



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

To: Linda Glaze, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies

Cc: Kevin Snyder, Curriculum Manager

From: George Flowers, Dean of the Graduate School

George T. Flowers

Jim Hansen, Director of the Honors College

James R. Hansen

Date: May 19, 2009

Subject: Accelerated Bachelor's / Master's Degree Program Guidelines

Please consider for approval, by the University Curriculum Committee, the attached Guidelines for an Accelerated Bachelor's / Master's Degree program, developed jointly by the Honors College and the Graduate School.

The idea for the proposal stems from a recommendation made by the Honors College Task Force, to endorse the proposal for "a degree option resulting in an Accelerated Bachelor's and Master's Degree Program to challenge and make effective use of the time and talents of our Honors Students." The Task Force report was presented to the University Senate on March 3, 2009. While the proposed program is not limited to Honors students, it is unique in offering Honors students a means to enhance their educational experience and to reward their effort with an advanced degree.

The attached Guidelines for an Accelerated Bachelor's / Master's Degree Program have been reviewed and approved by both the Graduate Council and the Director of the Honors College. If approved by the University Curriculum Committee, we expect to receive proposals for accelerated degree programs beginning in fall 2009. These proposals will then require the approval of the department, college, the Graduate Council, and the University Curriculum Committee before students may be admitted to the program(s).

*Approved by the UCC
Linda S. Glaze
8/20/09*

Accelerated Bachelor's / Master's Degree Program

Guidelines

Overview and Rationale

The Accelerated Bachelor's / Master's Degree Program offers Honors students and other outstanding Auburn students the opportunity to earn both the bachelor's and master's degrees in less time and at less cost than usual. It does so by allowing these exceptional students to count up to nine hours (in a thirty-hour master's program) or twelve hours (in a thirty-six hour master's program) to count towards *both* degrees.

In addition to saving students' time and money, the program enhances the marketability of students in fields in which the master's degree is fast becoming a requirement, even for entry-level positions. In other fields, where there is a shortage of workers, students benefit by earning their degrees at a faster rate than in conventional degree programs. Honors students and others who participate also have the opportunity to explore the prospects of graduate study, engage with graduate faculty, and deepen their understanding of their own academic disciplines.

The benefits of the accelerated degree program also accrue to Auburn University. The program encourages exceptional students to apply not only to the Honors College but also to Auburn's graduate programs, and it fosters the kind of integration and interaction between undergraduate and graduate programs that is characteristic of the best research institutions.

Even though many colleges and universities already offer accelerated degree programs, the Auburn program is distinctive. Unlike other accelerated degree programs, the Auburn model offers students in the Honors College the option of taking graduate courses. The program thus encourages highly motivated students to graduate with Honors while, at the same time, earning credit towards a master's degree at Auburn University.

Developing an Accelerated Degree Program

Participation in the Accelerated Bachelor's / Master's Degree Program is completely voluntary. In programs in which an accelerated degree program is appropriate, academic deans, department heads/chairs, and program officers are encouraged to develop application proposals by working with the appropriate undergraduate coordinator/director, the college curriculum committee, the Honors College, and the Graduate School. The application for an accelerated degree program requires the approval of the department, the college, the Graduate Council, and the University Curriculum Committee. To be considered, each application proposal should include the following:

- A Request to Add/Change an Accelerated Bachelor's / Master's Degree Program Form
- A justification for the program

- Minimum qualifications for admission (if different from those described below)
- Minimum qualifications for continuation and graduation (if different from those described below)
- A description of the application process
- A description of the matriculation process
- A plan for advising students admitted to the program to ensure success
- A list of courses that may be counted for both undergraduate and graduate credit. No more than nine hours (in a thirty-hour master's program) and no more than twelve hours (in a 36-hour master's program) may be counted towards the requirements of both degrees. Only graduate-level courses may be counted toward the graduate degree.
- A curriculum model, illustrating the time-table for the completion of the requirements of the bachelor's and the accelerated master's degree

Honors Students

- Honors students are encouraged to seek advice about course selection and scheduling as early as the freshman year.
- Honors students must meet the same requirements for admission (described below).
- Honors students must meet the same requirements for continuation and graduation (described below).
- Honors students who are making satisfactory progress towards completion of the requirements of the Honors College will be given priority consideration for admission to the Graduate School.

Admission Requirements

- Students must have completed at least 45 credit hours and no more than 96 credit hours, including advanced placement credits.
- Transfer students must have completed at least 24 credit hours at Auburn University.
- Honors and other students must have a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.4 / 4.0 or higher.

Individual graduate programs may set higher standards or require additional criteria for

admission to the accelerated degree program, subject to approval by the normal curriculum review process.

Application Process

- Students must complete an “Application for Admission to the Accelerated Bachelor’s / Master’s Degree Program.”
- Students must work with an Honors or a graduate advisor in the degree-granting department to complete an approved Plan of Study, including: a) a list of the courses that count towards both the undergraduate and graduate degree; and b) the projected dates for the completion of the bachelor’s and master’s degrees.
- Students must apply for admission to the Graduate School (including submitting the application, paying the application fee, and providing transcripts and standardized test scores, as required) by the prescribed deadline.

Continuation and Graduation Requirements

- No more than nine hours (in a thirty-hour master’s program) and no more than twelve hours (in a 36-hour master’s program) may be counted towards the requirements of both degrees. Only graduate level courses may be counted toward the graduate degree.
- Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.4 / 4.0 or higher. If individual graduate programs have set higher standards, students are required to meet those standards. If the student completed the Bachelor’s degree requirements with a cumulative GPA of less than 3.4 / 4.0, the student cannot double-count credit hours and is terminated from the program.
- Students must earn a grade of B (3.0 / 4.0) or better in all double-counted, graduate-level courses.
- Students must complete the bachelor’s degree, be admitted to the Graduate School, and be accepted by the degree program before entering the master’s degree program. Admission to the Accelerated Degree Program does not guarantee admission to the Graduate School; however, Honors students who are making satisfactory progress towards completion of the requirements of the Honors College will be given priority consideration for admission to the Graduate School. Students cannot opt to by-pass the bachelor’s degree.
- Students who do not follow the approved Plan of Study may be ineligible to continue in the program.

- Students must complete the accelerated Master's degree within time-limits set by the degree-granting program. If the Master's program is not completed within these time limits, none of the courses can be double-counted.

Individual graduate programs may set higher standards or require additional criteria for continuation and graduation, subject to approval by the normal curriculum review process.

Withdrawal

- Students may withdraw voluntarily from the Accelerated Degree Program at any time. Students must notify, in writing, the graduate program officer and the coordinator/director of undergraduate studies in their respective departments. A copy of the request to withdraw from the program should be sent to the Dean of the Graduate School.
- Students who withdraw from the program voluntarily or because they do not meet program requirements will not be awarded graduate credit for double-counted courses.