

SPECIAL REPORT
of the
GRADUATE COUNCIL
concerning
REQUIREMENTS FOR A DUAL MASTER'S DEGREE

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COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Elizabeth Bertone
Sarah Boy
Frederick Byron
Anthony Butterfield
Marta Calas
Melvin Carlson
Eduardo Cattani
Laura Doyle
Ann Ferguson
George Greenstein
Eileen Hayes
Frank Hugus, Chair
Amadou Kamara
Nigar Khan
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Ernest May
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Jose Ornelas
Lorna Peterson
R. Radhakrishnan
Linda Shea
Robert Sinclair
Peter Tamas
Ting-Wei Tang
Nate Therien
James Walker
Martin Wobst
Juan Zamora

This document replaces Sen. Doc. No. 92-022.

A dual degree program can be approved at the request of two cooperating programs providing the requirements listed below are met. These programs, which will be subject to review and approval of the Graduate Council and the Faculty Senate, will not establish any new degrees and are not new programs. The intent of a dual degree program is to allow a student to receive two Master's degrees in established and clearly related programs, more efficiently than would be the case if students pursued degrees in each of the programs separately.

1. The cooperating departments must make a proposal that argues the need and inherent value of the combined program.
2. ~~The total number of degree credits required will be at least equal to 30 plus the number of credits required by the program requiring the larger number of credits.~~

The total number of degree credits will be at least equal to 60 credits of which no less than 30 credits can come from either of the two programs.

(For example, under the previous requirements [Sen. Doc. No. 92-022], if one program were to require 48 credits and the other 42 credits, the minimum requirements of the dual program would be 30 credits plus 48 or 78 credits.

Under the new policy, the above example would be reduced to a minimum of 60 credits.)

3. ~~The required courses in each of the individual programs must also be required for the dual degree.~~

The required core courses in each program must be completed in each degree. A core course is defined as a formal course exclusive of elective requirements.

4. If either degree program alone requires a thesis, a thesis will be required. The thesis should address a topic which is derived from the rationale for the dual degree.
5. No dual degree shall be awarded retroactively.
6. In order for a student to be accepted into a dual degree program, the individual must meet the respective entrance requirements of each individual program and be admitted by both programs.

7. A student who does not complete both courses of study required by participating programs is only awarded a degree in one field of study pursuant upon completion of the program requirements for non-dual degree students.

8. Both degrees must be awarded concurrently.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Requirements for a Dual Master's

Rationale for Change

Dual degree programs are increasingly of interest to students who are pursuing graduate studies. At the same time, competition for qualified graduate students is increasingly competitive. For several years, the University has seen a steady increase in Graduate School applications; however, to a large extent this increase is attributable to significant interest from international students. Often times, these international students are highly qualified and contribute significantly to our programs. Yet, the competition for the top international students and the best U.S. students is difficult. Good students are looking for a course of study that is intellectually challenging, a quality education, and delivered in an efficient fashion for them to return or enter the career path of their choice.

The previous University/Graduate School policy for dual degrees (Sen.Doc. 92-023) is extremely workable for two thirty-credit programs. An issue does arise, however, with the existing policy when each program requires substantially more than thirty credits. Two questions must be asked in these instances. First, what is the educational purpose of the credit requirements? Second, for a program that requires more than thirty credits, how many of these credits are presented as elective opportunities? The second concern is a pragmatic one for the student with regard to the existing dual degree requirements. When one of the two programs requires more than thirty credits, does the application of the previous Dual Degree requirements (Sen.Doc. 92-023) result in a program that is pragmatic in terms of completion or in terms of the resultant purpose of the dual degree option?

Addressing the first question of educational purpose in credit requirements also leads to a resolution of the second question in terms of the pragmatic realities of a dual degree-seeking graduate student. The existing Dual Degree Program policy, while providing some opportunity for students, is not recognizing the intent of many Master's programs that require more than thirty credits. In many instances, the "more than thirty" Master's programs require significant electives in order to have the student build an area of concentration of study. As can be seen from Table 1 (attached), there are 36 Master's Programs¹ presently offered within the University that require more than 30 credits. However, as can be seen in this table, a significant number of these "more than thirty credits" programs have elective requirements that lead to this "more than thirty credit" result in order to fulfill degree requirements. For example, as can be seen in Table 1, of the nine Master's programs that require between 37 and 47 credits for degree completion, in six of these electives may allow the student to build an area of focus or concentration in their course of study.

¹ The data to support these numbers have been ascertained from the Graduate School Bulletin (2001-2002). An individual review of Master's programs was conducted according to the program descriptions contained therein. Departmental websites were also reviewed for additional information. The supporting Table is Table 2.

The proposed changes to the Dual Degree Policy are intended to allow students to build an area of concentration that is represented by the dual degree option. For example, a student who is interested in Public Health issues in a government setting might combine a MPH degree with a MPA. Under the present policy, this option would require a minimum of 78 credits and several years of study. However, in both programs, electives are required for completion of degree credit requirements. Public administration requires 12 credits of electives, while the MPH degree requires 6 credits. In the proposed Revised Guidelines, the reconstructed program could be reduced to 36 required core course credits in Public Administration and 33 required core course requirements in Public Health, for a degree total of 69 credits. In essence, this change reduces the program by one semester and reflects the students focused area of study by the Dual Degree Option.

This revised Dual Degree Policy would result in greater utilization of University resources in providing a quality Master's level education to students, lead to the recognition of the cross disciplinary interests of individuals, and provide a set of more market attractive alternatives to compete for the most qualified applicants in Graduate programs.

Master's Program Credit Analysis

The following table is based on information in the Graduate Catalogue as best determined by program information provided.

Table 1

	30 Credit Degree Programs	31-36 Credit Degree Programs	37-47 Credit Degree Programs	48 or More Credit Degree Programs
<i>Total number of programs</i>	37	21	8	11
<i>Number of programs requiring courses less than degree credit requirements</i>	26	14	5	7
<i>Number of programs including variable required credits</i>	6	7	1	3