

**COMBINED BACHELOR'S/MASATER'S
UNDERGRADUATE TO GRADUATE AND JOINT
 GRADUATE PATHWAYS**

Responsible Executive: Provost
Approving Official: Provost
Effective Date: TBD (On Approval)
Revision History: New, August 15, 2018., Amended _____

I. INTRODUCTION

Combined ~~bachelor's/master's~~ undergraduate to graduate and joint graduate pathways provide qualified students with a partially-structured path to earn two degrees from two separate academic degree programs. Combined pathways may be proposed for eligible and related degree programs from the bachelor's to master's degree and bachelor's to doctoral degree. Joint degree pathways may be proposed for a master's degree with another master's or professional degree. Admission to both academic degree programs is required in order to pursue these pathways. The purpose of combined ~~bachelor's/master's~~ undergraduate to graduate and joint graduate pathways is to provide academically prepared and qualified students with an opportunity to expand their expertise and knowledge through joint enrollment and completion of two academic degree programs in an appropriately customized manner.

II. POLICY (Including any Forms and Attachments)

1. Definitions

- a. Combined Bachelor's to Master's Pathways – Combined ~~bachelor's to master's~~ pathways provide academically talented qualified undergraduate students an opportunity to complete both a bachelor's and master's degree. Upon approval a combined bachelor's to master's pathway allows for up to 12 graduate hours to be shared with, or double-counted toward, an undergraduate degree program.
- b. Combined Bachelor's to Doctoral Pathways – Combined bachelor's to doctoral pathways provide academically talented undergraduate students the opportunity to complete both a bachelor's degree and doctoral degree in disciplines where a master's degree is not required for entry into the doctoral program. Upon approval, a combined bachelor's to doctoral pathway allows for up to 12 graduate hours to be shared with or double-counted toward both degree programs.
~~Direct Entry Pathways – Direct Entry Pathways are a type of combined pathway structured such that the curricula for two academic degrees are interwoven. Students are admitted to the~~

~~bachelor's degree program with the understanding that they are expected to complete both degrees.~~

- c. Joint Graduate Pathways – Joint graduate pathways provide academically qualified master's students with an opportunity to earn two master's degrees or master's and professional degrees from two academic degree programs. Joint graduate pathways share academic content that allows a student to expand their breadth of knowledge and content expertise to include additional domains not covered in a single degree. All post-baccalaureate degree programs must have at least 30 unique hours of coursework. Upon approval, joint graduate pathways allow graduate/professional courses in excess of the 30-hour minimum to be shared with, or double-counted, toward both degree programs.
- d. Shared-Credits – “Shared credits” refers to the limited number of credit hours toward the requirements of two separate degree programs. The principle of shared credits allows the student to earn two degrees for fewer total credit hours than would normally be required if both academic degree programs were taken independently. Academic programs must provide strong academic justification for the use of shared hours between the two degrees involved in the pathway that explains how program integrity is maintained or enhanced.

2. Responsibility

a. Faculty

The responsibility for developing combined and joint graduate pathways resides with the faculty in each program. Such proposals should be submitted when faculty identify student demand, employment demand, or a substantial pedagogical interest that is best served by offering two-degree programs in a combined or joint pathway format.

b. Administration and Proposal Routing

Each school or college must ensure that all proposals for developing combined and joint graduate pathways receive faculty review prior to submission to the next higher administrative level, as required herein. For combined and joint pathway programs, the head department chair or director of the academic unit, the curriculum committee for both the department and the college, ~~and the appropriate director (school) or and the Dean (college)~~ submitting a proposal must review and approve the proposal before submission to the next highest administrative level. Proposals involving undergraduate degrees are submitted to the Undergraduate Policy Committee and the Graduate Policy Committee for review and approval. Proposals involving graduate and professional degrees are submitted to the Graduate Policy Committee All proposals are reviewed and approved by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Dean of the Graduate School,

and Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement. Final approval resides with the Provost.

The academic college is responsible for listing approved combined and joint pathways in the ~~Undergraduate Bulletin and/or Graduate Bulletin~~, as appropriate university's General Bulletin and for coding students pursuing these degrees in a manner consistent with the Registrar's guidelines.

3. Shared Credit Hours

a. A limited number of courses may count in more than one program of study as follows:

- (1) Combined Bachelor's to Master's Pathways - Upon review by each degree program's department and college curriculum committee, ~~and Academic Dean, Undergraduate Policy Committee and Graduate Policy Committees~~, a maximum of 12 credit hours of defined graduate coursework may be shared with, or double-counted toward, both an undergraduate and master's degree. The resulting combined program will consist of 120 credit hours counted toward the undergraduate degree and at least 30 credit hours counted toward the ~~graduate-master's~~ degree with up to 12 credit hours of specified overlapping graduate coursework. Graduate courses counted toward the undergraduate degree must be appropriate for that degree program ~~consistent with the SACSCOC requirement that degree programs and embody a coherent course of study, as well as all other principles contained in the SACSCOC Policy on Quality and Integrity of Undergraduate Degrees~~. The integrity of the ~~graduate~~ program shall be maintained so that the graduate courses are progressively more rigorous than the undergraduate courses. Programs will set admissions standards that ensure that students are academically qualified and prepared for graduate-level coursework.

~~Direct Entry Programs—Direct entry Programs operate as combined degrees in which students are required to complete the entire interwoven undergraduate to-graduate curriculum.~~

- (2) Combined Bachelor's to Doctoral Pathways - Upon review by each degree program's department and college curriculum committee, Academic Dean, Undergraduate Policy Committee and Graduate Policy Committee, a maximum of 12 credit hours of defined graduate coursework may be shared with, or double-counted toward, both an undergraduate and master's degree. The resulting combined program will consist of 120 credit hours counted toward the undergraduate degree and at least 60 credit hours counted toward the doctoral degree with up to 12 credit hours of specified

overlapping graduate coursework. Graduate courses counted toward the undergraduate degree must be appropriate for that degree program and embody a coherent course of study. The integrity of the program shall be maintained so that the graduate courses are progressively more rigorous than the undergraduate courses. Programs will set admissions standards that ensure that students are academically qualified and prepared for graduate-level coursework.

(2)(3) Joint Graduate Pathways – Must have a minimum combined total of 60 unduplicated graduate or professional credit hours, and a minimum of 30 unique hours in each degree program. Upon review by each degree program’s department and college curriculum committee and academic dean, and the Graduate Policy Committee, graduate courses in excess of the 30-hour minimums may be counted in both graduate degrees in a joint pathway program.

4. Proposal

Faculty interested in creating a new combined or joint pathway should complete the appropriate proposal form available on the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement’s website. At a minimum, the proposal should be written in narrative format and include the following information:

Proposal Purpose

- ~~○ Define the purpose for proposing the program and the benefits of establishing the pathway~~
- ~~○ Justify the pathway in intellectual and pedagogical terms~~
- ~~○ Identify individual initially responsible for program~~

Admission Requirements, Student Application Procedures, and Advising

- ~~○ The proposal must explain the admissions requirements, including the time when a student applies to the program, minimum GPA and GRE score, and the application procedures~~

Curriculum

- ~~○ Provide the core requirements of each academic program as well as available electives (along with the associated hours)~~
- ~~○ Provide the curriculum for the proposed program~~
- ~~○ Explicitly identify and justify, both intellectually and pedagogically, specific courses designated as "shared credits" and explain how program integrity is maintained or enhanced~~

5. Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment of Outcomes Assessment

Assessment of student learning and program outcomes for programs

that are part of a combined or joint pathway shall be at the individual degree program level. ~~although student demand for the program shall be assessed as part of the participating academic department's program review (QER) process conducted by the Provost's Office.~~

6. Termination of a Combined or Joint Pathway

Combined and joint pathways are partially-structured paths to completing the requirements for two separate degrees. Admission to each degree program is required. As a result, if the institution discontinues a combined or joint pathway or terminates one of the academic degree programs in an approved combined or joint pathway, then it will be necessary for the student to separately complete the requirements for each academic degree. Termination of combined or joint Pathways should be requested by the College Academic Dean via a termination form from the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement.

7. Degree Conferral

A student enrolled in a combined bachelor's to master's or bachelor's to doctoral pathway will earn the baccalaureate degree upon completion of the undergraduate program and graduate degree upon completion of the graduate program.

Upon completion of a joint graduate pathway, a student will concurrently earn two separate degrees, one for each degree.

III. LEGAL SUPPORT, JUSTIFICATION, AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

BOG 1.001(4), Delegation to President from Board of Trustees

Federal compliance standards for Title IV funding and institutional accreditation, including policies related to program length, coherence, and rigor, and degree quality and integrity.

/s/ Name of Approving Official

[Proof of approval retained in file]