

Guidelines for Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's Degree Programs at WVU
Approved by the Office of the Provost – 4/27/15 (minor revision 10/27/15)

Definition:

Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's degree programs (ABM programs) offer WVU students the opportunity to pursue both a bachelor's and a master's degree in the same discipline or in related disciplines in an accelerated time frame. Students in these approved programs are able to begin taking courses for the master's degree prior to completion of the bachelor's degree.

Program Approval:

New ABM programs must be approved by the Associate Provosts for Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Affairs and be included in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs before students may be enrolled. ABM programs may only combine existing approved bachelor's and master's degree programs. The catalog listing must include, at minimum, admissions requirements, a listing of course requirements, and standards for continuation in the program. Approval insures that the integrity of both the undergraduate and graduate degree programs are maintained despite any efficiencies built into the ABM program (such as shared credits, allowing graduate courses to meet undergraduate requirements, and early participation in graduate courses). This administrative review also insures that appropriately high standards for admission to, continuation in, and completion of these programs are in place. At the prerogative of the Associate Provosts, Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee or Graduate Council review of proposed programs may be requested.

See below for instructions on obtaining approval for an ABM program.

Admission:

An ABM program may directly admit first-year students (early admission), or may admit students after completion of at least 60 credits (regular admission), or both.

Early admission:

For early admission, entering WVU first-year students must have a minimum high school GPA of 3.0 and SAT or ACT test scores above the 70th percentile, or higher, as determined by the program. Early admitted students must meet the standards described below for regular admission to continue in the ABM program after the completion of 60 credits.

Regular admission:

Only currently enrolled WVU students may be considered for regular admission to the program. Transfer students must complete at least 24 credit hours as

degree-seeking students at WVU before applying to the program. ABM programs are not available to students seeking a second (or subsequent) bachelor's degree.

Regular admission may not be any earlier than the semester in which an undergraduate student is expected to complete 60 credits or any later than the semester after which the student needs two additional semesters to complete the bachelor's degree. The minimum standard for regular admission is a cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0, with no provisional admissions allowed. Additional admissions criteria (such as completion of particular courses, entrance exam scores, letters of recommendation, or personal statements) are determined by individual programs.

Requirements:

Students in ABM programs complete all requirements for both degrees. Students are conferred both degrees simultaneously following completion of the requirements for both degrees. Acceleration of the time to complete the two degrees can be facilitated by allowing students to begin some of the work for the master's degree prior to completion of the bachelor's degree, and by allowing students to count up to 12 credits of specific courses at the 400-level or above toward both bachelor's and master's degree requirements. An ABM program may allow specific courses (at the 400-level or above) that are required for one degree to be substituted for specific course requirements for the other degree. The bachelor's degree in an ABM program must require at least 120 credits and the master's degree must require at least 30 credits, including any courses (up to 12 credits) that are approved to count for both degrees.

Programs are responsible for reporting to the Office of the University Registrar any courses completed by a student enrolled in an ABM program that are to be applied to both the student's bachelor's degree and the student's master's degree. Any course completed by a student in the ABM program that will be used to meet both bachelor's and master's degree requirements must be identified in writing to the Office of the Registrar by the ABM program director within 60 days following posting of the student's grade in the course. Otherwise, the course will only meet requirements of the student's primary curriculum at the time of course completion.

Enrollment:

Students accepted to an ABM program will be dually enrolled in the bachelor's and master's degree programs after completion of at least 60 undergraduate credits and admission to the master's degree program. Students must complete a separate application for admission to the master's degree program (including payment of an application fee).

Students enrolled in a master's degree program as part of an ABM program may enroll in graduate-level courses approved for their program without completing a Senior Petition.

Unless given specific permission by the relevant dean, students admitted to an ABM program must maintain full-time continuous enrollment during fall and spring terms. Enrollment requirements in summer term are determined by individual programs.

Students who are admitted to an ABM program may not pursue a dual degree, double major, or certificate. They may pursue minors and areas of emphasis, as approved by their advisor. However, students admitted to an ABM program will not be approved for course overloads (more than 17 credits in any term that includes more than one graduate-level course, more than 20 credits in any term that does not include graduate-level courses).

Graduation:

Students admitted to an ABM program will have their bachelor's and master's degrees conferred simultaneously upon completion of all requirements for both degrees.

Tuition and financial aid:

Students in an ABM degree program are charged undergraduate tuition and are eligible for undergraduate financial aid prior to completion (or near completion) of the minimum number of credits normally required for their bachelor's degree. After that, students are charged graduate tuition and are eligible for graduate assistantships (with permission of their program) or other graduate student funding opportunities and financial aid. Changes in students' tuition and financial aid status may be made only at the end of an academic year (May). Students will be charged graduate tuition during the academic year when they are expected to complete the program. Colleges/schools may choose to provide tuition scholarships to ABM students to reduce students' college tuition charges.

Continued eligibility and termination:

Students in an ABM degree program must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 (or higher, if specified by the program) in both their undergraduate and graduate courses throughout their enrollment. Grades in courses at the 400 level or higher that will be counted toward both the bachelor's and master's degree (maximum of 12 credits) will be included in calculation of both the undergraduate and the graduate GPA for the purposes of determining satisfactory performance.

Students' eligibility to remain in the ABM program will be evaluated at the end of each semester. Students failing to meet program or University standards will be placed on program probation for no more than one semester, after which they will be terminated from the ABM degree program. Terminated students as well as students who choose not to continue in the ABM degree program will be eligible to receive their bachelor's degree when they have completed the bachelor's degree requirements. The credits earned by such students in graduate-level courses will apply to the minimum credits required by the bachelor's degree program. The bachelor's degree program may decide to allow such

students to substitute graduate-level courses taken as part of the ABM program for specific undergraduate course requirements, but the program is not required to do so.

Approval of New Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's (ABM) Degree Programs

Proposals for new ABM programs must be submitted to and approved by the Associate Provosts for Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Affairs. ABM programs should be designed to allow accelerated completion of a bachelor's and master's degrees for a select group of outstanding students with a strong record of excellent academic performance prior to admission.

Guiding principles: Students completing ABM programs should acquire the same level of knowledge and skills as students completing the component bachelor's and master's programs sequentially. Acceleration of degree completion should be accomplished through allowing students to complete graduate-level courses in the discipline earlier than usual. If these graduate courses are allowed to count toward bachelor's degree requirements, these courses should cover the same or similar material as the specific undergraduate-level courses that they replace, or provide a similar enhancement of learning if they are counted as elective courses. Students in these programs must complete all University and College requirements.

Components of the program proposal

- Standard identifying information and approvals
- Admission to the program
 - Application requirements
 - Acceptance procedure
- Continuation in the program
 - Review procedures and standards
 - Probation and termination procedures
- Curriculum
 - Provide a chart illustrating the current bachelor's and master's degree course requirements, including total credit hours, and how these requirements will be met in the ABM program
 - Provide a sample course schedule for a student admitted to the ABM program
 - Identify the courses that will be counted toward both the bachelor's and master's degree (maximum 12 credits), and explain how these courses will meet the content requirements of both degrees
- Program demand and enrollment projection
- Resource needs – identify any additional needs for faculty time, facilities, equipment, etc. needed to provide this program
- Administration – identify the person or group(s) who will oversee this program and describe how students in the program will be advised
- Catalog entry – provide the catalog copy to appear in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Include a brief description of the program, admissions requirements, course requirements, and standards for continuation in the program. (Note that the details of the program can be provided on a website or in other written materials to be provided to students.)

- Approval page – appropriate unit approvals (e.g., department curriculum committee, department chair, college/school curriculum committee, dean, others as appropriate).