Best Practices for Managing Accelerated Programs

IUPUI currently offers a number of accelerated programs where a student completes requirements for two degrees in a shortened amount of time. Some programs are designed so the student receives a bachelor's degree in less than four years; others are set up for students to initially aspire to complete both an undergraduate and graduate degree in a shortened period. Often referred to as '3 + 2' or '4 + 1' programs, these bachelors + masters programs result in the student earning both degrees in less time (and at a reduced cost) which makes them attractive options.

The development of accelerated programs is consistent with the IUPUI Strategic Plan objectives of promoting undergraduate student learning and success and increasing the capacity for graduate education. With our focus on students, the **4 + 1 design is the preferred model** as it maximizes the students' ability to receive financial aid benefits and minimizes the overall cost of the degree.

This document provides an outline on how IUPUI accelerated programs should be administered throughout campus with regards to admission, registration, financial aid impacts, and billing for students. <u>NOTE:</u> *This document & discussion only addresses INTERNAL IUPUI accelerated programs and not any 'external' program where a student is earning two degrees concurrently at another institution like Butler, UIndy, Franklin, etc.)*

Definitions

Accelerated Programs: Completion of a college program of study in fewer than the usual number of years, most often by attending summer sessions and carrying extra courses during the regular academic term. (*http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/glossary/?charindex=A*)

Accelerated Bachelors/Masters Programs: At IUPUI, these are defined as those programs in which academically qualified students earn both a bachelor's degree AND a master's degree in a shorter timeframe than if pursued independently. A set number of credits apply to both undergraduate and graduate requirements.

Approval Process

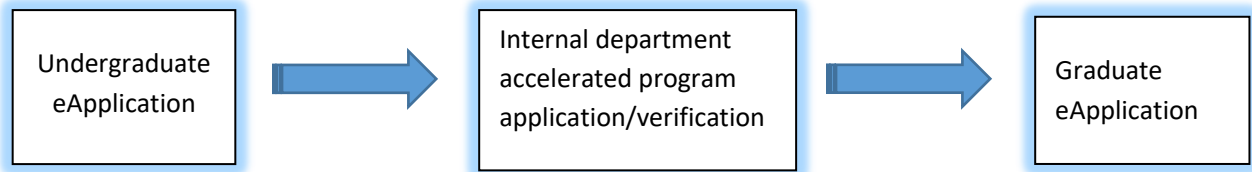Any new accelerated program must submit a proposal through the appropriate IU or PU curricular bodies.

➢ For IU programs, the approval matrix can be found here: https://uaa.iu.edu/academic-affairs/approval-process/Academic_Approval_Matrix.pdf. Accelerated programs most often follow the 'Degrees: Dual Degrees (Both Existing)' steps but this may vary if one of the degrees is new to the campus.

➢ For PU programs, Undergraduate Affairs Committee (UAC) and Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC) approval is required.   Once approved, the proposal would then be sent to Purdue West Lafayette for final approval.

Application Process

There are various points at which a student can apply to an accelerated program.

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┌──────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
│  Undergraduate   │ ───▶ │ Internal department  │ ───▶ │  Graduate        │
│  eApplication    │      │ accelerated program  │      │  eApplication    │
│                  │      │ application/verification │  │                  │
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UNDERGRADUATE E-APP

A student can indicate initial interest in an accelerated program as early as the first application to the university (incoming freshman). **Academic units offering accelerated programs will determine if they want this option to appear on the undergraduate eApp or not.** If a program would like this to be available as a recruiting tool, the undergraduate eApplication can distinguish between the traditional bachelors programs vs. the accelerated bachelors/masters programs using unique program plan codes in SIS. This also allows the unit the ability to better track and report on the traditional vs. accelerated degree cohorts early in the UGRD career. Admission by the academic unit to any accelerated program will always be dependent upon the student's subsequent performance in the undergraduate portion of the program and will further dictate whether the student will ultimately be admitted to the graduate portion of the accelerated program.

SCHOOL APPLICATION/VERIFICATION/DECLARATION

Each accelerated program will have process by which continued eligibility will be reviewed/verified within the academic unit for those already in the accelerated program plan codes. Similarly, there will be a clear process (application or declaration step) for students who are not already in the SIS accelerated codes but who are now interested and/or admitted.   For most programs, this occurs via an internal accelerated program application initiated by the student during the third year of study.   Waiting until the final year of an undergraduate program to have students apply does not usually allow for enough advanced planning to meet the intention of an accelerated program. Note: Academic units may set application eligibility that is tied to minimum credit hours earned towards program, minimum GPA, and/or student classification (i.e. junior). This allows for units to accommodate traditional students as well as those who may be nontraditional and/or have transfer credit on their record.

It is critical that a student is placed into the correct accelerated program plan code (bachelors/masters) as soon as the unit has internally 'admitted' them for clear tracking and reporting purposes. This is important to being able to carefully monitor this population for continued eligibility as it would be difficult to otherwise allow the students to take graduate level courses without confirmation that they are prepared or academically ready.

Use of AdRx (Advising Records) notes is strongly encouraged so that advisors at both the undergraduate and graduate levels can see the student/advisor/faculty advisor interactions that have occurred specific to the accelerated program degree progression.

GRADUATE E-APP

Programs with accelerated degrees must be sure the accelerated option is available on the graduate App.

During the fourth year of undergraduate study in an accelerated degree program, the student will need to submit the Graduate School e-App online to officially apply to the graduate degree portion of the program and to the Graduate career in the SIS system. The graduate eApplication will also have a unique program plan code in SIS to ensure separate between the traditional graduate programs vs those under which a student is being admitted as a result of an accelerated program admission.

Students will be evaluated by the Graduate Program/UGS (where applicable) for entrance into the graduate portion of the accelerated program. While different graduate departments or programs may establish unique criteria for admittance into and continuation in an accelerated program, a minimum 3.0 GPA is required for entrance into IU and PU Graduate School programs at IUPUI.

While students in accelerated programs may be enrolling in graduate level courses as an undergraduate student, they should submit the graduate eApp NO earlier than one calendar year from when they will be officially moving from the undergraduate to the graduate career. This ensures that admission term selected is accurate in terms of true career movement.

Example: Student should not submit graduate eApp as a junior simply because they plan to take GRAD courses during their senior year as a UGRD student. True transition to GRAD career typically occurs the term after UGRD career is conferred/completed and this is the admit term that should be indicated on the e-Application. If an earlier admit term is chosen, student runs risk of being run through WADM/NOSH when they do not enroll for that term under the GRAD career. In summary:

➢ Student declares accelerated intention third year as UGRD and completes the program-based internal application.
➢ Enrolls in both UGRD/GRAD courses during fourth year after being admitted and placed in the accelerated plan codes in SIS (UGRD career).
➢ Fall fourth year – earliest point at which GRAD eApp should be submitted for summer/fall entry.

Academic units will be responsible for auditing fourth year status + accelerated UGRD program code and communicating necessity to submit graduate e-Application.

If a student in an accelerated program plan code does not meet the requirements of the graduate school or the student decides they no longer wish to pursue the graduate portion of the accelerated program, the undergraduate recorder or appropriate program staff must move the student into the traditional baccalaureate-only degree code.

SIS Coding

Separate and distinct SIS plan codes are necessary for tracking and reporting purposes. Programs must verify minimum GPA and credit hour values to graduate with bachelor's degree which will be enforced at point of admission to graduate career and used for SAP purposes by Financial Aid.

Each accelerated program will have THREE unique academic plans that will assist in tracking and reporting on cohorts.

1) Undergraduate pre-plan within UCOL division (UCxx)
2) Undergraduate school-based plan which results in degree/credential from the degree granting school
3) Graduate school-based plan which results in degree/credential from UGS or degree granting school

Academic Plan Attribute: All program plan codes will be tagged with an accelerated program attribute (value = ACEL) on the SIS Academic Plan table. This will allow for an easier way to report on these programs both within a particular unit as well as use in institutional reporting.

Undergraduate and graduate program recorders will be responsible for ensuring accelerated program students are in the correct accelerated program plan code on the student record. Internal application deadlines may vary based on unit (with recommendation of third year of program), but changes to the program plan should be made as soon as possible to ensure appropriate advising is available.

In cases where the accelerated program declaration is made AFTER undergraduate admission to the university, a manual intervention/touch will be required by the academic unit. (There is no automated process that would move students to the accelerated program plan codes during the second, third, or fourth years).

At the graduate level, the student should be assigned to the correct GRAD level accelerated program plan code at the point of admission through the eApp. Any subsequent update (in possible case where a student selected incorrect grad intention) would also be manual by the graduate recorder.

Grandfathered Programs: **Multiple combo accelerated programs will need to utilize additional options/PPS maintenance steps to avoid duplicate/excessive diplomas, clear understanding of program requirements specific to a major within a shared degree, etc.** The following historical programs are impacted:

a) Biology BA/MPH and Biology BS/MPH
b) BS in SPEA/ Master of Public Affairs and BS in SPEA/ MS in in Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Registration & Enrollment

Students in approved accelerated programs should be term activated under only ONE CAREER per term. There should be no term under which an accelerated program student would have a term activation in both an undergraduate and graduate program at the same time (no overlap). Registration during the first 4 years of the program should fall under the undergraduate career while registration during the 5th year of the program will appear under the graduate career.

Academic units will have autonomy to allow a student to remain in an accelerated program in cases of students who might fall off track or stop out. This may include encouraging summer enrollment to stay on track or the decision to no longer allow the student to complete accelerated option.

AARs/degree maps

Presently there are no programmed academic advisement reports or degree maps for accelerated programs.

Academic units can work with the Office of the Registrar to explore iGPS degree maps (as functionality becomes available) to provide students with one sample path to degree completion. Creation of a working academic advisement report (AAR) will also be part of this process to ensure that students are able to monitor progress towards graduation requirements.   Use of AdRx notes will facilitate this clear communication between the UGRD and GRAD advisors throughout the program.

In the absence of existing maps or AARs, the academic unit must be sure to provide students with a clear plan of study to ensure appropriate registration occurs.

<u>Class Permissions</u>

The Student Information System is designed to prohibit undergraduate students from enrolling in graduate level coursework without class permission being granted. Permission to enroll in graduate level coursework for accelerated program students should be granted only internal school application submission and approval by the unit.

Coordinated academic advising will also ensure the student is registering in coursework necessary for degree progression at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Graduate coursework taken at the undergraduate level must apply towards graduate program requirements.

Academic advising transitions should be clear and coordinated between the undergraduate and graduate career advisors.

Academic Statistics & Overlap of Credit Hours

Transcript statistics (GPA, total credits, etc.) on the IU transcript are separated by career. Therefore, GRAD courses taken by an undergraduate accelerated program student (with class permission) will appear on the undergraduate section of the official transcript and will be factored into UGRD statistics.

Each accelerated program must CLEARLY define the maximum amount of credit hours that can 'double count'/apply towards both undergraduate and graduate level requirements. Typical overlap allowable is 9 – 12 credit hours with all exceptions requiring written Dean's authorization.

Before the graduate credentials can be conferred, academic programs must validate/verify that all degree requirements have been met. This may involve manual review of the course enrollment, confirming minimum grades are met, and ensuring total credit hours earned is accurate when statistics are split between careers.

When requesting an official transcript, students should be advised to always order a record that includes ALL CAREERS to ensure that both the undergraduate and graduate level coursework would be displayed.

Financial Aid Impact & Tuition/Fees

Keeping students in the undergraduate career during the first four years of an accelerated program allows for maximum gift aid eligibility. This is because many state and federal financial aid options (i.e. 21st Century Scholars, Pell Grant, O'Bannon aware) are available only to UGRD students. This model maximizes the availability of gift aid for those eligible for the longest time. This further discourages higher borrowing totals as graduate loan limits will not be offered until the 5th or final year of the accelerated program when the student is officially a graduate career student.

Undergraduate accelerated program students who are given permission to enroll in graduate level courses will pay undergraduate tuition and fees and will be subject to the banded tuition rates as applicable. While this structure means that there may be decreased revenue to units (as opposed to students who pursue a separate 4-year degree followed by an independent 1-2 year master's degree), this model was endorsed by all academic and support units as a way to encourage graduate level program participation and successful degree completion at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

Students enrolled in accelerated programs should be conferred the undergraduate credential upon completion of the undergraduate program requirements (typically spring of year 4).   Four year graduation rates will be positively affected as these students will be conferred their Bachelor's degree in year 4 while being on their way to the master's credential. Increased on-time graduation rates also have a direct impact on institutional funding by the State of Indiana.

Similarly, degree conferral of the master's credential should occur at the point of program requirement completion (typically end of year 5).

Timely degree conferral at the point of degree requirement completion will require close monitoring of students in the accelerated program plan codes throughout both the undergraduate and graduate career by the academic units.

The accelerated program plan codes now in SIS ensure that recorders will not need to update/change the student program plan stack to traditional academic plan codes when awarding the degree. The accelerated options will result in the awarding of the appropriate credential based on the career and should be left on the student record.