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## DOC 2010-01 Guidelines for the Development of Bachelor's Plus Master's (BPM) Degree Programs

University of Dayton. Graduate School

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**PROPOSAL TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE**

**Title:** Guidelines for the Development of Bachelor's Plus Master's (BPM) Degree Programs

**Submitted By:** The Graduate School

**Date:** January 4, 2009

**Action:** Legislative Authority

**Reference:** Art. II. B. 1.a

**Nature and Rationale**

Well-planned bachelor's plus master's (BPM) degree programs permit highly qualified students to pursue programs of study that not only facilitate the fulfillment of requirements for both degrees but, depending upon the program of study, might accelerate their completion as well. Student success in achieving these objectives is enabled through careful planning, mentoring, and advising. Therefore, a major objective of a formalized bachelor's plus master's program is to provide the faculty and administrative support that result in the development and completion of a coordinated program of study leading to both degrees. Normally, this plan will be prepared during the student's second or third year as an undergraduate and be designed to ensure that the student will be eligible for regular admission to the intended master's program at the completion of his or her undergraduate degree.

**Guidelines for Bachelor's Plus Master's Degree Programs**

There are two phases to the process by which a currently enrolled undergraduate student will be admitted to a BPM degree program: (1) admission to the BPM program that results in development and initial implementation of a plan to complete both the baccalaureate and master's degree requirements, and (2) subsequent admission to the master's degree program to formally pursue the graduate degree.

***Admission to the BPM Degree Program***

Admission to a BPM program will typically occur during the first semester of the junior year. However, a student may be admitted anytime subsequent to completion of 60 semester hours of undergraduate coursework and prior to being awarded the baccalaureate degree. Admission to a BPM program requires a minimum cumulative undergraduate grade-point-average (GPA) of 3.00. Continued enrollment in the BPM program requires maintenance of an undergraduate cumulative GPA of at least 3.00 and, when applicable, a graduate GPA of at least 3.00 as well. Individual programs may require additional or more stringent criteria (e.g., higher minimum GPA's, standards for

performance within the undergraduate major, or the completion of specific coursework). The standards for continued enrollment in the BPM program should be at least as stringent as those required for admission to the intended master's program. All admission requirements as well as specific application and admission procedures must be specified in the proposal for the BPM degree program.

### ***Admission to the Master's Degree Program***

Subsequent to admission to the BPM program, students will apply for admission to the master's program through the Office of Admission using regular admission processes. This application must be completed prior to enrollment in more than six hours of coursework intended for credit at the graduate level. An application will be considered to be complete only when the Office of Admission has received all documentation that is normally required for application to the intended graduate program (e.g., personal statements, letters of recommendation, and/or results from standardized tests).

Following review of the graduate program application, students who satisfy all standards for continued enrollment in the BPM program and who also meet all additional admission requirements that are normally associated with the intended master's program (e.g., satisfactory performance on the Graduate Record Exam), will be conditionally admitted to the graduate program. While conditional admission does not guarantee ultimate admission to the master's program, admission on regular status will be granted upon conferral of the baccalaureate degree provided that all requirements for admission to the master's program have been satisfied. If a conditionally admitted student does not achieve regular admission to the graduate program, any graduate work already completed will be noted on the undergraduate transcript only.

### ***Undergraduate Student Status***

Until the baccalaureate degree is awarded, students enrolled in a BPM program will be classified as undergraduates and will therefore be subject to all normal undergraduate student regulations and processes.

### ***Registration for Courses***

All courses in a student's program of study that will be used to satisfy requirements of the intended master's degree program must be taken for graduate credit. Thus, when registering for courses while classified as undergraduates, students and their faculty advisors should take care that proper registration procedures, as stipulated by the Office of the Registrar, are followed to ensure appropriate enrollment.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Award of the Baccalaureate Degree***

The baccalaureate degree will normally be awarded at the conclusion of the semester during which all baccalaureate degree requirements have been completed. Under normal

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<sup>1</sup> According to Fall 2009 practice, undergraduate students who wish to take courses for graduate credit must submit a hard-copy registration or drop/add form that explicitly shows which courses are to be taken for graduate credit.

circumstances, the baccalaureate degree should be awarded at least two semesters prior to award of the master's degree.

### ***Time to Completion of the Master's Degree***

Master's degree requirements associated with a BPM program must be completed within seven years of matriculation in graduate coursework following admission to the graduate program under regular status.

### ***Advising***

A faculty advisor within each department participating in a BPM program will be appointed to serve as the departmental focal point and mentor to students enrolled within the program. In addition, an individual within the dean's office will be appointed to serve as the focal point for BPM degree programs at the academic unit level.

At the time of initial acceptance into a BPM program, a plan for completion of both degrees should be developed and approved at both the department and academic unit levels. This plan should be maintained in the student's file. The plan for degree completion should identify projected courses to be completed during each semester as well as the dates when the baccalaureate and master's degrees are expected to be awarded. Annual reviews of student progress should be conducted and maintained in the student's file. The graduate program plan of study should be reviewed when the student is admitted to the intended master's program and, again, upon completion of all requirements for the baccalaureate degree.

### ***Student Financial Aid and Support***

Normally, university provided financial awards made to support completion of the baccalaureate degree will apply only to coursework used to satisfy baccalaureate degree requirements.

A student enrolled in a BPM program is not permitted to hold a graduate assistantship until the baccalaureate degree has been awarded and the student is admitted on regular status to the graduate degree program.

## **Bachelor's Plus Master's Degree Program Proposals and Procedures for Approval**

### ***Process for Approval of BPM Degree Proposals***

In order to establish a BPM degree program, a proposal detailing the proposed program must be forwarded from the academic unit to the Graduate Leadership Council (GLC). Proposals for BPM programs require approval by the appropriate committees responsible for the graduate curriculum within the academic unit prior to submission to the GLC. Upon receipt of a BPM program proposal, the GLC will consider the proposal and make a recommendation to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost of the University, who holds final approval authority.

BPM degree programs may cross traditional departmental/disciplinary boundaries by awarding a baccalaureate degree in one disciplinary area and a master's degree in another. In such cases, each of the academic departments/units involved in proposing the BPM degree program should approve the program proposal prior to its being forwarded to the GLC.

### ***Proposal Requirements***

Proposals for BPM degree programs must specify the following:

- The undergraduate and master's degree programs that will constitute the program. It is possible that more than one undergraduate degree program will be proposed within the program. If this is the case, each such program should be identified. As noted above, it is also possible that undergraduate and graduate degree programs will cross departmental/disciplinary boundaries (e.g., an undergraduate degree in the School of Engineering might be proposed in conjunction with an MBA degree).
- Requirements and procedures for application and for admission to the BPM degree program. These requirements and procedures should stipulate the criteria to be used in identifying eligible students and identify the point during the student's undergraduate career when the student would be admitted into the BPM degree program (typically 30-45 hours from completion of baccalaureate degree requirements).
- The proposed curriculum for the BPM degree program, including the credit hours to be earned for the baccalaureate degree, the master's degree and in total, as well as sample program(s) of study with timelines. The proposed program of study should identify how the proposed BPM program would facilitate the receipt of both degrees (e.g., summer coursework, joint degree credit –see next section) and differ, if at all, from the standard undergraduate and graduate degree programs.
- Procedures for mentoring and monitoring the progress of students who are admitted to the BPM program, including identification of the advising and administrative support to be provided at both the department/program and unit levels.

### ***Joint Degree Credit***

Within a BPM degree program, it is possible that up to six semester hours of coursework can be applied to both the baccalaureate and master's degree requirements.<sup>2</sup> If such joint credit is proposed, it shall not exceed six semester hours. Joint credit will normally be awarded for graduate level courses (i.e., 500 level and above) that are to be applied toward both undergraduate and graduate program degree requirements. In all cases, current University policy pertaining to receipt of credit through enrollment by undergraduate students in graduate courses shall apply.<sup>3</sup>

Joint-degree hours will be credited to both the undergraduate and graduate degree requirements, and will appear on both transcripts. Transcription of graduate degree credit will be contingent upon matriculation in the graduate degree program.

### **References**

*Dual/Accelerated Bachelor's to Master's Degree Program Guidelines, Wichita State University, November, 2007*

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<sup>2</sup> Inclusive of the coursework that will be applied to both degree programs, a minimum of 120 hours must be applied to satisfying undergraduate degree requirements and a minimum of 30 hours must be applied toward the satisfaction of master's degree requirements

<sup>3</sup> University of Dayton *Graduate Bulletin*: (1) Graduate courses to count toward the undergraduate degree: Approval must be obtained from the director of the appropriate graduate program. (2) Graduate courses to count toward the graduate degree: Approval must be obtained from the director of the appropriate graduate program. Unless the student has been accepted into a dual baccalaureate/master's degree program, the student must be within 15 semester hours of completing the semester-hour requirements for graduation in the undergraduate program. Credit obtained for the graduate courses may not be counted toward both the bachelor's degree and any future master's degree unless the student has been admitted to a dual baccalaureate/master's program. The undergraduate student whose status is less than full-time or 3/4-time must pay the graduate tuition rates to register in graduate courses for graduate credit.