or divided into partial credits. Accelerated program proposals must specify which courses in the graduate curriculum can be double counted with the undergraduate requirements and how they fit into the undergraduate program of study. Typically, graduate programs designate graduate courses with similar subject-matter to undergraduate degree requirements (i.e. requiring accelerated students to take the 500 level course of a 400 level undergraduate requirement). Graduate level double counted courses are delivered at a higher level of rigor and should not be taken until students are officially admitted into the accelerated program.

Once the maximum of 16 credit hours of graduate coursework has been completed, a student in an accelerated program cannot continue to take graduate level courses until they have completed their undergraduate graduation and the graduate degree program has moved to their primary degree program. Undergraduate students who exceed this maximum will be administratively dropped from their graduate courses.

Admission

Undergraduate students can be considered for admission into an accelerated master’s program after they have earned 60 credit hours, typically in the junior year. If admitted, their graduate program will be their secondary curriculum in the student information system. Given the condensed nature of the program, a higher GPA is expected for admission. Individual programs can set their own admission requirements to ensure student success in the accelerated program.

Student Status (U/G)

Accelerated students remain classified as continuing undergraduate students until they complete their undergraduate degree requirements and apply for and are granted their bachelor’s degree. In addition, they will not be classified as new graduate students or be factored into a graduate cohort for retention calculation purposes. They will only come in as continuing graduate students for headcount.

Financial Aid eligibility

Accelerated students taking graduate courses to complete the requirements of their undergraduate degree are eligible for financial aid as undergraduate students. When 4+1 students obtain their undergraduate degree and their graduate program changes from

secondary to primary curriculum, they are viewed as graduate students for financial aid purposes (i.e. domestic students are restricted to only loans). To maximize their financial aid benefits, students should be advised not to proceed with additional graduate courses before they complete the approved double-counted graduate courses along with all other undergraduate degree requirements.

Tuition

Undergraduate students electing graduate courses (those numbered 500 and above) will be assessed at the undergraduate tuition rate while still pursuing their undergraduate degree. However, any relevant graduate-equivalent premiums and lab fees will be added. Once the graduate program becomes the primary degree program, graduate tuition rates will be assessed.

Graduation timing

Accelerated students can apply for each degree credential as soon as the respective degree requirements have been completed. Students who are unable to complete their graduate degree are still eligible to complete the requirements of the undergraduate degree and apply for their bachelor’s degree.

Minimum grade requirements

Students must meet the minimum grade requirements of their graduate program and respective accelerated option.