



Joint/Combined Graduate Degree Pathways # 308.105

INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2020	LAST REVISION DATE: July 1, 2020	RESPONSIBLE UNIVERSITY DIVISION/DEPARTMENT University Graduate School
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POLICY STATEMENT

Joint/Combined Graduate Degree Pathways include two graduate degree programs whereby highly qualified students have the opportunity to expand their expertise and knowledge through admission into two graduate degree programs before commencing the pathway. Students take graduate credits that are shared with, or double counted, towards two graduate degree programs. All students participating in a pathway earn a minimum of 30 semester hours for each graduate degree program.

Proposals for joint/combined graduate pathways must include a strong curricular rationale to support the streamlining of credit requirements in the two degrees and the proposal is subject to formal curricular review and approval through the department and college/school curriculum committees, Dean’s Office, Faculty Senate, University Graduate School, and Office of the Provost.

Admission to a joint/combined graduate degree pathway requires:

- A selective procedure, requiring an application, review, and approval process established by the colleges or departments of each unit where a degree is housed.
- Students must meet all admissions criteria for each graduate degree program.

Award of Degrees

- The joint/combined degree pathway must indicate when students are eligible to apply for graduation. It may be when the requirements of one degree are satisfied, or may be upon completion of both degrees.

SCOPE

This policy applies to academic units with graduate degrees who propose joint/combined graduate degree pathways.

REASON FOR POLICY

The University Graduate School proposes policies to bring the university into compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges Principles of Accreditation.

DEFINITIONS	
TERM	DEFINITIONS
Joint/Combined graduate degree pathway	Student completes two graduate degrees in complementary related disciplines (examples include but not limited to: MS/MS, MBA/MD, MPH/PhD, and MS/PhD).
Shared credits	The use of a limited number of credit hours toward the requirements of two separate degree programs. This is done through the sharing of credits between



two graduate programs. The principle of shared credits allows the student to earn two degrees for fewer total credit hours than would normally be required if both academic degree programs were taken independently. Academic programs must provide strong academic justification for the use of shared hours between the two degrees involved in the pathway that explains how program integrity is maintained or enhanced.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Academic departments participating in joint/combined graduate degree pathways must demonstrate that graduate courses counted towards each graduate degree are appropriate for the degree program, consistent with SACSCOC core requirement, Principle 9.1, that degree programs embody a coherent course of study.

Academic departments sponsoring joint/combined graduate degree pathways must demonstrate the integrity of each of the graduate programs is maintained, despite inclusion of graduate students outside of the unit (if applicable), per SACSCOC Principle 9.6 (Post-baccalaureate Rigor and Curriculum). Programs will maintain appropriate admissions standards to ensure that joint/combined degree pathway students are adequately prepared for all graduate level coursework.

RELATED RESOURCES

Program Length, Core Requirement, Principle 9.2, Resource Manual, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

Program Content, Core Requirement, Principle 9.1, Resource Manual, Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges.

Post-baccalaureate rigor and curriculum, Principle 9.6, Southern Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Colleges.

Quality and Integrity of Academic Credentials, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges Policy Statement, December 2018.

CONTACTS

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HISTORY

New policy July 1, 2020.