

Saint Louis University
College of Arts & Sciences
Graduate Education

Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's Programs: Guidelines & Procedures

Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's programs (ABMs) may be developed with the intent to retain exceptional undergraduate students and must be designed to enable them to complete the requirements for both the bachelor's and master's degrees at an accelerated pace. To accommodate the broad variation between disciplines in the arts and sciences, the College has not established a specific format to follow when proposing an ABM. However, ABM proposals must include outcomes similar to a traditional master's at SLU and meet benchmarking comparisons with ABMs at peer institutions. While a reasonable set of comparable institutions for benchmarking will vary by discipline, the expected default set of institutions should represent comprehensive Jesuit universities and flagship state universities in the Midwest.

A maximum of six credit hours of graduate-level coursework may be counted toward both the bachelor's and master's degrees. Departments may choose to permit fewer than six hours, or to count such hours as electives for the bachelor's portion only of the ABM. All ABM proposals require approvals by the CAS Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, the Board of Graduate Education, and the Faculty Council. Final approval is made by the Dean of the College.

Procedures

1. Students will normally apply for acceptance to the ABM program during the spring semester of the junior year using the application form available on the CAS website: [Faculty and Staff Resources](#) (scroll to the bottom and look under Graduate Education Resources). ***Students must not apply through Graduate Admissions.***
2. Departments offering ABM programs may require supporting documentation in addition to that minimally indicated on the form. They may elect to forego the GRE and letters of recommendation based on the department's first-hand experience with the student. Any supporting documentation will be retained by the admitting department.
3. Minimum overall GPA and in the ABM field should be commensurate with admissions standards for a master's program in the admitting department.
4. Applicants must have completed a minimum of 90 hours toward the bachelor's degree by the end of the junior year, and 105 hours by the end of fall semester of the senior year. Transfer students must have completed a minimum of 30 hours at SLU.
5. Following conditional admission to the ABM program, the registrar's office will code students' records in Banner to identify them as ABM students. However, an ABM student remains strictly an undergraduate for the purposes of financial aid and scholarships until the bachelor's degree is awarded.
6. Students accepted to an approved ABM program are not required to complete the "Petition by an Undergraduate to Enroll in Graduate Coursework". Instead, a registration form must be completed for any graduate courses to be taken. **Be sure to note in the Comments section that the student is in the ABM program.** Forms must be signed by the graduate program director or department chair. Completed forms are sent to the Associate Dean of Graduate Education in the College who will enter a registration override code and notify the

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student that s/he may register for the desired graduate course(s). ***Under no circumstances may departmental staff register students for graduate courses.***

7. During the undergraduate career, a maximum of six hours of graduate-level coursework will be permitted to count toward both the bachelor's and master's degrees. Additional graduate courses may be taken during the undergraduate career but they may count toward the master's degree only if (a) the credit hours earned are in excess of the total number needed to earn the baccalaureate degree; and (b) the student successfully petitions for admission to the master's program.
8. All graduate coursework will be credited toward the undergraduate program until the degree is conferred. ABM students must receive at least a 'B' in graduate courses taken as an undergraduate to maintain eligibility to advance to the master's level following conferral of the bachelor's degree.
9. Undergraduate courses at the 400-level may not be double-counted in an ABM program. In accordance with Graduate Education policy, a maximum of ten credits at the 400-level may be counted toward a graduate degree. However, credits for 400-level coursework may be transferred to the master's program only if ALL of the following conditions are met:
 - a. they are in excess of the total number of credits needed for the BA;
 - b. they were not used to satisfy a requirement of the undergraduate program;
 - c. the course was not dual-listed at the graduate level.A minimum grade of 'B' must be earned in any 400-level course that is to be transferred to the master's program
10. ABM students who have incomplete or missing grades on their undergraduate transcripts will not be permitted to advance to the master's level until those deficiencies are corrected.
11. In the final semester in the BA portion of the degree and after ABM students have applied for graduation, they must submit a petition for formal admission to the graduate program. On this petition, the student lists any graduate (or 400-level) coursework in excess of the total hours required for the bachelor's degree that is eligible for transfer to the master's program. *Transfer of excess graduate-level credits to the master's may potentially impact the GPA (negatively or positively) since these credits may be applied to only one degree program.* A separate petition to receive credit for graduate courses that will be double-counted may be submitted only after the bachelor's degree is conferred and the student has been formally admitted to the graduate program (see #12 below). Approval of the admission petition by the department will constitute verification that the student remains eligible to continue to the master's level. Students may not take coursework beyond the baccalaureate until the admission petition is approved by the associate dean.
12. After the bachelor's degree is conferred and the student has been formally admitted to the graduate program, the student may submit the petition to receive credit toward the master's for double-counted graduate courses (six credits maximum). Double-counting of courses results in no change to the undergraduate GPA.
13. A graduate assistantship for the fifth year may be awarded pending conferral of the bachelor's degree and approval of the admission petition.

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Additional guidelines

- Departments must carefully plan the sequencing and availability of graduate courses to ensure that an ABM program can be completed in an accelerated fashion. In addition, departments must work with students to devise a feasible plan of study and must closely monitor students' performance.
- ABM programs typically do not provide for a formal transition to graduate studies and their associated demands. Therefore, departments are advised to create an intentional transition and orientation to the extent possible. If departments do not match ABM students with individual advisors, it is also recommended that a designated advisor (e.g. the graduate program director) assume the responsibilities for advising ABM students.