

Accelerated Graduate Program Policies
Approved by the Graduate Council, May 4, 2023

Purpose

Accelerated graduate programs encourage and facilitate the completion of master's programs by JMU undergraduate students. Even with highly selective enrollment, the availability of these programs will help promote James Madison University as an academically-desirable undergraduate institution. This document defines the policies governing the development and implementation of accelerated programs.

General Principles & Procedures

1. Students earning a bachelor's degree must complete a minimum of 120 credit hours that count toward the undergraduate degree, and a minimum of 30 additional graduate credit hours to also earn a master's degree for a total of 150 unique credits.
2. Some courses required for the graduate degree may also fulfill requirements for undergraduate major or minor programs and may count towards the overall 120 credit-hour graduation requirement.
 - a. All courses completed while an undergraduate will appear on the undergraduate transcript. Graduate courses may fulfill undergraduate major or minor degree requirements when the graduate courses are logical undergraduate program options. If not required for a specific undergraduate program, graduate courses may count towards the overall 120 credit-hour graduation requirement.
 - b. A maximum of 12 credit hours of graduate coursework may be counted towards both the undergraduate and graduate degrees. These will typically be taken during the student's senior year, up to 6 credit hours each semester.
 - c. Undergraduate courses may not count towards graduate degrees.
 - d. All coursework that is included in a student's graduate program must be completed in its entirety, and those courses must be taken at the graduate level (courses numbered 500 or above).
 - e. Upon completion of the undergraduate degree, and satisfactory completion of all graduate admission requirements, graduate courses taken as an undergraduate and completed with a grade of B or above will satisfy requirements of the student's graduate program.
 - f. As part of its degree-audit process when certifying students have met all master's degree requirements, The Graduate School will verify that at least 30 graduate credits were completed that did not also count towards the undergraduate degree.
3. Undergraduate students apply for admission to accelerated programs using the standard graduate-school admission system.
 - a. Students must be admitted to a graduate program to count graduate credit hours towards their undergraduate degree.
 - b. Admission criteria and admission deadlines must be established for each accelerated program.
 - c. The deadline for applying for admission to a graduate program must not be less than 6 weeks prior to registration for the first graduate-level course.
 - d. Criteria for admission of a JMU undergraduate student to an accelerated program may vary from criteria for direct admission to the graduate student for post-baccalaureate students. (For example, GRE scores, when required for admission by post-baccalaureate students, may be waived for JMU undergraduate students enrolled in an accelerated program. Similarly, grades in specific JMU undergraduate courses may be included among the criteria for admission to an accelerated program.)
 - e. Students must be accepted into the program by the deadline established by The Graduate School.
 - f. Students admitted to accelerated programs will be conditionally admitted to a graduate program, conditional upon successful completion of their undergraduate degree and satisfactory performance in their graduate courses.

- g. Unconditional admission to the graduate program will require successful completion of the undergraduate degree, successful completion of all graduate coursework completed while an undergraduate, and may include other requirements that are typically included in letters of admission for all graduate students.
 - h. Overrides from the academic department offering the graduate program are required for students admitted to accelerated programs to enroll in graduate courses.
4. Students enrolled in required accelerated program pathway courses will be considered undergraduate students, for tuition and financial aid purposes, as long as they are in the process of completing their undergraduate degree.
 - a. Students must complete their undergraduate degree as efficiently as possible, and no later than the term specified in their letter of conditional admission to the graduate program.
 - b. Once all coursework required for the undergraduate degree is earned, the undergraduate degree will be conferred and the student will be considered a graduate student for tuition and financial aid purposes.
 - c. Conditional offers of admission will be rescinded if the degree is not earned by the date specified in the admission letter or if any graduate courses that are included in the accelerated admission plan are not completed with a grade of B or better.
5. Full-time undergraduate students who are paying full-time tuition, who are admitted to an accelerated graduate program, can enroll in required graduate courses without paying a surcharge for graduate coursework as long as the total number of credits completed each semester does not exceed what undergraduate students are permitted to complete without surcharges.
6. Accelerated programs must be approved through the university C & I process and must additionally be approved by the Offices of Financial Aid and Budget Management.
 - a. Accelerated program options for existing graduate programs do not need to complete the preview (pre-proposal) process.
 - b. New graduate programs that have an accelerated option, before initiating proposals, should engage in conversations among the AUH, Academic Dean and Graduate School Dean; with agreement of these individuals, proposals can begin the standard program preview and C & I processes.
 - c. Program proposals must include a semester-by-semester plan for completion of the undergraduate degree and graduate program, showing which courses will be completed during various undergraduate terms, which will be completed during graduate terms and which courses will count towards both the undergraduate and graduate degrees. Proposals will also include: a description of processes to be used to identify potential candidates, the application timeline, admission criteria, application materials required, plans for advising and mentoring enrolled students.
 - d. Proposals will also provide data showing the number of new students enrolled in the program annually during the past 5 years, the projected number of new accelerated-program students that will be admitted during future academic years, and information about any additional resources that will be needed to serve any increased number of enrolled students.
 - e. Graduate courses that may be taken by undergraduates enrolled in accelerated graduate programs will be listed in both the undergraduate and graduate catalogs. To assist with Financial Aid and University Business Office operations, graduate courses that are available to undergraduates enrolled in accelerated programs will be identified by the Registrar.
7. Undergraduate students who are enrolled in accelerated programs are not eligible for graduate assistantships until they become full-time graduate students.