Dual and Joint Degrees

Formal Dual Degree Programs

A formal dual degree program links two master’s degrees or a master’s program with a JD program and leads to two degrees. The Graduate Council and the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies must approve all proposals for formal dual degree programs.

There are two types of formal dual degree programs. Type one incorporates two distinct disciplines where students complete two separate sets of core courses and cross-count electives. Type two incorporates two areas of study within one discipline where students can cross-count a common set of core courses and take separate sets of electives.

Dual degrees must be pursued concurrently, not consecutively. In order to meet this requirement, students interested in pursuing a dual degree must matriculate into the second program no later than the first term available following fifty percent (50%) course work completion of the first program.

Students should complete both degrees at the same time. However, students can receive the first degree as long as all original requirements and credits for the first degree have been met. They then have up to 18 months to complete the second degree. Students must apply for graduation for both programs.

With fully developed and approved curricula, these programs are available to graduate students who are admitted to both schools and submit the Dual Degree Approval Form (http://www.du.edu/media/documents/graduates/dual_degree_form.pdf) during the program's first term. For program details, please contact the school, college or department.

Flexible Dual Degree Programs

Students may propose a flexible dual degree program that links two master’s degrees or a master’s degree and a JD degree.

Students must submit the proposal for the flexible dual degree no later than one term prior to matriculation into the second degree.

Dual degrees must be pursued concurrently, not consecutively. In order to meet this requirement, students interested in pursuing a dual degree must matriculate into the second program no later than the first available term following fifty percent (50%) course work completion of the first program.

Students should complete both degrees at the same time. However, students can receive the first degree as long as all original requirements and credits for the first degree have been met. They then have up to 18 months to complete the second degree. Students must apply for graduation for both programs.

Any significant changes to the approved program require the student to resubmit a revised proposal packet to the deans/chairs/directors and advisors of both programs and the Office of Graduate Studies.

Proposing a Flexible Dual Degree

To propose a flexible dual degree, the student must first apply to and be admitted by both programs, pay application fees and admissions deposits for both programs, and seek the counsel of an advisor in each program. Admission into each program does not take the place of filing a Flexible Dual Degree proposal (http://www.du.edu/media/documents/graduates/flexdual.pdf) nor guarantee approval of the proposal.

The dean, chair, or director of each degree program and both program advisors, must carefully compare the requirements for each program and approve the proposed curriculum. The student must then submit a copy of the original requirements for each degree (printout from the unit website or copy from the student handbook is acceptable), a detailed course plan showing all proposed courses, and the credit hours; a one to two- page statement of the educational/career objectives stating the reasons for the specific course selection and which courses most clearly serve the educational and career goals of the student; and current official/unofficial transcript(s) showing any work already completed towards the proposed program and degrees.

The student then submits the documents listed above to the Office of Graduate Studies, which reviews and decides on the proposals. Proposals with errors or course/program inconsistencies will be returned for revision.

Once the proposal is approved, the student will be entered into the University computer system as a flexible dual degree student.

Curriculum Structure

Students may propose any flexible dual degree program that seems reasonable to them and their advisors for academic and career objectives. Only elective courses may be counted among the hours used for reduction or cross-counting.

All the core requirements of each program must be preserved and cannot be overlapped or waived. Credit reduction due to cross counting of elective courses will be limited to the following for each program as determined by the original number of credit hours required for each degree.

Required credit hours for degrees and flexible dual degree reduction allowed:
• 45-60 quarter hour degree program: Reduce or cross-count a maximum of 10 quarter hours for the one degree without outside transfer credit. The traditional maximum outside transfer credit allowed in this case would be 10 quarter hours. A reduction of 15 quarter hours from the original 42 degree will be the maximum allowed when combining outside transfer hours and the cross counting of degree hours.

• 61-75 quarter hour degree program: Reduce or cross-count a maximum of 12 quarter hours for the one degree without outside transfer credit. The traditional maximum outside transfer credit allowed in this case would be 22 quarter hours. A reduction of 25 quarter hours from the original degree will be the maximum allowed when combining outside transfer hours and the cross counting of degree hours.

• 76-90 quarter hour degree program: Reduce or cross-count a maximum of 15 quarter hours for the one degree without outside transfer credit. The traditional maximum outside transfer credit allowed in this case would be 45 quarter hours. A reduction of 45 quarter hours will be the maximum allowed from the original degree when combining outside transfer hours and the cross counting of degree hours.

Note: Credits at the Sturm College of Law for a JD degree are calculated using semester hours: 1 semester hour equals 1.5 quarter hours. A 90 semester hour JD degree may only be reduced by a maximum of 10 semester hours for a total of 80 semester hours completed for the JD (10 semester hours equals 15 quarter hours).

Non-Course Requirements

All non-course requirements must be fulfilled for both programs. If one of the non-course requirements of both intended programs is the writing and defense of a thesis, then (with prior approval from both departments) a combined thesis may be written as long as both departments are equally represented (from original proposal to completion) and so long as the most rigorous requirements are adhered to for completion and oral defense.

Students who decide to only complete one degree must inform the units, program advisors and the Office of Graduate Studies in writing of their intention to nullify the flexible dual degree proposal. Students must complete all the original requirements for the remaining degree in order to graduate.

Dual Undergraduate-Graduate Degree Programs

A Dual Undergraduate-Graduate Degree Program is an institutionally approved program in which a DU undergraduate student begins taking classes toward a graduate degree program prior to earning a baccalaureate degree. Both degrees must be earned within five years of matriculation into the undergraduate degree program. Students pursuing a dual degree with a Juris Doctorate must earn both degrees within six years.

The programs may reduce a limited number of both undergraduate and graduate credit hours toward both degrees.

The amount of the credit hour reduction is variable across programs. To be admitted, a student’s academic progress must demonstrate that the requirements of the program can be completed within the set time-frame.

Undergraduates still need to meet all normal core, major, minor and total credit hour requirements of their respective majors and minors before receiving the undergraduate degree. Graduate coursework is usually taken during the undergraduate “senior” year. Students should be admitted to the dual undergraduate-graduate program before taking graduate courses since undergraduate students generally may not take graduate courses. Usually, no more than 30 hours of electives may be used in the senior year to begin the graduate/professional program. Only graduate credit may be counted for the graduate degree. The total number of credit hours required varies by department. All requirements of the graduate or professional program need to be completed before receiving the advanced degree.

• For students enrolled in a dual degree program, the University will award the undergraduate degree at the time it is earned.

• As a dual-degree student, you are considered an undergraduate until you have fulfilled your undergraduate degree requirements, and should file your FAFSA (http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) and CSS PROFILE (https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf) as an undergrad. Once you complete your undergraduate degree requirements, you are considered a graduate student. Federal loan eligibility will increase for most students because of the higher graduate student borrowing maximum and scholarship merit based aid will be decided and awarded by their graduate unit. If you have specific questions about how your financial aid may be affected, please contact the graduate academic program or the Office of Financial Aid for information. Dual undergraduate-graduate students who matriculated into the undergraduate degree 2012 and earlier will continue to receive the undergraduate financial aid award level in the 5th year. In addition, Boettcher and Daniels Fund scholars in a dual undergraduate-graduate degree will continue to receive the undergraduate financial aid award level in the 5th year.

• Upon completion of the undergraduate degree federal loan eligibility will actually increase for most students because of the higher graduate student borrowing maximum.

• A student who chooses not to continue on for the graduate degree may count the graduate courses, if approved as relevant by the advisor, toward the undergraduate degree. (Students should visit the appropriate college or school for opt-out options and requirements).

• Students enrolled in the dual undergraduate-graduate program who have been awarded the BA/BS degree, completed all required coursework and are working on a thesis may be eligible to enroll in graduate continuous enrollment.

Dual Undergraduate-Graduate Admission and Records Procedures

The following must be followed consistently and accurately:
• Students are admitted to dual undergraduate-graduate degree programs by the graduate admission unit. The graduate unit follows all normal admission procedures and the student must meet all admission criteria for the graduate program other than receipt of the baccalaureate degree. Students should be admitted to the dual undergraduate-graduate program as early as practical for financial aid and other reasons. They must be admitted to the dual undergraduate-graduate program no later than the end of their tenth full-time quarter of the undergraduate degree (i.e., by the first quarter of the senior year).

• The effective term for admission should be the term in which the student is permitted to take graduate courses. For example, if the student’s senior year begins in the fall and the student meets admission criteria and may begin taking graduate courses in the subsequent spring term, the admission term should be that spring.

• Graduate units are responsible for assuring that the student information is accurate.

Note: A student who receives a bachelor’s degree and was not previously enrolled in a dual undergraduate-graduate program is not eligible to return and enroll in a graduate program and reduce the number of credit hours for the graduate degree.