ACCELERATED PROGRAMS

Accelerated master’s degrees are intended for high achieving undergraduate students who are interested in continuing their study at the graduate level, and for high achieving high school and junior college students who might be attracted to pursuing both degrees at UWM. Students follow prescribed curricula, allowing them to begin graduate study before completion of the undergraduate degree. Accelerated master’s degrees may be established between UWM undergraduate and graduate programs, between external undergraduate programs and UWM graduate programs, or between UWM undergraduate programs and external graduate programs.

Classroom credits may be earned in person or online and can include those credits earned in regular courses after admission to university studies, including earned credit for research and independent studies. Some of these credits can be earned for graduate level work taken in an accelerated standing. With the approval of the undergraduate program on a case-by-case basis, appropriate college credits already completed through the Advanced Placement (AP) Program, the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), the International Baccalaureate (IB), and enrollment in college courses while in high school, may be applied towards the credits required for the bachelor’s degree, provided the student’s undergraduate program approves.

Requirements

Students must complete the requirements for both their bachelor’s and master’s degrees within the accelerated program’s prescribed limits on double counting of credits. Undergraduates must complete at least 120 credits for a bachelor’s degree. Graduates must complete at least 30 credits for a master’s degree, and substantially more in some programs.

Undergraduate Requirements

Students should plan their studies to complete their general education requirements, school or college general requirements, and most of their major requirements prior to their admission to the master’s degree. The undergraduate requirements that may be satisfied through graduate coursework will be specified within the accelerated master’s program. Students also must satisfy any residency requirements for the undergraduate degree. Students cannot secure waivers of university requirements based upon their participation in an accelerated master’s. Students should work closely with their advisors in selecting appropriate courses each semester. Undergraduates who intend to pursue an accelerated master’s degree must meet the minimum GPA requirements for admission to the Graduate School before attempting graduate level work. Programs may specify additional requirements before permitting undergraduates to attempt graduate level work.

Undergraduates who intend to attempt graduate-level work in G or U/G courses for the purpose of forward double counting must declare their intent to apply for an accelerated master’s program, meet the minimum GPA requirements for admission to the Graduate School at the time of enrollment, and meet any additional requirements established by programs.

Undergraduates who take a graduate-level U/G course must enroll in the appropriate offering designated for graduate-level work (e.g. U/G course number followed by letter G). Undergraduates will need instructor permission to enroll in G courses or in the graduate-level offerings of U/G courses.

Graduate School Admission

Students must meet the regular Graduate School admission requirements (https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/admission), with the following exceptions:

1. Completion of the bachelor’s degree. Instead, before entering graduate school students must have completed undergraduate credits equal in number to the total number of required credits in the bachelor’s degree (usually 120) minus the number of credits available for backward double counting as part of their accelerated master’s degree.

2. Graduate school English language proficiency requirements. Undergraduates already are subject to the undergraduate proficiency requirements, which will determine proficiency for accelerated degrees.

3. Additional standards set by individual programs (such as higher GPA or required standardized tests).

Graduate Student Status

Students admitted to the Graduate School as part of an accelerated master’s degree carry the same graduate student status as those admitted with a bachelor’s degree. They are eligible for the same types of competitive financial assistance as all other graduate students, including appointments as TAs, PAs, and RAs. Their programs of study require completion of the same academic work as is required of all other graduate students. They are subject to the same performance requirements. Once admitted they will be required to pay tuition at the graduate rate. Students and program administrators should be aware that some forms of undergraduate financial aid, such as Pell Grants, may not be available to support graduate study.

Failure to Gain Admission to Graduate School

A student who intends to pursue an accelerated master’s degree but who does not gain admission to the Graduate School can continue as an undergraduate student in order to complete the bachelor’s degree. Students who are not admitted to the Graduate School through an accelerated program can apply again later to enter with a completed bachelor’s degree.

Degree Completion

Double Counting Credit

Forward double-countable credit will be transferred into the master’s degree upon admission to the Graduate School using the Graduate Transfer Credit Evaluation Form. Because forward double-counted credits are transferred into the master’s degree upon admission to the Graduate School, students must earn a B or higher in the course (B- is not acceptable) in accordance with existing Graduate School policy. Once forward double-counted graduate-level credit has been transferred into the master’s degree, it is available for other forms of double counting, such as that permitted between master’s degrees and certificates.

Backward double-counted credit will be transferred to the undergraduate transcript once the student completes all required undergraduate credit and applies for graduation.

Bachelor’s Degree

Upon completion of the courses and credits required for the bachelor’s degree (including all completed backward double-counted credit),
the student should apply for graduation in the undergraduate degree program. Upon receipt of the application for graduation, the Registrar’s Office will transfer the credits completed at the graduate level into the undergraduate record to facilitate the review of the student for undergraduate degree clearance. Degree clearance procedures at the undergraduate level will follow established procedures once the graduate credit is transferred to the undergraduate record.

**Master’s Degree**

Upon admission by the Graduate School, credits earned in graduate-level work while the student was still an undergraduate will be transferred into the master’s degree using the Graduate Transfer Credit Evaluation Form. Students graduate with the master’s degree when they have completed all requirements. This may occur concurrently with or after completion of the bachelor’s degree.

**Definitions**

**Double Counting:** counting the same course credit for fulfillment of the requirements of both the bachelor’s and the master’s degree.

**Forward Double Counting:** double counting course credit taken by an undergraduate student completing graduate level work prior to admission by the Graduate School. Forward double-countable credits are transferred into the master’s degree upon admission to the Graduate School. Students accruing forward double-countable credits are in undergraduate standing, paying undergraduate tuition for graduate-level courses, and remain eligible for undergraduate federal financial aid, such as Pell Grants.

**Backward Double Counting:** double counting graduate course credit to fulfill remaining undergraduate requirements or electives after admission to the master’s program. Students accruing backward double-countable credits are in graduate standing.