

## **Establishment of Combined Programs at UCR**

### *Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee*

The main charge to the Ad Hoc Committee (AHC) was to set a framework for establishing Combined five-year Programs (CP) for Bachelor/Master studies at UCR. The AHC was jointly formed by the Committee on Educational Policy and Graduate Council, with two representatives designated from each Committee. In this memo, AHC members outline possible incentives that can establish CPs as viable educational tools for both prospective “CP-students” and UCR units.

The two main questions addressed by the members of the AHC were:

- Can the CPs lead to a Masters degree in 5 years without any compromise of educational standards?
- Can the CPs streamline the educational process, compared to separate Bachelors and Masters programs?

The members of AHC believe that both questions can be answered in the affirmative and suggest the following framework:

1. Each program at UCR can tentatively admit incoming students to a CP at the beginning of their Bachelors studies. Admission criteria to the CP must be established by each program and then approved by the Graduate Council. In general, these criteria should exceed the normal admission requirements set by the specific program.
2. Admitted students maintain their tentative enrollment in the CP if their cumulative GPA exceeds some level X. If students fail to maintain the level X standard, they are disenrolled from the CP but are eligible to re-enroll if their cumulative GPA subsequently exceeds this level X for three consecutive quarters. The same condition would be applied to all new enrollments requested after freshman entry, including transfer students.

The specific level X is to be determined by each Program and then approved by the Graduate Council. We suggest that all programs at UCR set this level X at 3.3 or above.

3. By their request, the students tentatively enrolled and in good standing in their CP programs become unconditionally enrolled at the start of the first quarter in which their past record shows accumulation of 135 units towards their Bachelors degree.
4. CP-students must fulfill all the requirements set for their Bachelor programs at UCR without any modifications. In particular, the CP students must meet the specific program requirements set for the number of total units and for units within the major. CP students would automatically become Masters students after receiving a Bachelors degree.
5. For each CP student, up to 12 upper division units from within their undergraduate major can be double-counted towards the Masters degree. This number of units is further limited as follows.
  - a. Each CP can establish its own minimum threshold and double count upper division major units taken in excess of this threshold toward both the Bachelors and the Masters degree, with a limit of 12 undergraduate units to be so double-counted. Generally, the allowable

range for setting the minimum threshold is 0 to 11 units below the total number of units required within the major for that Bachelors degree.

- b. Double-counting begins at the minimum threshold. Therefore, the maximum double counting of 12 units can be granted only if a student exceeds the unit requirements within the major for the program. The amount of double counting allowed is correspondingly reduced if the requirements within the major are not exceeded.

Examples: A certain program requires a total of 80 units within the major for the Bachelors degree and sets its minimum threshold for double counting at 72 units. Students in the CP can begin double counting after they complete 72 units within the major. Student A in the program completes the minimum of 80 units within the major for the Bachelors and can double count 8 units. Student B in the program completes 82 units within the major for the Bachelors and can double count 10 units. Student C in the program completes 84 units within the major for the Bachelors and can double count 12 units. Student D in the program completes 90 units within the major for the Bachelors but can still double count only 12 units.

- c. Each Program can also specify that only a subset of the upper-division courses in the major are eligible for double-counting, or it can set its minimum threshold for double counting to be some level above the total number of units within the major required for the Bachelors degree in the program, or it can limit the maximum number of units that can be double counted to be some number less than 12.
6. The undergraduate courses double counted for the Masters degree may not be applied in any manner to reduce the following requirements:
    - a. for Plan I programs, the 24 units of required graduate-level courses
    - b. for Plan II programs, the 18 units of required graduate-level courses.
  7. Excepted as described above in numbers #1 - #6, all rules and regulations that apply to graduate students apply to CP students.

The above framework can be justified by the following analysis:

- Many undergraduate programs at UCR have their own unit requirements, which substantially exceed the minimum number of 180 units set at the campus level. As a result, UCR graduates admitted to Masters programs often have done more undergraduate coursework within their major than their peers admitted from other institutions with lower unit requirements.
- Some Masters programs at UCR currently include up to 12 units of undergraduate course work within the same major. This work may be particularly important for non-UCR students, due to a different structure or amount of the undergraduate course work required by the other institutions. In most cases, however, this work has already been done by the former UCR undergraduates. This is the main rationale for allowing CP-students to double count up to 12 undergraduate units and thereby streamline their Masters studies.

The AHC concludes that CPs will prove beneficial for both incoming students and UCR programs due to the following reasons:

- CPs can better attract top high school graduates, transfer students, and returning students, especially those interested in advanced degrees. Thus, UCR Departments can expect a higher proportion of good undergraduates.
- CP students will be more inclined to stay at UCR for their Masters studies instead of applying to other institutions. Thus, UCR Departments can better retain these students.

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