

## Guidelines for Creating Combined Offerings (Combined Bachelor's/Master's (4+1) Degrees)

As more programs are considering developing combined undergraduate/graduate degree offerings that allow double counting of up to 9 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 (SGS) has a reporting and tracking obligation to ODHE; please contact the SGS 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 SGS has worked with Graduate Council to develop an approved Combined Degree Pathway (CDP) that ensures these criteria are met; the pathway has received campus and BOT approval

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

This White Paper explains the creation of the Combined offerings by the program.

### 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 the Provost's approval for the combined offering BEFORE completing ANY paperwork.**

- Up to 9 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 (DPRs)

- Students apply to the CDP during their junior year (complete 60+ 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 (eg, if the graduate degree is 36 hours, the transcript must show 36 graduate credit hours)

- Once the program defines the number of double counted hours in a program (up to 9), all students are required to double count that number (eg, if the program chooses to double count 9 hours, students in the CDP are not permitted to complete anything less than 9 hours)

### Good Practices and Finances

- Typical time to degree completion when combining a 120-hour undergraduate with a 30-hour graduate program (excluding co-op, internships), should not exceed 5 years, and requires a minimum completion of 141 unique credit hours

- The standard undergraduate curriculum into year 3 should be the same; this gives students time to decide if they want to apply to the CDP in their junior year

- The bachelor's degree should be completed and awarded by the end of year 4; there can be no penalty for students not wanting to complete the 5<sup>th</sup> year

- The master's degree should be completed and awarded by the end of year 5

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

- Students who leave the program after the 4<sup>th</sup> year and before completing the 5<sup>th</sup> year will only receive the undergraduate degree; if they do not return to active graduate student status within 1 year, they lose the ability to double count courses

- Students are manually tracked by the Registrar, Bursar and Financial Aid Offices: undergraduates retain their undergraduate financial aid eligibility through the completion of their undergraduate degree; the double counted graduated 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)

### - Junior Year

- Vetted juniors in good standing (minimum cumulative 3.30 GPA) gain permission to enter the CDP
- Application materials include letter of intent, completed application form and 2 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 graduate program and SGS must sign off

### - Senior Year

- Students take the required number of graduate credits (defined by program; up to 9) 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 School of Graduate Studies – 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 CDP (junior year) does not guarantee admittance to a Graduate Program. Students must maintain good academic standing while completing all double-counted coursework, meet SGS/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 9-hour double-counted offering – 141 unique credit hours

