

Guidelines for Creating Combined Offerings (Combined Bachelor's/Master's Degrees)

As more programs are considering developing combined undergraduate/graduate degree offerings that allow double counting of up to nine credit hours of graduate coursework to meet both undergraduate and graduate degree requirements, this white paper is intended to share some information to assist with their development; the information is consistent with discussions among the Chancellor's Council on Graduate Studies (CCGS) and ODHE/HLC practices. The School of Graduate Studies has a reporting and tracking obligation to ODHE; please contact the School of Graduate Studies (Dr. Joseph Wilder) if considering the creation of a combined offering.

-ODHE and CCGS have allowed programs to develop their own process in approving these offerings, provided standard criteria are met.

-The School of Graduate Studies worked with Graduate Council to develop an approved Combined Degree Pathway that ensures these criteria are met; the pathway has received campus and Board of Trustees approval.

-The pathway enables the combining of *previously approved* undergraduate and graduate degrees *while bypassing both the undergraduate and graduate curriculum proposal systems*.

The first part of this White Paper explains the creation of the combined offerings by the program; the second part of this White Paper explains the student requirements, paperwork and timeline to completion of both degrees.

Part I – Creation of Combined Offering (Program Application Form, Attached)

STEP 1: Programs need to discuss the combined offering with their College Dean BEFORE completing ANY paperwork.

STEP 2: The Dean/Dean's representative seeks Provost approval for the combined offering BEFORE completing ANY paperwork.

- Up to nine credit hours of graduate coursework may be used to double count in the completion of both the undergraduate and graduate degrees; correct and thorough completion of the program application paperwork is critical to properly set up the students' advisement records.

- Students apply to the combined program during their junior year (complete 60+ credit hours of undergraduate coursework); this provides students time to begin to accelerate the undergraduate coursework, as necessary.

- All double counted coursework must be completed during the senior year of undergraduate study, no exceptions.

- Only vetted juniors in good standing (minimum 3.3 cumulative GPA) are eligible; programs may impose more stringent GPA requirements.

- Only graduate credit hours may be used to fulfil the graduate degree course requirements (e.g., if the graduate degree is 36 credit hours, the transcript must show 36 graduate credit hours).

- Once the program defines the number of double counted credits in a program (up to nine credit hours), all students are required to double count that number (e.g., if the program chooses to double count nine credit hours, students in the combined program are not permitted to complete anything less than nine credit hours).

Good Practices and Finances

- Typical time to degree completion when combining a 120 credit hour undergraduate with a 30 credit hour graduate program (excluding co-op, internships), should not exceed five years, and requires a minimum completion of 141 unique credit hours.

- The standard undergraduate curriculum in year three should be the same; this gives students time to decide if they want to apply to the combined program in their junior year.

- The bachelor's degree should be completed and awarded by the end of year four; there can be no penalty for students not wanting to complete the fifth year.

- The master's degree should be completed and awarded by the end of year five.

- This combined pathway is for students fast-tracking to industry; graduate students are not eligible for assistantships.

- Students who leave the program after the fourth year and before completing the fifth year will only receive the bachelor's degree; if they do not return to active graduate student status within one year, they lose the ability to double count courses.

- Students are manually tracked by the School of Graduate Studies, Registrar, Bursar, and Financial Aid Offices: undergraduates retain their undergraduate financial aid eligibility through the completion of their bachelor's degree; the double counted graduate courses are charged the lower, undergraduate tuition rate; and the double counted graduate courses are not eligible for the undergraduate plateau.

Part II – Student Participants (Student Application Form, Attached)

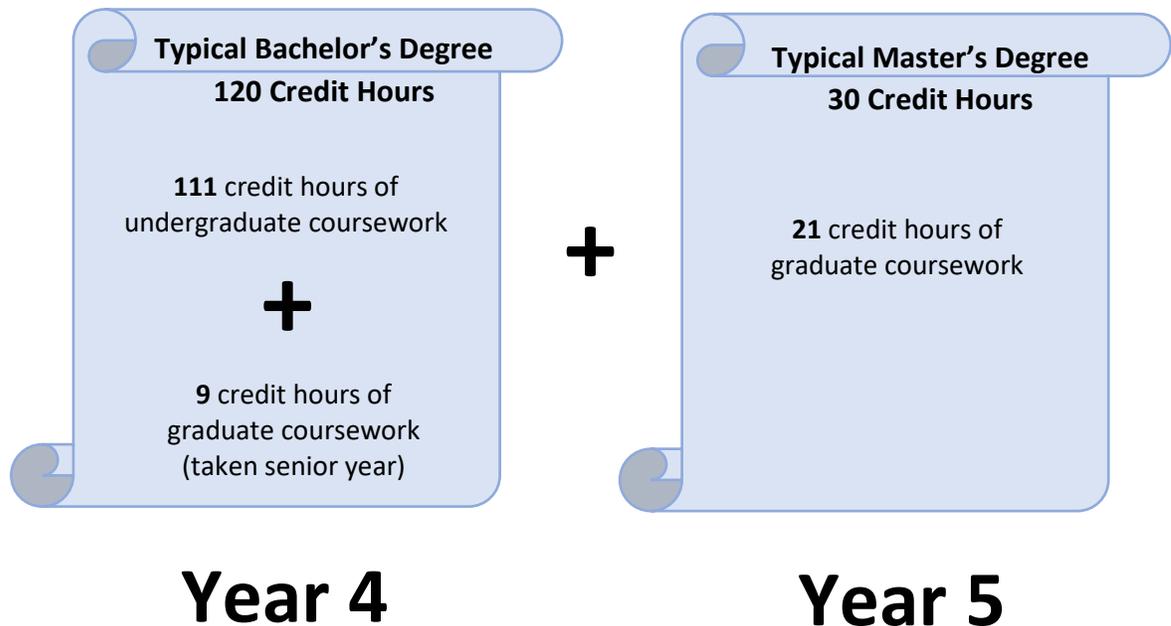
- Junior Year

- Vetted juniors in good standing (minimum cumulative 3.30 GPA) gain permission to enter the combined program.
- Application materials include letter of intent, completed application form and two letters of recommendation from faculty; only students that can successfully complete graduate level coursework should be admitted.
- Faculty (Instructors) will approve applicants; Chair and Dean of the graduate program and Senior Director, School of Graduate studies must sign off.

- Senior Year

- Students take the required number of graduate credit hours (defined by program; up to nine) that can apply to both their undergraduate and graduate degrees; no more than six hours of 'C' grade (C+,C or C-) may be used toward a graduate degree.
- Students apply to the graduate program – recommend middle of final semester (avoid undergraduate financial aid/scholarship issues).
 - If successful, they will obtain full admission pending undergraduate degree completion.
 - Students must remain in good academic standing while completing all coursework.
- **NOTE:** Successful admittance to the combined program (junior year) does not guarantee admittance to a graduate program. Students must maintain good academic standing while completing all double-counted coursework, meet School of Graduate Studies/graduate program eligibility requirements and apply to the graduate program during their senior year.

CORRECT WAY TO THINK OF Combined Bachelor's/Master's Degree for a nine credit hour double-counted offering – 141 unique credit hours



PROGRAM APPLICATION

Combined Degree Pathway Worksheet:

Date: _____

Undergraduate degree (title and code (BS or BA)/department/college):

Graduate degree (title and code (MS or MA)/department/college):

Define the double counting options in this pathway:

Credit hour requirements for undergraduate degree: _____

Credit hour requirements for graduate degree: _____

Note: This credit hour requirement must be met regardless of double counting.

Graduate Program GPA requirement, if more stringent than the University requirement (3.30): GPA: _____

Eligible Overlap Coursework:

List all graduate coursework (title and number) AND the undergraduate coursework that is being substituted (title and number) and double counted for undergraduate degree completion (for registrar academic plan code/Stellic creation).

Attach additional sheets if necessary. Note: The most any student may double count is nine credit hours.

Example: CIVE:523 Chemistry for Environmental Engineers for CIVE:423 Chemistry for Environmental Engineers

Required Signatures:

Program Chair (Undergraduate Program College): _____

Program Chair (Graduate Program College): _____

College Dean (Graduate Program College): _____

Senior Director, School of Graduate Studies: _____

STUDENT APPLICATION

Combined Degree Pathway Student Application:

Date: _____

Student Name: _____ ID: _____

Combined Degree Pathway: _____

Student Eligibility: To be completed by faculty advisor/appropriate faculty representative

Student's Current Cumulative GPA: _____ (University minimum cumulative GPA requirement is 3.30)

Graduate Program GPA Requirement: _____ (Program cumulative GPA requirement if > 3.30)

Junior in Good Standing: YES NO

Is student eligible: YES NO Faculty Advisor Name and Initials: _____

Application Materials: To be submitted to graduate program department

i) a letter of intent; ii) completed application; and iii) two letters of recommendation from faculty

Overlap Coursework:

List up to three graduate courses (or nine credit hours) that will be double counted and the undergraduate courses they will replace – provide course numbers and titles for both. Indicate whether the courses will be taken in the fall or spring semester. Note: Student must obtain Course Instructor permission

Example, FALL 2026 CIVE:523 Chemistry for Environmental Engineers for
CIVE:423 Chemistry for Environmental Engineers

Circle One:

FALL/SPRING YEAR

Instructor Signature:

Required Signatures:

Student: _____

Faculty Advisor/Undergraduate Program Chair: _____

-If process requires screening committee, please have appropriate representative sign following screening process

Program Chair (Graduate Program College): _____

College Dean (Graduate Program College): _____

Senior Director, School of Graduate Studies: _____

Disclaimer: This form is to be completed by eligible students (junior standing) seeking to participate in the Combined Degree Pathway. Successful completion of the overlap coursework does not guarantee admittance to the graduate program. Students must maintain good academic standing, meet School of Graduate Studies/graduate program eligibility requirements and apply to the graduate program during their senior year.