

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON GRADUATE COURSE AND CURRICULUM TO ESTABLISH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND REVIEW OF INTEGRATED BACHELOR'S/MASTER'S DEGREES**

**I. Description of integrated bachelor's/master's programs**

Integrated bachelor's/master's programs are intended for high achieving undergraduate students who are interested in continuing their study at the graduate level. They follow prescribed curricula, allowing these students to begin graduate study before completion of the undergraduate degree. They may be established between UWM undergraduate and graduate programs, or external undergraduate programs and UWM graduate programs.

**II. Rationale for establishing integrated bachelor's/master's programs**

There is increasing demand from both private and public sector employers for the accelerated production of college graduates who are qualified to fill the jobs of the twenty-first century, and the University has an opportunity to help meet this demand through the creation of integrated bachelor's/master's degree programs. Recent surveys have indicated that the bachelor's degree is a minimal requirement for entry into most jobs, and master's-level education is necessary for many fields and for many graduates who hope to achieve the earning potential of the previous generation of college graduates. At the same time, the sky-rocketing cost of higher education is discouraging students from seeking the level of education that is desired by many employers. One way to address this issue is through the creation of integrated bachelor's/master's degree programs that cut out a full year of university studies, saving students both considerable time and money.

Perhaps even more importantly, these integrated programs will allow very bright, highly motivated students who have clear academic goals to reach those goals sooner. Such students will be ready to move into their desired careers more quickly, benefiting not only the students but also the businesses, agencies, and other employers who hire these graduates.

Integrated bachelor's/master's degree programs are becoming increasingly common across the United States. These programs are built around a variety of models, some similar to the Graduate School's senior-graduate admission, others that accelerate the completion of requirements through the selective scheduling of required coursework during the summer. Fewer are built around a model that overlaps more credits than currently are allowed to "double count" under senior-graduate status. The most common model that we expect to be proposed involves the completion of three years of undergraduate coursework (minimally 90 undergraduate credits) and the full two years of a master's degree program. (This proposal is not intended to preclude the development of additional models.)

The L&S bachelor's degree is particularly well suited for the integrated degree program. For most students, there are minimally 30 credits in the degree that can be used toward electives. While recognizing the maturation value of a student spending a full four years in undergraduate studies, many educators believe that exceptionally-bright, highly-motivated students are spinning their wheels in that fourth year, when that time could be spent more productively in moving on to graduate-level study in their chosen field. The integrated program would allow admission to Graduate School after three years

of undergraduate work, completion of the same set of activities and requirements as any other student admitted to a particular master's program, and awarding of both the bachelor's and master's degrees by allowing up to 30 credits required for the Graduate School to count toward the completion of the final 30 credits of the bachelor's degree. This model changes nothing for the Graduate School's programs; it requires the bachelor's degree program to accept the graduate credits as transfer credits. Many professional degree programs also lend themselves to an integrated model.

An integrated program of study such as this is not intended for most students. Rather, it is anticipated that the number of participants initially will be small and limited to students who have outstanding academic records, who have demonstrated a high level of motivation for academic work, and who have a clear academic goals in mind. An important goal of this program is to attract to UWM such students who otherwise might not apply here. These students tend to enter the university with 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. In addition, such students may gain additional college credits based on the granting of credits for demonstrated equivalent preparation (retro credits) in a foreign language or other field of study. Because of this, it is anticipated that many, if not most, students at the time they enter graduate school will have earned 100 or more credits at the undergraduate level.

One of these programs already exists at UWM (Integrated BS/MS in Engineering), and another between the School of Freshwater Sciences and Carroll University was recently approved. There is a need to establish overall policy that can be applied to all future proposals, rather than considering them on a case-by-case basis.

### **III. Current policies that would be affected by adoption of the integrated program model**

#### Standard Admission Requirements (GFC Document 832)

An applicant must meet the requirements of the individual graduate program unit and the following Graduate School requirements in order to be considered for admission in regular standing:

- A bachelor's degree
- A minimum grade point average of 2.75 (4.0 scale), based on all undergraduate work completed prior to the awarding of the bachelor's degree
- Proficiency in the English language (GFC Documents 832 and 876)

#### Senior-Graduate Admission (included as information only, no change to this policy is being proposed)

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee seniors within 6 credits of graduation who otherwise meet the requirements for admission in good standing may apply for a semester's concurrent enrollment in an undergraduate college and in the Graduate School. A student within 4 to 6 credits of graduation may carry 6 graduate credits and a maximum course load of 15 credits and may earn two-thirds of a semester of residence credit, while a student within 1 to 3 credits of graduation may carry 9 credits of graduate work and a maximum course load of 12 credits and may earn a full semester of residence

credit. The student's entire program is subject to regulations and requirements of the Graduate School and he will receive graduate credit only if he completes requirements for the bachelor's degree by the end of the semester of Senior-Graduate enrollment. (GFC Document 23 and 52)

#### **IV. Summary of Proposed Changes to current policies**

To enable the development of integrated programs, the standard admission requirements would have to be amended to include an exception to the bachelor's degree requirement. Students approved for admission to an approved integrated bachelor's/master's degree program will not have completed the bachelor's degree at the time of their admission.

#### **V. Proposed criteria and procedures for integrated bachelor's/master's programs**

##### **Admission to the Program**

Students may apply for admission to an integrated program as incoming freshmen, continuing UWM students, or transfer students. The department(s)/schools and colleges proposing a particular integrated program will determine the criteria for acceptance into both the undergraduate and graduate portions of the program as well as the criteria for remaining in good standing in the program. Minimal requirements for students to participate in such programs are described below. Individual programs may include higher standards.

Applications for admission will be reviewed according to the process outlined in each specific integrated program proposal. Students admitted to the program at any level will be assigned either a PAWS Student Group code or a PAWS Service Indicator code, to be determined. This will simplify the process of identifying the cohorts and of tracking their progress toward completion of their requirements in a timely fashion.

##### Admission of High School Graduates

Students applying for an integrated program as incoming freshmen must meet the following requirements:

1. A GPA of 3.25 on all high school work;
2. A GPA of 3.50 on high school courses related to the student's desired field of university studies;
3. An ACT score of 28 or SAT score of 1260;
4. A 1-2 page statement explaining the student's interest in a particular field of study and reasons for entering an integrated program
5. Two letters of recommendation from high school teachers/counselors attesting to the student's maturity and suitability for an integrated program.

These materials should be submitted in accordance with the process outlined in the specific integrated program plan proposal.

### Admission of Continuing Students

Continuing students, after completing a semester or more of coursework, may decide that they are interested in entering an integrated program. Such students must meet with an academic advisor to determine if it is possible to complete all of the requirements in the portion of undergraduate study remaining to them. If there is not a logistical problem, the student then must write a 1-2 page statement explaining her/his interest in the particular field of study as reasons for entering an integrated program. The student should attach a copy of the college transcript to this statement and a recommendation letter from a faculty member in the chosen field. These materials should be submitted in accordance with the process outlined in the specific integrated program proposal.

### Admission of Transfer Students

Transfer students who decide that they are interested in completing an integrated program must meet with an academic advisor to determine if it is possible to complete all of the requirements in the portion of undergraduate study remaining to them. If there is not a logistical problem, the student then must write a 1-2 page statement explaining her/his interest in the particular field of study as reasons for entering an integrated program. The student should attach to the statement a copy of the college transcript to this statement and a recommendation letter from a faculty member in the chosen field. These materials should be submitted in accordance with the process outlined in the specific integrated program plan proposal.

### **Continuation in the Program**

To continue in the undergraduate portion of an integrated program, a student must maintain an overall GPA of at least 3.25 and a GPA of at least 3.5 in the major area of study. Students who fall below either of these levels will be notified that they are being withdrawn from the integrated program. They can continue their studies as regular undergraduate students and can apply for graduate school under the regular Graduate School admission requirements.

Students in the graduate portion of their studies are subject to the same academic standards as all other graduate students.

### **Undergraduate Requirements**

Students should plan their studies to complete their general education requirements, school or college general requirements, and most of their major requirements in three years of undergraduate study. Depending upon the field of study, there may be courses taken during graduate studies that will satisfy some of the university or college/school requirements, but for the most part, students should expect to transfer from their graduate studies courses required for the major and elective courses for completion of their undergraduate degree. Students also must be certain to satisfy any residency requirements for the undergraduate degree. Students cannot secure waivers of university or school/college requirements based upon their participation in an integrated program. Students should work closely with their advisor(s) in selecting appropriate courses each semester.

## **Monitoring Student Progress**

### Advising

As undergraduates, students may have a professional general advisor as well as a faculty advisory in their major area of study. Advisors can discuss the requirements for remaining in the integrated program as well as assist in the selection of appropriate courses to satisfy the majority of their requirements in their first three years of study. Department or program advisors can assist students in negotiation the Graduate School application process. It is recommended that students consult with their advisor(s) each semester.

### Mentoring

A student who has selected a field of study and has been approved as a participant in an integrated program will be assigned a faculty mentor from the UWM department or program of interest. The faculty mentor will assist the student in designing the program of study within the field of interest as well as working with the student to become involved in undergraduate research in the appropriate field.

### Semester Review of Progress

At the completion of each semester, the academic records of students in integrated programs will be reviewed for adherence to the required academic standards. Any students who do not maintain both of the required GPAs will be withdrawn from the integrated program and so notified.

## **Admission to Graduate School**

### Admission Requirements

Students must meet the following minimum standards to be eligible for admission to Graduate School:

1. Regular Graduate School admission requirements, with the exception of completion of the bachelor's degree;
2. Completion of at least 90 semester credits of college classroom\* coursework before entering graduate school;
3. A minimum GPA of 3.25 in all college credits;
4. A minimum GPA of 3.50 in college credits that count toward the major;
5. Additional standards set by individual programs.

\*Classroom credits may be earned in person or online and count those credits earned in regular courses after admission to university studies. With the approval of the graduate 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 90 credit minimum, provided their prior approval by the student's undergraduate program.

### Graduate Student Status

Students admitted to the Graduate School through an integrated program carry the same graduate student status as those admitted with a bachelor's degree. They are eligible for the same types of 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 as well.

### Failure to Gain Admission to Graduate School

A student in the integrated program who does not gain admission to Graduate School can continue as an undergraduate student in order to complete the bachelor's degree.

## **Completion of Degrees**

### Bachelor's Degree

Upon completion of the courses and credits required for the bachelor's degree (with a maximum of 30 credits from the graduate program counting toward the undergraduate degree), the student requests that a graduate transcript be sent to the undergraduate admissions office. Those credits will be posted on the undergraduate transcript, and the bachelor's degree will be awarded.

### Master's Degree

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.

## **Program Administration**

### Program Oversight

Oversight of the program is the responsibility of an advisory committee composed of at least two representatives of each program appointed by the dean(s) of the units involved. A program coordinator is selected each year by the advisory committee from among its members. The duties of the coordinator and advisory committee are articulated in the attached Program Policies and Procedures.

### **Program Authorization**

Requests to integrate existing UWM's bachelor's and master's degree programs must be approved through the normal process for changes to undergraduate and graduate programs. These requests will follow the attached template for an integrated bachelor's/master's degree program proposal and the attached approval matrix.

When the partnership involves an articulation agreement with another institution, the approval matrix need not include the APCC step since no undergraduate UWM program will be affected.

### **Program Evaluation and Reauthorization**

Integrated bachelor's/master's degree programs are approved for 10-year periods. The GFC must authorize program continuation following evaluation. This evaluation and reauthorization will occur as part of the standard program review process. Students who currently are enrolled in an integrated bachelor's/master's degree program that is not reauthorized may complete the program, subject to course availability.

### **Changes to Academic Program Requirements**

Changes to the requirements of the integrated program will follow the standard academic approval process of each participating unit and institution.

## INTEGRATED BACHELOR'S/MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM

**Proposal Template**

RECOMMENDATION OF THE [INSTITUTION AND UNDERGRADUATE UNIT] AND THE UWM GRADUATE PROGRAM IN [GRADUATE UNIT] TO ESTABLISH AN ACADEMIC PROGRAM TRACK LEADING TO BACCALAUREATE AND MASTER'S DEGREES

**I. Overview**

Provide a general description of the program of study and the degrees that the students will earn.

**II. Purpose and Goals**

Provide a statement of purpose and goals for the accelerated program. Identify goals that are conducive to assessment.

**III. Need/Justification**

Provide a rationale for creating an accelerated program in this field of study, addressing the need(s) being addressed and the demand for the program.

**IV. Undergraduate Admission and Continuation Requirements**

List the criteria for considering acceptance of undergraduate students to the integrated program, addressing new freshman, continuing student, and transfer student admission. Include assumptions about prior academic work, placement scores, or other standards that indicate at what level in any particular subject students will be able to begin their studies. Identify standards students must meet to continue in the program. If applicable, list criteria for admission to the graduate portion of the program that exceed the minimum standards for integrated programs.

**V. Proposed Curriculum**

Provide a sample table of semester-by-semester coursework that students will complete over the course of the integrated program (typically five years).

**VI. Administration of the Program**

Prepare a set of program Policies and Procedures that explain how the program will be administered, including (but not limited to) who is responsible for oversight and day-to-day administration of the program (e.g., coordinator and advisory committee), the specific duties assigned to each; how those administrative individuals/bodies are selected; how the progress of



students in the program will be monitored; how recommendations to change requirements will be made, reviewed, and approved; how program assessment will be conducted. Attach Policies and Procedures to the proposal.

**VII. Financial Aid Eligibility**

Include information from financial aid officials that will clarify the student’s eligibility for financial support while in this program.

**VIII. Implementation Issues**

Discuss any issues that may be impediments to implementation of the program, and propose resolutions of those issues.

**IX. Date of Implementation**

Identify the semester and year in which the program will be implemented.

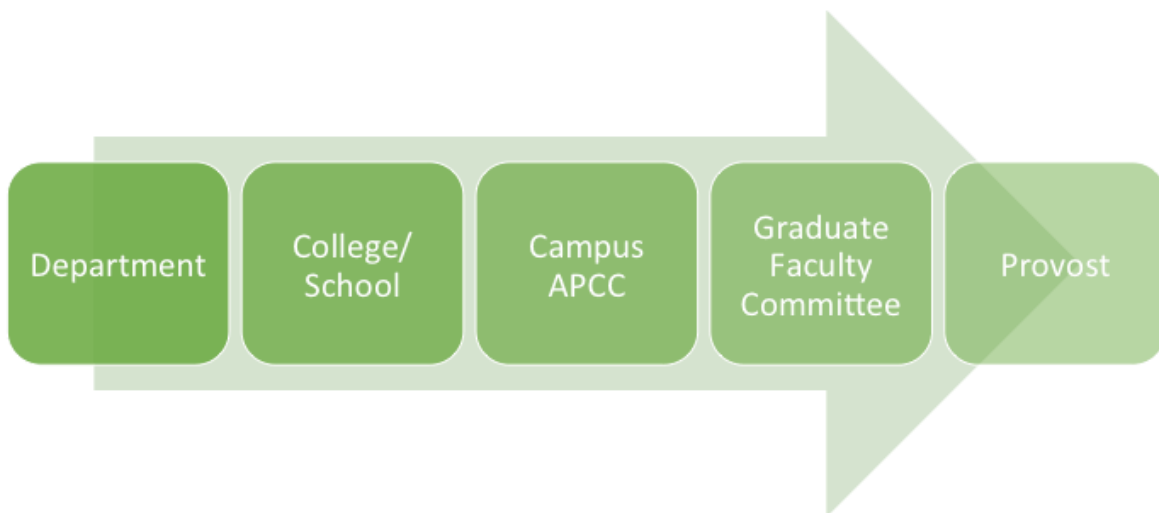
**X. Programs involving external partners**

Proposals for integrated bachelor’s/master’s programs between UWM and other institutions must also include a Program to Program Articulation Agreement.

**INTEGRATED BACHELOR’S/MASTER’S DEGREE PROGRAM**

**APPROVAL MATRIX**

**APPROVAL PROCESS FOR INTEGRATION OF  
EXISTING BACHELOR’S AND MASTER’S DEGREES**



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1. Integrated bachelor's/master's degrees shall be authorized and follow the requirements described above.
  2. Following appropriate administrative approval, this policy is effective Spring 2015.
- 

DOCUMENT APPROVAL HISTORY

Graduate Faculty Committee ..... May 12, 2014  
Graduate Faculty Committee ..... October 19, 2015