



## University Policy Statement

### UPS 410.400

## Academic Standards for Blended Bachelor's and Master's Programs

- I. Definition of Blended Programs – Blended programs (also known as 4+1 programs) are a seamless and combined pathway of the bachelor's and master's degrees. Students in blended programs work on both degrees concurrently and have a shortened time frame to earn the degrees.
- II. Admission Requirements
  - A. Undergraduate minimum standards to enter the blended program:
    - a. Completion of a minimum of 60 units but not more than 120 units
    - b. Not currently in the semester in which they will complete the baccalaureate degree requirements
    - c. Completion of at least 12 upper-division course units in residence
    - d. At least a 2.5 cumulative GPA
  - B. Programs can determine admission requirements that are more stringent than these university standards.
  - C. Students are not required to apply formally for graduate admission.
  - D. Transfer students and international students are eligible, pending they meet eligibility criteria, including having completed 12 upper-level course units in-residence.
- III. Degree Requirements
  - A. A minimum of 138 units are required for the blended program, which includes 120 units minimum for the undergraduate degree, 30 units for the graduate degree, and 12 units double counted between the two degrees.
    - a. For courses with variable unit loads or courses that can be repeated for degree credit, the number of course units allowed to be counted towards the graduate degree should be specified. The maximum repeatable units need to be maintained for each degree (bachelor's and master's) in the blended program.
    - b. For units that are double counted, none of the required graduate courses can be replaced by an undergraduate course, and graduate courses that will also count toward the bachelor's degree must either require mastery of the more rudimentary knowledge taught at the undergraduate level or cover the content of the undergraduate courses that they replace.

- c. The double-counted units that fulfill both the undergraduate and graduate degree requirements must be 400-level (approved for graduate-level credit) or 500-level courses. Each double-counted course shall be specifically identified in the program catalog and be required (students cannot pick from a menu of courses to double count). It is up to each program to limit the number of 400-level courses that can be applied to a blended degree program according to university requirements.
  - d. If students double-count 400-level coursework, they must complete the extra assignment and demonstrate competency at the graduate level, as specified by UPS 411.100.
- B. Although students in blended programs may be completing degree requirements for the bachelor's and master's simultaneously, students will follow undergraduate policies and degree requirements while in undergraduate status and will follow graduate policies and degree requirements while in graduate status, with the exception of continuous enrollment.
- a. Blended students will be required to maintain continuous enrollment as outlined in the graduate policy (UPS 410.106). If students break continuous enrollment and return to the university, they will return to the appropriate (non-blended) bachelor's degree major.
- C. Blended program students will receive their bachelor's degree once they have completed the bachelor's degree requirements. They will then receive their master's degree once they have completed the master's degree requirements.
- D. Blended program students must remain in good academic standing while in undergraduate status.
- a. Students placed on academic notice while in undergraduate status will be moved back to the appropriate bachelor's degree major.
  - b. Students who are placed on academic notice while in graduate status will follow the graduate academic standing policy from UPS 410.106.
  - c. Failure to make satisfactory progress is grounds for the blended advisor to request the student return to the appropriate non-blended major.
- E. Time Limit
- a. Students will adhere to the time limit boundaries of the undergraduate degree while in undergraduate status. Failure to make satisfactory progress is grounds for the blended advisor to request the student return to the appropriate non-blended major.
  - b. Students must complete all graduate Study Plan courses within five years (10 consecutive semesters), starting with the earliest course on the graduate Study Plan (i.e., TDA). Students may petition to extend the time limit to complete the graduate degree to seven (7) years (14 consecutive semesters). Students must retake or validate courses on the graduate study plan completed more than seven (7) years before completing the requirements for the degree. Courses completed

more than ten (10) years before completing the requirements for the master's degree are not eligible for validation.

#### IV. Blended Program Advising

- A. Each blended program will have a blended advisor responsible for overseeing the program. Blended program students require a high level of support in applying to and navigating the program to maintain timely academic progress. In many cases, the blended advisor will be the graduate program advisor, but each blended program will appoint its own blended advisor as it meets their needs.
- B. Blended advisors should meet the qualifications outlined for graduate advisors from UPS 270.102 and be chosen according to policies and procedures determined by the responsible unit.
- C. Blended advisors will be responsible for but not limited to the following duties.
  - a. Advisement of academic progress and development of a graduate study plan.
  - b. Overseeing the blended admissions process includes reviewing files and recommending admission to blended programs.
  - c. Approval of graduate study plans and culminating experience choice.
  - d. Review of graduation candidates for both the undergraduate and graduate degrees recommendation for award of the degrees, and approving the transition from undergraduate to graduate status.
  - e. Approval of exceptions to policy (TDA exceptions) for the undergraduate and graduate degrees.

#### V. Transition from Undergraduate to Graduate Status

- A. The student will transition to graduate student status in the semester when 120 units are completed, including in-progress units. The transition must occur even if the bachelor's degree requirements are not complete.
- B. Approval of the transition to graduate status by the appropriate provost designee will be granted if:
  - a. The student is in good academic standing in their undergraduate program and graduate program.
  - b. The student has applied for a grad check for their bachelor's degree.
  - c. The student has completed all lower division coursework and GE coursework.
- A. Approval for the transition is granted by the blended advisor
- d. International students must complete all undergraduate degree requirements before moving to graduate status.
- C. Students who do not successfully meet the requirements to transition will be moved back into the appropriate undergraduate degree major.
  - a. Students who exit the blended program and return to the undergraduate major may apply for admission to the graduate program, but double-counting units will no longer be possible.

- b. Students who exit the blended program can transfer up to 9 units of graduate work into a future graduate degree if it is not used for the bachelor's degree and meets all criteria specified for transfer coursework from UPS 410.106.

## VI. Program Eligibility and Curriculum

- A. For consideration for a new blended program, the bachelor's and master's programs should already be approved degree programs. The undergraduate and graduate programs must also be in the same support mode (both self-support or both state-support). If the undergraduate and graduate programs are not in the same department, the new blended program proposal must include evidence and agreement of terms by both department chairs.
- B. A new blended program proposal uses existing courses and programs. Any new courses, course changes, or program changes should be done independently of the new blended program proposal.
- C. New blended programs are proposed by the academic units and approved by the department, college curriculum committee, the college dean, and the Provost designees for undergraduate and graduate curriculum, and final approval by the CSU Chancellor's Office.
- D. Changes to an existing blended program must be made through a program change. When either the bachelor's or master's program is changed, the department must also submit a separate program change for the blended program with an implementation date in the same semester.

Source: Graduate Education Committee

**EFFECTIVE DATE: July 10, 2024**  
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