

Policy on Blended Undergraduate and Graduate Programs

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide an accelerated pathway from a bachelor's to a master's degree program, to provide a pipeline of high-achieving students to a master's degree program, to enhance the undergraduate learning experience, and to curb the "brain drain" from the Fresno area.

II. Background:

As specified in Executive Order No. 971, both degrees may be awarded during the same term and at a single graduation ceremony. Under Title V, Sections 40500, 40501, and 40510, a minimum of 150 semester units (120 bachelor's-level and 30 master's level units) are required for blended programs.

III. Policy:

Academic programs may offer blended programs that comply with the requirements of Title V and Executive Order No. 971. Blended programs must establish clear pathways for students to complete the blended program by outlining course requirements that meet both bachelor's degree and master's degree requirements. These blended programs must be approved by the normal program approval process.

IV. Bachelors/Masters Degrees Blended Programs:

Students who meet department established criteria for blended programs and are interested in being part of a blended program must apply to the blended program either upon admittance or while in undergraduate status and will be admitted as undergraduates to the bachelor's component of the blended program. While in undergraduate status, the students in a blended program may take graduate-level courses required for the master's degree. During the period when students in a blended program have earned fewer than 120 semester units, they will be assessed only the undergraduate State university fee. The semester after a blended program participant has completed at least 120 semester units toward program completion, the campus will change the student code to reflect graduate status. The FTE calculation for students in graduate status will be 12 units equal one FTES.

Students participating in a blended program will not be required to apply for graduate admission, nor will they be required to pay a graduate admission fee. When the degree-objective status is changed to "graduate," students will be assessed the graduate student tuition rate, even though they may continue to take undergraduate courses. Students in a master's degree program that has been authorized to assess the higher graduate professional degree ("MBA Fee") will only be charged that fee for courses required to complete the fee-approved master's degree program.

If a student in a blended program opts not to complete the master's program but does complete the undergraduate degree requirements, the undergraduate matriculation will be re-opened at no cost to the student in order to grant the baccalaureate degree.

V. Master's/Doctoral Degrees Blended Programs:

Students who meet department established criteria for blended programs and are interested in being part of a blended program must apply to the blended program either upon admittance or while in master's degree status and will be admitted as master's degree students to the master's component of the blended program. While in master's status, the students in a blended program may take doctoral-level courses offered for the doctoral degree. The semester after a blended program participant has completed 30 semester units towards master's program completion, blended program students become doctoral program students.

Students participating in a blended program will not be required to apply for doctoral graduate admission, nor will they be required to pay a doctoral graduate admission fee. When the degree-objective status is changed to "doctoral," the student will be assessed the doctoral student tuition rate, even though the student may continue to take master's courses. Students in a master's degree program that has been authorized to assess the higher graduate professional degree ("MBA Fee") will be charged that fee for courses required to complete the fee-approved master's degree program.

If a student in a blended program opts not to complete the doctoral program but does complete the master's degree requirements, the graduate matriculation will be re-opened at no cost to the student in order to grant the master's degree.

Approved by the Senate

September 18, 2013

Approved by the President

August 7, 2012 (Interim Policy)

October 11, 2013