

Office of the Chancellor
Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education
Procedures and Standards for University Operations

Procedure/Standard Number 2016-25-A
Guidelines for Accelerated Bachelor to Master's Degree Programs and Early/Dual Admission to First Professional Master's Degree Programs

Approved by Karen M. Whitney Date: 6/4/18
Chancellor

History: Original version signed April 6, 2016

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Additional History:

Related Policies, Procedures or Standards:

[Board of Governors' Policy 1990-06-A: Academic Degrees](#)

Additional References:

I. Introduction

The purpose of this procedure is to communicate the instructions, processes, and standards regarding the establishment of accelerated bachelors to master's degree programs and early admission to first professional master's degree programs within Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education.

II. Definitions

- A. **Accelerated Program:** Bachelor's to master's program which permits qualified undergraduate students with at least junior standing to take graduate coursework that will apply to both degrees, per the articulation. An example would be a psychology undergraduate accelerating into a master's program in industrial/organizational psychology by taking graduate courses during their junior and/or senior year.
- B. **Early/Dual Admission:** Bachelor's to master's program which permits qualified undergraduate students to enter the university with provisional admission to a first professional master's degree program and to take graduate coursework that will apply to both degrees, per the articulation. The intent is for qualified undergraduates to earn both the bachelor's and master's degrees upon successful completion of the combined programs. Examples would include but not be limited to Physician Assistant and Athletic Training programs.

III. Admissions Procedures

- A. **Accelerated Program:** A student may be provisionally accepted into the respective graduate program in accordance with local policy and formally admitted upon completion of his/her undergraduate degree so long as all other program admission requirements have been met. Admission requirements are a local decision.
- B. **Early/Dual Admission:** A student may be provisionally accepted into the respective graduate program at the point of admission to the university or any time during his/her undergraduate studies. The student may be fully admitted to the graduate program upon completion of the undergraduate requirements and benchmarks set out in the early/grad dual admission programs, but no later than the beginning of the fifth full-time year of enrollment in the prospective course of study. All other graduate program admission requirements must also be met.

IV. Standards for Accelerated Programs and Early/Dual Admission

- A. Students must satisfy the requirements and expectations (student learning outcomes) of both degree programs.
- B. Programs should be constructed to ensure that the degree requirements at both the undergraduate and graduate levels adhere to academic standards set forth for independent degree programs.
- C. A student must have attained at least junior standing and have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 before taking graduate courses in the intended graduate program. If the intended graduate program requires a higher GPA, the student must meet the higher GPA before taking graduate courses.
- D. Each program would determine whether a particular course was eligible for enrollment by undergraduate students.
- E. All prerequisites for the intended graduate courses must be satisfied prior to taking those graduate courses.
- F. Undergraduate credits may not be applied to satisfy the requirements for the graduate degree.
- G. Up to 40 percent of graduate program credits (rounded to the nearest whole number) may be applied to satisfy the requirements for the undergraduate degree.
- H. The total number of credits required for both the undergraduate and graduate degrees would be reduced by the number of graduate credits used to satisfy requirements for the undergraduate degree. For example, completing both an undergraduate degree program requiring 120 credits and a graduate degree program requiring 30 credits could be accomplished with a combined total of 138 credits.
- I. In accordance with Board Policy, 1990-06-A: *Academic Degrees*, at least 42 credits of advanced coursework are required for a baccalaureate degree and at least 50 percent of coursework (excluding thesis, research, or internship hours) to complete a master's

degree must be identified as primarily directed at graduate students with the majority of students in the course obtaining graduate credits.

- J. Students may be eligible for undergraduate or graduate financial aid, in accordance with federal regulations. The university may charge graduate tuition to undergraduate students in accelerated and/or early/dual admission programs; all students within each program must be charged in the same fashion.

- V. **Implementation:** Beginning of fall 2018 semester.