Graduate Program Definitions

The University of Denver offers a range of graduate degree and certificate programs:

Graduate Degree Program

A graduate degree program is a combination of courses and related activities organized under the authority of a dean, the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, Graduate Council, the Provost and the Board of Trustees for the attainment of broad educational objectives leading toward a post-baccalaureate degree.

In general, with the exception of students in the dual undergraduate-graduate program, graduate students must have earned a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college or university before matriculation in a graduate program. However, with approval from the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, students who have already earned a master’s degree, but not a bachelor’s degree, may in rare cases, matriculate without a bachelor’s degree.

Formal Dual Degree

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 pursuing a dual degree with Sturm College of Law must complete all requirements for both degrees before the law degree can be awarded. Students will not be graduated and certified to take the bar examination unless both programs have been completed. Students must apply for graduation for both programs.

Flexible Dual Degree

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 pursuing a dual degree with Sturm College of Law must complete all requirements for both degrees before the law degree can be awarded. Students will not be graduated and certified to take the bar examination unless both programs have been completed. 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 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 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.

If a student decides to only complete one degree, s/he must inform the units, program advisors and the Office of Graduate Studies in writing of his/her intention to nullify the flexible dual degree proposal. The student 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 (formerly known as a Three-Two or Four-One 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.

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 in five years.

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.
- The University may continue to provide the same level of institutional financial aid for newly graduated dual degree students but now in the form of a graduate scholarship. The undergraduate level of aid will be provided for an additional year beyond the initial commitment of four years or until the bachelor’s degree is earned, whichever comes first. Once a dual degree student receives the undergraduate degree, funds formerly provided to them in the form of Pell grants, Federal Supplemental Opportunity Grants and Colorado State Grants will take the form of graduate scholarships. Not all dual degree students may be eligible for the graduate scholarship. Please contact the graduate academic program or the Office of Financial Aid for information.
- 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.

**DU-Illiff Joint PhD Program**

The University of Denver (Colorado Seminary) and the Iliff School of Theology jointly administer a program leading to the doctor of philosophy in religious and theological studies.

Joint PhD students maintain student status and have access to resources in both co-sponsoring institutions. Students in the Joint PhD program should be referred to as “DU/Illiff Joint PhD Students” and not primarily as either Iliff or DU students.

Students in the Joint PhD program are expected to know the specific policies, procedures, and requirements for both the University of Denver and the Iliff School of Theology.

**Certificate Programs**

A certificate program provides a set of learning experiences concentrated in a specific set of educational goals.

Certificate programs may grant Continuing Education Units (CEUs), or they may include non-credit offerings. Most certificates require a minimum of 18 quarter credit hours. Credit hours that have already been counted for a previous degree that has been awarded cannot count towards granting a certificate. Contact the unit for details.

**Concurrent Candidacies**

Concurrent candidacies occur when students are enrolled in two programs concurrently.

Admission and program requirements must be fulfilled for each program. There will be no reduction in the number of credit hours required for either degree.

At the time of admission, the student submits written approval from each unit allowing enrollment in two programs simultaneously.

**Transfer of Credit for Graduate Degrees**

**Transfer of Credit Criteria**

• The student must initiate in writing the request for transfer of credit through the program of study and is responsible for seeing that the transfer of credit is requested prior to the beginning of the first term but not later than the end of the first term. Transfer credit requests for course work taken from another institution during DU’s program of study needs to be submitted in the returning quarter and no later than the preceding term in which the student wishes to graduate.

• The student is responsible for seeing that the transfer of credit is posted on his/her DU transcript and the department, appropriate student services office of the college, school, or department and the Office of Graduate Studies have approved the request.

• Graduate coursework and credit hours already applied toward a degree received from DU or another institution cannot be accepted as transfer credit towards another graduate degree of the same level or less. Graduate credit earned and not applied towards a degree may be eligible for transfer of credit to a DU degree.

• An official transcript must be on file in the Registrar's office.

• The transfer credit must have been earned as graduate credit at a regionally accredited institution offering a graduate degree program in a similar field for which the student is currently seeking a degree. Transfer credit is approved on a course-by-course basis (unless it is a blanket transfer of credit hours for a doctoral program from a previously earned master’s degree).
• The credit must have been earned within a five-year period preceding the request for transfer of individual courses. Exceptions to this regulation may be made only by petition with specific justification by the college, school or department to the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies.

• Coursework with a “B-” grade may be requested to be transferred, providing the average of all graduate transfer coursework is “B” or better. If only one course is to be transferred, the grade must be “B” or better (a grade of “B-” or lower is unacceptable).

• Courses taken on a pass/fail basis are not acceptable for transfer, unless the instructor provides a class syllabus and the student provides proof from the institution that a “Pass” is equivalent to a “B” or better.

• Transfer credit is not included in the computation of the grade point average for the current degree.

Coursework Taken Prior to Enrollment at DU
Credits earned prior to enrollment in a degree program at DU may be transferred to meet degree requirements at DU in accordance with the transfer of credit policy and for students entering DU without a previous graduate degree OR students entering a DU doctoral program with a master’s degree, the request for the transfer must be made prior to or during the first quarter of attendance as a DU degree-seeking student.

Coursework Taken After Enrollment at DU
If the credit to be transferred is earned while the student is already enrolled in a degree program at DU, students may transfer graduate credit earned from a regionally accredited institution to meet degree requirements at DU in accordance with the transfer of credit policy and:

• The student must initiate in writing a request for approval of outside coursework, prior to enrolling in the course. The written request, submitted to the college, school or department, should include the name of the institution where the course will be taken, the course title, number of credit hours, course description, and the student’s reasons for requesting outside credit.

Transfer of Credit for a Master’s Programs
Transfer credit toward a 45-credit hour master’s degree is generally limited to 10 quarter hours, but some programs may have more restrictive limits. Some master’s degree programs that require more than 45 credits may allow more than 10 credits to be transferred toward the degree. Contact the unit for details.

Transfer of Credit for a Doctoral Programs
With approval from the student’s advisor and the chairperson of the department, doctoral students may reduce the required hours for a doctoral degree by up to 45 hours with an earned master’s degree from a regionally accredited university.

The student must initiate in writing the request for posting the master’s degree through the program of study and is responsible for seeing that the department, appropriate student services office of the college, school, or department and the Office of Graduate Studies have approved the request.

An official transcript must be on file in the Registrar’s office and must demonstrate that the student earned a “B” average or better in his/her master’s degree program.

The student’s DU academic department must fill out the **Transfer of Credit** form and provide a statement that the student’s master’s degree is appropriate and adequate background for the doctoral degree being sought.

15 additional quarter hours may be allowed to be transferred provided the credits have been earned after the master’s degree was awarded and it does not conflict with the doctoral residency requirement that requires enrollment at DU in at least six quarters (four semesters), including at least two consecutive quarters (one semester) of full-time attendance.

**Note:** Some graduate programs may have more stringent policies regarding transfer credit. Contact the unit for details.

**Exceptions:**

• Morgridge College of Education: Students must complete 90 quarter hours in addition to a master’s degree for the doctoral program.

• English: Students must complete 90 quarter hours in addition to a master’s degree for the doctoral program.

• GSSW: An MSW (or equivalent) plus 75 credits are required for completion of the PhD program in Social Work. The MSSW and MSSA are equivalent to the MSW.