

Revision of Combined/Master's Degree Programs Policy Proposal Summary

SUBJECT SPECIFICATION

This proposal seeks to revise the policy for combined bachelor's/master's degree programs as published in the University Catalog, in addition to creating a policy to guide faculty developing combined degree programs to be published in the Curriculum Guidelines.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In July 2019, the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) revised the policy regarding the allowance of applying graduate-level coursework toward both a bachelor's and master's degrees for students declared in a combined degree program (i.e. double counting graduate credit).

Previously, the ODHE allowed the double-counting of graduate credit only after a student completed a minimum of 150 unique credit hours (120 for the bachelor's degree and 30 credit hours for the master's degree). With that previous policy, there could be no double-counting of credit if the master's degree was 30 credit hours.

The revised policy permits an exception to the 150-unique-hours policy, allowing a maximum of 9 credit hours of graduate coursework to double count in a combined degree program with the following stipulations:

- The combined bachelor's/master's degree is approved by all appropriate bodies at the university (e.g., department, college, university undergraduate/graduate curriculum committees, provost) and by the ODHE.
- Only exceptionally well-prepared students are admitted to the program.
- Total number of credit hours counted toward the master's degree is minimum 30.
- All credit hours counted toward the master's degree are at the graduate level.
- Total number of unique credit hours required for the combined bachelor's/master's degree program is minimum 141.
- The student is charged undergraduate tuition and fees for no fewer than 120 credit hours (i.e., undergraduate students in a combined degree program are not charged graduate tuition until they become graduate students).
- The university will submit to the ODHE an annual report on the scope of the combined degree program and student success.

Under this revised policy, we need to seek ODHE approval for any combined degree program where unique credit hours total is between 141 and 149 (i.e., the master's degree is 30 to 38 credit hours). We will *not* need to seek ODHE approval for combined degree programs that are or more than 150 unique credit hours (i.e., the master's degree is more than 38 credit hours).

Members of the Graduate Deans Advisory Council (GDAC) reviewed and revised the university's policy on combined bachelor's/master's degree programs to align with ODHE's new policy. In addition, GDAC proposes the following revisions:

- Replace specific GPA per credit hours with a minimum 3.000 overall GPA for eligibility for a combined degree program. The meaning of the GPA in different programs may not be the same, and GDAC members felt that decision should be left to the program areas.
- Remove requirement that a letter grade must be earned in courses that will be doubled counted toward both the bachelor's and master's degrees.
- Remove categories of formal and informal combined degree programs.
- Create a policy in the Curriculum Guidelines that explains when a combined degree program needs ODHE approval and details the stipulations and process for approval.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES

The alternative to the proposed policy revisions is the status quo, and the consequences will be a policy that discourages students to apply early to a master's degree while finishing their bachelor's degree at Kent State.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION

The Graduate Dean's Advisory Committee, with approval of the dean of graduate studies and in consultation with graduate faculty coordinators, recommends that revisions to the combined bachelor's/ master's degree program—as listed on the next pages—be approved effective for fall 2020 to alleviate issues in practice by the current policy.

TIMETABLE AND ACTIONS REQUIRED

Approval by the Graduate Dean's Advisory Council.....February 2020
 Approval by Educational Policies Council.....April 2020
 Approval by Faculty Senate.....April 2020
 ImplementationFall 2020

Added	Removed	Moved From	Moved To
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University Catalog (Mark-up of Revisions)

Combined Bachelor's/Master's Degree Program

A combined bachelor's/master's degree program allows exceptional, well-prepared Kent State University undergraduate students early admission into a graduate program ~~graduate school~~. Students in a combined degree program ~~take~~ ~~are able to identify and begin taking~~ graduate-level coursework as undergraduate students, ~~thus enabling courses to be applied toward both degree programs.~~

~~Students in a combined degree program must meet the m~~Minimum requirements ~~must be met~~ for each degree earned. ~~A student who earns a bachelor's degree and a master's degree must complete a minimum of 150 unique credit hours (120 representing the bachelor's degree and an additional 30 representing the master's degree).~~ Undergraduate requirements must be fully satisfied before a bachelor's degree will be awarded. Until that time, students continue to have undergraduate student status and are charged undergraduate tuition and fees. Following award receipt of the undergraduate degree, their status will be changed to that of graduate student.

~~Undergraduate students in a combined program may complete a maximum of 12 credit hours of graduate-level coursework and apply it toward their undergraduate degree. Once a student completes the undergraduate degree and enters graduate student status, the graduate-level coursework taken as an undergraduate student may be applied toward the graduate degree (i.e., courses are double counted). Double counting may occur only after the minimum 30 credit hours for the master's degree are completed.~~

~~To be eligible for double counting, the coursework must meet all of the following criteria:~~

- ~~1. Be of graduate level~~
- ~~2. Apply to degree requirements for the master's degree~~
- ~~3. The letter grade earned must meet minimum standards as described in the Academic Standing Graduate policy in the University Catalog~~

~~Courses that do not earn a regular letter (A-F) grade, as well as courses given as credit by examination, are not eligible for double-counting. Under no circumstances will undergraduate-level coursework be applied toward the master's degree.~~

ELIGIBILITY FOR ADMISSION

To be eligible for admission to a combined degree program, undergraduate students must meet the following stipulations:

- ~~have junior standing~~ (Earn a minimum of 60 GPA credit hours (junior standing))
- ~~and must have a~~ Achieved a minimum 3.000 overall Kent State GPA (some combined degree programs may require a higher GPA) ~~of one of the following~~:
 - ~~3.500 GPA after 60 credit hours~~
 - ~~3.400 GPA after 75 credit hours~~
 - ~~3.300 GPA after 90 credit hours~~
 - ~~3.200 GPA after 105 credit hours~~
- Complete a standard online graduate application, ~~(including paying the application fee)~~
- Meet all admissions requirements for ~~as established by~~ the master's degree program. ~~Students should (consult the University Catalog for specific requirements)~~
- Be admitted to the master's degree program ~~graduate program of interest~~
- Submit the ~~Informal~~ Combined Bachelor's/Master's Degree Program form Plan of Study prior to the first semester of enrollment in the combined degree program

APPLICATION OF GRADUATE CREDIT

Undergraduate students in a combined degree program may complete a maximum of 9-12 credit hours of graduate-level coursework, depending on the approved combined degree program (see table below), and apply the courses and credit hours it toward their undergraduate degree. Once a student completes the undergraduate degree and enters graduate student status, the graduate-level coursework taken as an undergraduate student may be applied toward the graduate degree (i.e., courses are double counted). As students who undertake earns a combined bachelor's/ degree and a master's degree program must complete a minimum of 141 150 unique credit hours, with a minimum 30 of those credit hours applied toward the master's degree. (120 representing the bachelor's degree and an additional 30 representing the master's degree). Double-counting may occur only after the minimum 30 credit hours for the master's degree are completed.

To be eligible for double counting, the coursework must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Be of graduate level – u~~Under no circumstances will undergraduate-level coursework be applied toward the master's degree.~~
2. Apply to degree requirements for the bachelor's and master's degrees
3. Are not awarded as credit by examination
4. The letter grade earned must m~~Meet~~ Meet minimum standards as described in the Academic Standing - Graduate policy in the University Catalog

The following are approved combined bachelor's/master's degree programs:

<u>Approved Combined Degree Program</u>	<u>Double-Counting of Graduate Credit</u>
<u>Any combined degree program where the master's degree is 39 or more credit hours</u>	<u>Maximum 9 credit hours with college approval</u>
<u>Any combined degree program where the master's degree is 42 or more credit hours</u>	<u>Maximum 12 credit hours with college approval</u>
<u>B.S./M.S. Computer Science</u>	<u>Maximum 9 credit hours</u>
<u>B.A. Criminology and Justice Studies/M.A. Criminology and Criminal Justice</u>	<u>Maximum 9 credit hours</u>
<u>B.A./M.A.E. Economics</u>	<u>Maximum 9 credit hours</u>
<u>B.B.A./M.A.E. Economics</u>	<u>Maximum 9 credit hours</u>
<u>B.B.A. (all majors)/M.B.A. Business Administration</u>	<u>Maximum 9 credit hours</u>
<u>B.A./M.A. English</u>	<u>Maximum 9 credit hours</u>
<u>B.A. Environmental Studies / M.S. Geography</u>	<u>Maximum 9 credit hours</u>
<u>B.A./M.S. Geography</u>	<u>Maximum 9 credit hours</u>
<u>B.A./M.A. Geology</u>	<u>Maximum 9 credit hours</u>
<u>B.A. Interior Design/M.H.D. Healthcare Design</u>	<u>Maximum 9 credit hours</u>
<u>B.A./M.A. Teaching English as a Second Language</u>	<u>Maximum 9 credit hours</u>

Combined degree programs are ~~The informal program will be developed~~ initiated by an individual students in consultation with their his/her academic advisor. The combined degree program should ~~It is to~~ be developed according to the individual career interests and goals of the student and should be an integrated learning experience rather than merely the completion of a certain number of undergraduate and graduate credits. The proposed combined degree program requires the approval of both the undergraduate and the graduate programs involved, as well as the respective college dean(s).

~~Kent State University allows for both formal and informal combined degree programs, as described below. Formal programs may have more stringent requirements than the general eligibility requirements listed above.~~

~~Formal Combined Bachelor's/Master's Degree Programs~~

~~A formal combined bachelor's/master's degree program has established admissions requirements, a curriculum and graduation requirements.~~

~~To qualify for a combined bachelor's/master's degree program, an undergraduate student must complete a standard online graduate application (including the application fee) and be admitted to the graduate program of interest. The student must meet all admissions requirements as established by the formal combined program. Students should consult the University Catalog for specific requirements. The student is also required to submit the Formal Combined Bachelor's/Master's Degree Programs form prior to the first semester of enrollment in the combined program.~~

~~The following combined programs have been formally approved by the university:~~

- ~~● Combined Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts degrees in Speech Pathology and Audiology~~
- ~~● Combined Bachelor of Business Administration and Master of Business Administration degrees~~
- ~~● Combined Bachelor of Science degree in Fashion Merchandising and Master of Business Administration degree~~
- ~~● Combined Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Master of Science in Nursing degrees~~
- ~~● Combined Bachelor of Science in Public Health in Health Services Administration and Master of Public Health in Health Policy and Management~~

~~Informal Combined Bachelor's/Master's Degree Programs~~

~~An informal combined bachelor's/master's degree program has not been formally approved by the university, but allows undergraduate students to begin taking graduate level coursework that may be applied to the undergraduate and/or graduate degree.~~

~~The informal program will be developed by an individual student in consultation with his/her academic advisor. It is to be developed according to the individual career interests and goals of the student and should be an integrated learning experience rather than merely the completion of a certain number of undergraduate and graduate credits. The proposed combined program requires the approval of both the undergraduate and the graduate programs involved, as well as the respective college dean(s).~~

~~To qualify for an informal combined bachelor's/master's degree program, an undergraduate student must complete a standard online graduate application (including the application fee) and be admitted to the graduate program of interest. The student must meet all admissions requirements as established by the master's degree program. Students should consult the University Catalog for specific requirements. The student is also required to submit the Informal Combined Bachelor's/Master's Degree Plan of Study form prior to the first semester of enrollment in the combined program.~~

University Catalog (Clean Version of Revisions)

Date Revised

Month Year

ACADEMIC POLICY

Date Effective

Month Year

Combined Bachelor's/Master's Degree Program**POLICY STATEMENT**

A combined bachelor's/master's degree program allows exceptional, well-prepared Kent State University undergraduate students early admission into a graduate program. Students in a combined degree program take graduate-level coursework as undergraduate students, thus enabling courses to be applied toward both degree programs.

Students in a combined bachelor's/master's degree program must meet the minimum requirements for each degree earned. Undergraduate requirements must be fully satisfied before a bachelor's degree will be awarded. Until that time, students continue to have undergraduate student status and are charged undergraduate tuition and fees. Following award of the undergraduate degree, their status will be changed to that of graduate student.

ELIGIBILITY FOR ADMISSION

To be eligible for admission to a combined degree program, undergraduate students must meet the following stipulations:

- Earn a minimum 60 credit hours (junior standing)
- Achieve a minimum 3.000 overall Kent State GPA (some combined degree programs may require a higher GPA)
- Complete a standard online graduate application, including paying the application fee
- Meet all admissions requirements for the master's degree program (consult the University Catalog for specific requirements)
- Apply and be admitted to the master's degree program
- Submit the Combined Bachelor's/Master's Degree Program form prior to the first semester of enrollment in the combined degree program

APPLICATION OF GRADUATE CREDIT

Undergraduate students in a combined degree program may complete 9-12 credit hours of graduate-level coursework, depending on the approved combined degree program (see table below), and apply the courses and credit hours toward their undergraduate degree. Once students complete the undergraduate degree and enters graduate student status, the graduate-level coursework may be applied toward the graduate degree (i.e., courses are double counted). Students who undertake a combined bachelor's/master's degree program must complete a minimum of 141 unique credit hours, with a minimum 30 of those credit hours applied toward the master's degree.

To be eligible for double counting, the coursework must meet all the following criteria:

1. Be of graduate level – under no circumstances will undergraduate-level coursework be applied toward the master's degree
2. Apply to degree requirements for the bachelor's and master's degrees
3. Are not awarded as credit by examination

4. Meet minimum standards as described in the Academic Standing - Graduate policy in the University Catalog

The following are approved combined bachelor's/master's degree programs:

Approved Combined Degree Program	Double-Counting of Graduate Credit
Any combined degree program where the master's degree is 39 or more credit hours	Maximum 9 credit hours with college approval
Any combined degree program where the master's degree is 42 or more credit hours	Maximum 12 credit hours with college approval
B.S./M.S. Computer Science	Maximum 9 credit hours
B.A. Criminology and Justice Studies/M.A. Criminology and Criminal Justice	Maximum 9 credit hours
B.A./M.A.E. Economics	Maximum 9 credit hours
B.B.A./M.A.E. Economics	Maximum 9 credit hours
B.B.A. (all majors)/M.B.A. Business Administration	Maximum 9 credit hours
B.A./M.A. English	Maximum 9 credit hours
B.A. Environmental Studies/M.S. Geography	Maximum 9 credit hours
B.A./M.S. Geography	Maximum 9 credit hours
B.A./M.A. Geology	Maximum 9 credit hours
B.A. Interior Design/M.H.D. Healthcare Design	Maximum 9 credit hours
B.A./M.A. Teaching English as a Second Language	Maximum 9 credit hours

Combined degree programs are developed by students in consultation with their academic advisor. The combined degree program should be developed according to the individual career interests and goals of the student and should be an integrated learning experience rather than merely the completion of a certain number of undergraduate and graduate credits. The proposed combined degree program requires the approval of both the undergraduate and the graduate programs involved, as well as the respective college dean(s).

REASON FOR POLICY

Policy enforces uniform standards for undergraduate students seeking early admission to a graduate degree at Kent State University and aligns with the policy from the Ohio Department of Higher Education.

PROCEDURES

There are no procedures with this policy.

FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS

- [Combined Bachelor's/Master's Degree Form \(DOCX\)](#)
- [Graduate Admissions](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

- [Academic Standing - Graduate](#)
- [Academic Standing - Undergraduate](#)
- [Credit-Hour Requirement for Graduation](#)
- [Dual Degrees/Double Majors](#)
- [Undergraduate Students Enrolling in Graduate Courses](#)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

There is no FAQ associated with this policy.

DEFINITIONS

Credit by examination: a special examination, which upon successfully completion, a student is awarded college-level credit hours but no grade.

Graduate-level courses: numbered with the first digit of 5 and 6 at the master's degree level and the first digit of 7 and 8 at the doctoral degree level.

Undergraduate-level courses: numbered with the first digit of 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4. These courses are taken by students declare in an associate or bachelor's degree or undergraduate certificate. Undergraduate courses cannot be applied toward requirements for a graduate degree or certificate.

REVISION HISTORY

To come

FEEDBACK

Your Name (optional):

Your E-mail (optional):

Policy Name:

Your Feedback:

Curriculum Guidelines

Combined Bachelor's/Master's Degree Program (**New Policy**)

Academic units may allow Kent State baccalaureate-seeking students to be admitted early to a master's degree program and have 9-12 credit hours of graduate coursework applied toward both the bachelor's and master's degree (i.e., double counted). See the Combined Bachelor's/Master's Degree Program policy in the University Catalog [hyperlink] for information on minimum admission and graduation requirements for students seeking to complete a combined degree program.

The Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) requires that students in a combined degree program complete a minimum of 150 unique credit hours (minimum 120 for the bachelor's and minimum 30 for the master's). The ODHE allows an exception for 141 unique credit hours (120 for the bachelor's and 21 for the master's) only if the combined degree program is approved by all appropriate bodies at the university and by the ODHE.

Faculty who wish to promote a combined degree program and allow students to double count graduate credit toward both degrees must seek prior ODHE approval where the unique credit hours total is between 141 and 149. Faculty do **not** need ODHE approval for combined degree programs that are or more than 150 unique credit hours (see table below).

Table: Policy in practice for combined degree programs:

Master's degree total credit hours	Maximum credit hours for double counting	Total unique credit hours	ODHE approval needed?
30-38	9	141-149	Yes
39+	9	150+	No
42+	12	150+	No

Faculty wishing to request the exception to the 150-unique credit hours rule should complete the ODHE Combined Bachelor's/Master's Degree Program Request form available on the Curriculum Services website. The form must proceed through the regular curriculum review/approval process within the department, school and/or college. From there, the form will go to EPC as an information item and then to ODHE for approval.

All combined degree programs must meet following stipulations:

- Only exceptionally well-prepared students are admitted to the program.
- Minimum 30 credit hours is required to earn the master's degree (some master's degree programs require more credit hours).
- All credit hours counted toward the master's degree are at the graduate level. Under no circumstance will undergraduate-level courses or credit hours be applied toward graduate degree's requirements or overall hours.
- Total number of unique credit hours required for the combined bachelor's/master's degree program is minimum 150 (or minimum 141 with university and OHDE approval).