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# Concurrent Programs Leading to Two Graduate Degrees

(Policy adopted by the Graduate Council, February 19, 1988)

## Objective

The purpose of offering a concurrent program of graduate study leading to the conferring of two advanced degrees is to serve students with interests in two disciplines. Such students can be allowed to waive certain overlapping requirements and pursue a program of study to take advantage of a specific career opportunity and the unique interdisciplinary perspective that a combined study of these two disciplines can offer. In no case should a concurrent program result from the merely arbitrary meshing together of two distinct sets or requirements. Rather, the program should reflect a single organic and unified field of study which crosses current disciplinary lines for reasons integral to the methods or subject matter.

Concurrent programs may, therefore, be appropriate in certain professional areas that require similar common experiences (internships, research methodology, or supporting academic subjects outside the major area) or in those areas where traditional academic disciplines have come to share interest in a common subject.

In all cases, concurrent programs require that the student be carefully advised so the academic components of the program are as comprehensive as possible for both degree areas while also providing a common substantive core. Thus, only certain highly qualified students, usually with significant experience, such as professional employment, or advanced standing in one or more areas of knowledge applicable to the degree(s), should be admitted to a concurrent program. When a concurrent program of study is offered, the normal condition is for the student to complete the two degrees in approximately 25 percent less time than if the two degrees were taken serially.

## Policy

1. Normally, all concurrent programs at the graduate level will be from existing professional two-year degree offerings: MFA, MPH, MSW, MCP, MBA, MS in Rehabilitation Counseling, or MS in Counseling, or similar professional degrees from other institutions with approved cooperative academic programs.
2. Under exceptional conditions the Graduate Council will consider proposals for concurrent programs where only one of the degrees is a two-year applied and professional degree or where the program is based on two discipline-based (MA, MS) degrees.
3. The concurrent program unit total in relation to the unit value of the two degrees taken serially should not exceed a reduction of about 25 percent.
4. It must be demonstrated that the unit reduction proposed for the concurrent program involves overlapping requirements and does not reduce the educational value and content of the separate degrees and that graduates from the concurrent program will be fully qualified to carry out all of the responsibilities that pertain to graduates of the two separate programs. Acceptable reductions could be through shared internships and practicum experiences; a carefully specified, shared body of knowledge in relation to theory and method; or in similar required supporting courses outside the major area.
5. Concurrent programs of study leading to two graduate degrees will usually be intended for very specific career objectives. Proposals for concurrency must include information about the career opportunities and justify the accelerated concurrent program as necessary relative to these career objectives.
6. The sponsoring departments shall form a concurrent graduate program faculty advisory committee which shall take responsibility for recommending admission, advising, and advancement.
7. Concurrent graduate programs require a substantial ability to integrate and apply knowledge beyond that necessary for either single degree. The prospective student will meet the minimum admission standards of both single degree programs.
8. Similarly, students applying for advancement to candidacy will meet both program requirements for such advancement.

## ***Concurrent Programs***

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9. All concurrent graduate degree programs must include one thesis or project (Plan A) culminating experience integrating methods and interests from both programs.
10. If a student in a concurrent graduate program returns to a single degree program, none of the provisions of the concurrent degree program of this policy shall pertain.
11. Transfer units will not be accepted toward a concurrent graduate program of study. (See, however, the provisions of Item 1 with respect to cooperative programs with other institutions.)
12. Previous graduate study or prior degrees will not be accepted toward meeting the unit requirements of the concurrent graduate program of study.

### **Procedure**

Proposals for concurrent programs leading to two graduate degrees are processed through the regular curricular process as outlined in this guide. The following information should be provided in the request for concurrent degree programs.

1. Purpose and objectives of the program. Include information about career opportunities and justify the accelerated concurrent program as necessary relative to these career objectives.
2. Total unit reduction in program in relation to unit value of the two degrees. What courses that are included in the two separate degree programs have been deleted for students in the concurrent program?
3. Bulletin copy (catalog output blocks) to include:
  - General information.
  - Admission requirements.
  - Specific requirements for program information listed in items 10, 11, and 12 under "Policy" heading above must be included in bulletin copy.