POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Blended Bachelor’s and Master’s Programs

Whereas: Coded Memorandum AA-2012-01 specifies the minimum requirements for establishing a “blended degree model”, and

Whereas: No current university policy exists to guide the development of a blended bachelor’s degree to master’s degree program at San José State University, and

Whereas: The blending of bachelor’s and master’s degrees would support students in the pursuit of advanced degrees in the same or different fields, and

Whereas: Adopting this model may streamline students’ pathway to completing the master’s degree program, and

Whereas: Title 5 requires completion of a minimum of 120 units for a bachelor’s degree and a minimum of 30 units for a master’s degree, and

Whereas: The decision to offer a blended bachelor’s and master’s degree would be exclusively the decision of the department/school faculty with curricular approval following normal SJSU processes; therefore, be it

Resolved: That programs interested in establishing a blended bachelor’s to master’s degree be allowed to offer the blended program as described in this policy.

Approved: 03/18/2019

Vote: 9-0-1

Present: Thalia Anagnos, Marc d’Alarcao, David Emmert, Cynthia Fernandez-Rios, Susana Khavul, Cara Maffini, Winifred Schultz-Krohn Pam Stacks, Lynne Trulio, Brandon White

Absent: Anand Ramasubramanian, Gwendolyn Mok

Workload Impact: A temporary increase in workload at department, college, and university level for curriculum committees, chairs, associate deans, Undergraduate Studies staff and College of Graduate Studies staff
as programs develop curriculum and application processes for blended degree programs.

A significant increase in workload is anticipated for GAPE, registrar’s office, and financial aid staff members to develop business processes and PeopleSoft applications for tracking and implementation.

Financial Impact: None anticipated
BLENDED BACHELOR’S AND MASTER’s DEGREE
PROGRAMS POLICY

I. Academic Objectives of a Blended Bachelor’s and Master’s Program

1. To provide an accelerated route to a graduate professional degree, with simultaneous award of both bachelor’s and master's degrees.
2. To enhance the undergraduate learning experience.
3. To provide a seamless process whereby students (first time freshman or transfer) can progress from undergraduate to graduate status without having to apply through the Admissions Office.
4. To enable a senior project capstone experience to be integrated with a graduate thesis/project.

II. Establishment of a Blended Bachelor’s and Master’s Program

Academic units that choose to establish a blended program must follow the normal curricular review process. A blended program must meet the following minimum criteria:

1. Title 5 requires the completion of a minimum of 120 units for a Bachelor’s degree and a minimum of 30 units for a Master’s degree. Thus, a minimum of 150 units are required for a blended program. In a given situation where a Master’s degree exceeds 30 units, the curriculum could be designed such that the excess units would be absorbed into the undergraduate portion of the blended program as “blended” units. The blended policy, therefore, differs from university policy S89-2 on graduate credit for undergraduates, which permits students to take as many as 6 units of graduate work in their last undergraduate semester and apply those units (via petition, and only if those units are not counted towards undergraduate requirements) to a subsequent graduate program.
2. Academic units may only implement programs blending existing bachelor’s and master’s degree programs in the same support mode (e.g. all self-support or all stateside-support).
3. Curricula for the blended bachelor’s and master’s programs must adhere to existing campus curriculum policies for both bachelor’s and master's degrees.
4. The College of Graduate Studies, Undergraduate Studies and the Registrar shall develop guidelines and processes for administration of the blended degrees.

III. Admission to the Blended Bachelor’s and Master’s Program

1. Individual programs will develop the criteria for admission as well as the degree roadmap for completion of the blended degree programs.
2. The process for applying to the blended program will be internal to the university.
To apply to the program, the student must successfully have completed a minimum of 60 undergraduate degree applicable units (including all lower division units) and not exceed a maximum of 120 undergraduate degree applicable units. Departments may require more than 60 undergraduate degree applicable units before students may apply to the blended degree program.

The blended bachelor’s and master’s program must include blended units. Blended units are graduate-level courses required for the master’s degree which students in a blended program may take while in undergraduate status.

IV. Change to Graduate Status in the Blended Program

1. Students in the blended Bachelor’s and Master’s program do not apply for the graduate program through Cal State Apply. As noted above in Section III.2, students will apply internally to the university to the blended degree program.

2. A minimum of 2.5 GPA in the last 60 semester units attempted is required. Once admitted to graduate standing, students must maintain an overall 3.0 GPA or better in courses that appear on the Formal Study Plan and adhere to all graduate policies and procedures.

3. Completion of the undergraduate Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) is required before a student can transition to graduate status.

4. A student must complete 120 degree-applicable units (undergraduate or graduate).

5. All lower division undergraduate coursework shall be completed prior to approval of graduate status.

6. The registrar’s office in consultation with College of Graduate Studies shall develop processes for transitioning students from undergraduate to graduate status.

V. Award of Degrees

1. The student applies to graduate for the bachelor’s degree the semester before the student will complete the bachelor’s degree requirements. Upon evaluation of the bachelor’s degree requirements, if the student has satisfied all requirements for the bachelor’s degree, the degree will be awarded.

2. If a student admitted into a blended program opts out of, or fails to complete, the master’s degree portion of the program, graduate level coursework already counted towards completion of the undergraduate degree may not be used towards the completion of a subsequent master’s degree, even if admitted for a future term.