

Graduate School Guidelines for 2+3 Programs

The 2+3 programs allow students to make a smooth transition from an undergraduate program into a master's program and to complete both degrees with fewer total credit hours than would be required if they completed the two degrees independently. At the University of Missouri-St. Louis, they are called 2+3 programs because of the large number of transfer students on this campus. The simple model envisions a student who completes an AA degree in two years at a community college, and then spends 3 years at UMSL to complete both a bachelor's and a master's degree.

These programs represent a cooperative agreement between the Graduate School and the student's undergraduate College. The main points are:

- (1) The Graduate School agrees to enroll the 2+3 students in the Graduate School prior to their receipt of a bachelor's degree.
- (2) The undergraduate College/Department agrees to allow the students to count 12 to 15 credit hours of graduate courses toward the degree requirements for the bachelor's degree.

The maximum number of credit hours of graduate work that can be applied to the bachelor's degree is set by the undergraduate college. Currently, the number of graduate credits allowed in the 2+3 programs varies among different departments. Assuming that the student may count 12 credits of graduate work, then the bachelor's degree would be awarded based on a combination of 108 credits of undergraduate work and 12 credits of graduate work. This reduces the total tuition paid for the bachelor's degree by about \$4,000. The Master's degree will be earned based on the normal credit hours and courses, **which should be taken under graduate status.**

Admission

Admission to a 2+3 program occurs in two stages. If we assume an idealized undergraduate career, consisting of 8 semesters of 15 credit hours each, then a student may apply for **Provisional Admission** after earning 60 credit hours, i.e., the first semester of the junior year, by filing the Supplemental Application for the 2+3 Program. This form requires approval of both the undergraduate college and the Graduate School. Students must have a 3.0 gpa to apply for provisional admission to the 2+3 program. The primary purpose of provisional admission is to facilitate the advising process. The student will continue to take regular undergraduate courses, but will need additional advising to plan and schedule the credit hours of graduate coursework that are intended to count toward both degrees.

This idealized student will continue on provisional status through the second semester of the junior year and into the first semester of the senior year, during which the idealized student is enrolled in credit hours 91 – 105. Students must maintain a 3.0 gpa while under provisional status. With permission (Graduate School Form C-1), students may take up to 6 hours of 5000/6000 level courses while still classified as an undergraduate. These 6 hours will be treated by the Graduate School as "under graduate status".

Every semester each provisional 2+3 student should be re-evaluated by the Department to determine whether the student is ready to make the transition to graduate status. A minimum gpa of 3.0 is required, but beyond this simple metric, the program should determine whether the student has taken the courses necessary to be successful at the graduate level. At the appropriate time, provisional 2+3 students will be recommended by their Graduate Program Director for **Formal Admission**, which involves admission to the Graduate School. Program Directors will complete the bottom portion of the Supplemental Application form and submit the form to the Graduate School. The application for Formal Admission must be approved by both the undergraduate college and the Graduate School.

For the idealized student, the application for Formal Admission would come in the Fall semester of the senior year (>90 credit hours), and the student would be admitted to the Graduate School for the following Spring semester and would begin paying graduate tuition. The student is expected to continue taking courses under graduate status until the completion of the master's degree.

The transition from Provisional to Formal status after 90 credit hours is not automatic. The department must make a formal recommendation for admission to the graduate school by approving the bottom portion of the Supplemental Application form. This recommendation should not be based simply on the number of accumulated credit hours. For example, a student who has changed majors might well reach 90 total credit hours, but still be missing key courses within the major that are essential for success in graduate courses. The department should continue the student on provisional status until the key preparatory coursework has been completed, regardless of the total number of credit hours the student has accumulated.

A student need not spend any minimum number of semesters in Provisional status. For example, a student beginning his/her senior year in the Fall could apply for Provisional Admission to the 2+3 program. During the Fall semester, the student could then apply for Formal Admission to the Graduate School for the following Spring semester. The key factor is whether or not the student has the preliminary courses and an overall academic record that suggest that (s)he will be successful at the Graduate level. But keep in mind that the longer a student waits before applying for Provisional Admission, the more likely it is that there will be advising and scheduling problems that will add time and perhaps cost to the overall program.

We will not allow a 2+3 student to start a semester as an undergraduate and switch to graduate status during the semester.

Graduate School Requirements

Once admitted to the Graduate School, the student must meet all of the usual requirements for the Master's degree. No graduate degree requirements are waived for 2+3 students. Once admitted, the student is expected to maintain graduate status until the program has been completed. No courses that have been used to award an undergraduate degree may be used to meet any requirements for the Master's degree.

Graduate Courses used in the Bachelor's Degree

It is up to the undergraduate department to determine which of the courses taken for graduate credit will be counted towards the 120 credits required for the bachelor's degree. We anticipate that these courses will represent some combination of (a) 4000 level courses that could have been counted toward the bachelor's degree had they been taken as an undergraduate, and (b) 5000/6000 level courses that will be used to replace some courses in the regular undergraduate curriculum.

Awarding of the Degrees

The Bachelor's and Master's degrees should be awarded simultaneously at the end of the 2+3 program. Students in the 2+3 program will not be awarded a Master's degree unless they are also awarded a bachelor's degree.

Graduate students who formally withdraw from the 2+3 program may apply for the bachelor's degree, assuming that all of the undergraduate degree requirements have been met. However, the advantage of dual credit is forfeited. Any courses (graduate or undergraduate) that are applied to the bachelor's degree may not be included in any future graduate degree program.