

Office of Graduate & Professional Studies

Accelerated Program Planning Considerations

Instructions: Use these questions to help plan your accelerated program.

Part A: How many units will count for both degrees?

Policy: <https://www5.nau.edu/policies/client/Details/511?wholsLooking=All&pertainsTo=All>

Up to 12 units can count for both degrees. Of these 12 units, only 6 may be 400-level (no 300-level courses may be used). Students must receive a grade of “B” or higher in this coursework used towards both degrees.

Options:

A program can require that undergraduates take up to 12 graduate units.

A program can require that graduate students to take up to 6 undergraduate units.

A program can split the units that count for both degrees, e.g., 6 undergraduate units - 6 graduate units, 3 undergraduate - 6 graduate, 3 undergraduate - 9 graduate, etc.

Considerations in making this decision:

- Are there accreditation issues that might prevent undergraduate courses from counting toward the graduate degree?
- Will the undergraduate courses meet the rigor intended of a graduate course?

Part B: What courses will count for both degrees?/What will the progression plan look like?

Start with the current requirements for both degrees from the catalogue. Look at the undergraduate progression plan. Write a list of the specific courses/course requirements that will count toward both degrees. Sketch out the progression plan for Years 4 and 5, which are generally the years in which there is overlap between the two degrees.

Considerations in making this decision:

-Are the courses identified offered with enough frequency such that the student can take them and still stay on an accelerated path?

-Is one course on this list a pre-req. to another on the list?

-Is there a requirement in the last semester/last 2 semesters of the undergraduate degree that might make taking graduate courses in Semester 7 and 8 impossible/unattractive, e.g., a student teaching semester, fieldwork, or internship requirement?

If so, would it be acceptable for the accelerated student to take graduate-level courses in Semester 6? Will the student have the background knowledge required to be successful in a graduate course in Semester 6 (i.e., second semester of junior year)? Could the undergraduate take more than 1 graduate course in Semester 6?

Remember:

- to identify courses in the major and/or program of study that will count for both degrees
- to not replace liberal studies, undergraduate electives, required minor courses, required courses outside of the department with graduate courses
- to identify which graduate course or graduate course requirement can replace the undergraduate equivalent (in the major) – if applicable
- to identify which undergraduate level course (in the major) is rigorous enough to replace the graduate-level equivalent – if applicable

- to not just add graduate courses to the undergraduate degree (if you do, you are not identifying which courses count for both degrees; you're simply adding to the required units needed for the undergraduate degree; refer to Part B above)
- to try to avoid requiring summer or winter courses (it's less attractive to the student)
- to try to avoid requiring 18-21 units every semester of the undergraduate degree (they have to keep their GPA at 3.0 – or higher, depending on the accelerated program)
- to strive for 12 units that count for both degrees, instead of only 6 or 9 (it works better)
- to remind colleagues that:
 - if these are truly accelerated students, they should be able to handle graduate-level work in Year 4 (and they can)
 - there may be undergraduate 400-level courses that lend themselves to being considered equivalent to graduate-level courses (i.e., capstone courses are a good undergraduate course to consider; programs could even require two capstone courses [of different topics] for their accelerated programs, depending on the discipline)