Bachelor’s-Accelerated Master’s (BAM) materials for Deans’ Council

Proposal: Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s students currently receive both degrees (bachelor’s and master’s) at the end of their studies. In the proposed Bachelor’s-Accelerated Master’s (BAM) structure, students will receive the bachelor’s “along the way,” and then the master’s degree once completed. The BAM structure will replace the Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s structure.

Contents:

- Overview of BAM structure: pp.2-3
- Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards for BAM programs: pp.4-6
- BAM FAQs: pp.7-10
- Appendix (Charge given to Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s Working Group in 2017): pp.11-12
Bachelor’s-Accelerated Master’s (BAM) Programs

Overview

Bachelor’s-Accelerated Master’s programs (BAMs) offer currently enrolled CU Boulder undergraduate students the opportunity to receive a bachelor’s and master’s degree in a shorter period of time. Students receive the bachelor’s degree first, but typically begin taking graduate coursework as undergraduates. Because some courses are allowed to double count for both the bachelor’s and the master’s degrees, students receive a master’s degree in less time and at a lower cost than if they were to enroll in a stand-alone master’s degree program. In addition, staying at CU Boulder to pursue a Bachelor’s-Accelerated Master’s program enables students to continue working with their established faculty mentors.

The Bachelor’s-Accelerated Master’s program is administered jointly by the Graduate School and the respective undergraduate school or college. The major department assumes primary administrative authority and responsibility, reflecting the full authority and standards of both the undergraduate and graduate degrees (including any minimum standards which may be unique to departmental BAMs).

Initial acceptance: Initial acceptance to the Bachelor’s-Accelerated Master’s program typically occurs during the junior year with an intent application. Minimum standards for acceptance require a cumulative GPA of 3.00 and completion of all MAPS deficiencies. Additional acceptance criteria are determined by the individual departments in conjunction with the appropriate school or college deans and the Graduate School. An approved intent application enables the student to begin taking graduate courses while an undergraduate and to double-count select courses toward the bachelor’s and master’s degrees, in accordance with the requirements listed below. Students interested in a BAM program should contact the relevant department for advising and intent application information.

Bachelor’s degree award: BAM students will have their bachelor’s degree automatically posted upon successful completion of all requirements for the undergraduate degree portion of the BAM. This will be determined by student degree audit records and confirmation by school/college.

Formal admission: Students apply to be formally admitted to the accelerated master’s program for the semester (fall or spring) following the award of the bachelor’s degree, and are admitted provided they have fulfilled basic continuation requirements and all departmental eligibility requirements. (Summer term admission is also possible, depending on the program.)

Financial Information: Once admitted to the master’s program, students are assessed graduate tuition rates. (In-state graduate students are assessed resident graduate
tuition, but do not receive COF.) In addition, graduate students receiving financial aid are considered “independent” and are no longer eligible for aid requiring undergraduate status.

FLOWCHART FOR BAM PROGRAMS

Eligibility

- Student is a currently enrolled CU Boulder undergraduate who meets BAM GPA and other eligibility requirements.

Initial acceptance with intent application

- Student fills out an intent application, typically during the junior year.
- Approved intent application enables undergraduate student to take up to and including 12 hours of coursework (as an undergraduate and at undergraduate tuition rates) which can later be applied to the accelerated master’s portion of the BAM.
- The number of credits that can double-count for both the undergraduate and the graduate portions of a BAM is determined by the department’s approved program proposal.

Conferral of bachelor’s degree; formal admission to master's program

- BAM students will have their bachelor’s degree automatically posted upon successful completion of all requirements for the undergraduate degree portion of the BAM. This will be determined by student degree audit records and confirmation by school/college.
- In the semester in which the student will graduate with the undergraduate degree, the student applies for formal admission into the master's program and is admitted provided basic continuation requirements and all departmental eligibility requirements have been fulfilled.

Master’s coursework and conferral of master’s degree

- The student is now at graduate status and completes remaining graduate coursework, with tuition assessed at graduate tuition rates. Graduate students receiving financial aid are considered "independent" and are eligible for aid and awards available to students at graduate status.
- Once degree requirements are met, student applies to graduate with the master's degree.
Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards for Bachelor’s-Accelerated Master’s Programs

1. Only currently enrolled University of Colorado Boulder undergraduate students may be considered for acceptance to Bachelor’s-Accelerated Master’s (BAM) programs.

2. During the undergraduate portion of their studies (before formal admission to the Accelerated Master’s portion of the BAM), students are subject to undergraduate academic rules and full-time/part-time standards in effect in their school or college, unless otherwise noted below. Once formally admitted to the Accelerated Master’s portion of the BAM, students are subject to Graduate School rules, policies, and full-time/part-time standards.

3. Students in the undergraduate portion of the degree program are expected to be full-time (with an average of 24 credits per year) and remain continuously enrolled, and must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00.

4. With the permission of their school or college and the Graduate School, departments may set academic standards higher than school/college or Graduate School minimums. Departments that establish GPA requirements that are higher than this minimum standard will be responsible for monitoring the progress of the students within their program, including a procedure for probation or dismissal from the BAM. Issues of satisfactory academic progress, petition/appeal, transfer credit, and grievance shall be monitored by the individual colleges and schools regarding departmental undergraduate major requirements and minimum standards of achievement.

5. Students may withdraw from the Bachelor’s-Accelerated Master’s program at any time and pursue only the bachelor’s degree. Students who wish to pursue a master’s degree or a doctoral degree after withdrawing from or completing a Bachelor’s-Accelerated Master’s program must apply separately through the regular (non-BAM) admissions process and be admitted to the Graduate School. In this case, courses may not be double-counted.

6. The Dean of the Graduate School will consider appeals and review standards regarding Graduate School or University requirements and will confer with college deans as appropriate for issues that cross undergraduate/graduate or school/college lines of authority.
7. An intent application for each BAM student will be electronically submitted to the Graduate School by the department, typically during the student’s junior year. An identifying academic subplan will be placed on the student’s record once approved.

8. Students are awarded the undergraduate degree first upon satisfactory completion of all baccalaureate degree requirements. Students who have met all degree requirements according to their degree audit will be initially identified through a report, and placed on the graduation roster in “in review” status. Graduation coordinators from each school/college will confirm that all requirements are met, and either confirm the student for graduation or deny them on the roster. If denied, the report will identify the student in an upcoming semester.

9. Bachelor’s degrees will be posted to student records upon successful completion of all requirements of that portion of the BAM program by the posted deadline. It is important to note that students pursuing double degrees or additional majors/minors at the undergraduate level are subject to college/school policies. This may result in a student choosing to discontinue the additional undergraduate degree, major or minor, or delaying formal admission into the graduation portion of the BAM program in order to complete the additional degree, major, or minor, or fulfilling the remaining requirements for the additional undergraduate credentials while at graduate status (graduate tuition, enrollment status, etc.). Students should discuss these options with their advisor.

10. During the semester in which the student is enrolled in the remaining requirements for the undergraduate degree portion of the BAM, and is placed automatically on the graduation roster, the student must apply for formal admission into the master’s program. This is done using a streamlined online application reviewed by the department, and the student is admitted provided basic continuation requirements and all departmental eligibility requirements have been fulfilled. Students must meet basic continuation requirements, including maintenance of 3.0 GPA, and all departmental eligibility requirements, to be admitted to the graduate program. There is no provisional admission for the accelerated master’s degree. Once enrolled in the master’s program, students are assessed graduate tuition rates. (In-state graduate students are assessed resident graduate tuition, but do not receive COF.) In addition, graduate students receiving financial aid are considered “independent” and are no longer eligible for aid requiring undergraduate status.

11. Students may take up to and including 12 hours of coursework (as an undergraduate and at undergraduate tuition rates) which can later be applied to the accelerated master’s portion of the BAM. (This would typically be graduate level credit, but in programs where the use of 6 hours 3000/4000 level is allowed to double-count toward the bachelor’s and master’s degrees, those credits would be part of the 12 allowed.) Graduate credits taken by the student as an undergraduate in excess of the 12 hour allowable amount will not be allowed to count toward the master’s. The number of credits that can double-count for both the undergraduate and the graduate portions of
a BAM is determined by the department’s approved program proposal. Double-counted courses may not be used toward a subsequent doctoral program (or additional master’s program) at CU Boulder.

12. Students who were not admitted to the Bachelor’s-Accelerated Master’s program with the intent application before receiving the undergraduate degree are not eligible to double-count courses between degrees. In addition, students who defer or discontinue their graduate studies for more than one academic year may not double-count courses in the event that they return to their graduate studies.

13. The minimum cumulative GPA for all students formally admitted to the Accelerated Master’s portion of the BAM must be maintained at 3.00 for the duration of the program, both at the undergraduate level and at the graduate level. The cumulative GPA of the courses being used toward the Master’s degree must also be 3.00 or better. Once students transition to graduate status, the Graduate School will be responsible for monitoring the minimum standard and notifying students who are placed on probation. Departments will be responsible for establishing a procedure for probation or dismissal from the BAM if their departmental standard is higher than the minimum.

14. Students whose bachelor’s degrees have been conferred and who are admitted to the master’s program are eligible, at the discretion of their department, for RA/TA appointments, scholarships, fellowships, or other types of support or recognition for which graduate students would ordinarily be eligible to apply. Professional Masters students are eligible for hourly student assistant work, but not positions with tuition remission such as RA/TA/GPTI.

15. International students must maintain full-time status throughout the program. Full-time standards are based upon the undergraduate or graduate status of the student, not upon the level of courses being taken. Upon applying to the master’s portion of the degree, the students must work with International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) to complete all requirements for a change of level, including providing proof of funding, etc.

16. Students may participate in university-wide commencement ceremonies in the respective semester/year for each degree. Students should check with individual colleges, schools, and departments for information related to participation in those recognition ceremonies.
Bachelor's-Accelerated Master's Program FAQs

1. What is being proposed?
   a) Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s programs are currently structured such that students receive both degrees (bachelor’s and master’s) at the end of their studies. In the proposed structure, students would receive the bachelor’s “along the way,” and then the master’s degree once completed.
   b) The proposed revisions also eliminate a clause prohibiting students in Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s programs from double majoring. The Graduate School has routinely granted waivers to this clause, such that there is no compelling rationale to keep the clause in the guidelines. Departments may wish to advise students against double-majoring while in their BAM program if they wish, but this will not be a campus policy. It also seeks to eliminate a current guideline which restricts concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s students from participating in the Leave of Absence program. Again, requests are generally only made in cases of extenuating circumstances, and are therefore routinely approved.
   c) Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s programs will be renamed Bachelor’s-Accelerated Master’s programs, to reflect the new structure and to accentuate the portion of the program that is completed at an accelerated rate, due to double-counted coursework.

2. Who is making the recommendations to change the current structure?
   Members of the Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s Working Group have recommended these changes in response to requests from a variety of CU Boulder departments and offices; see membership and charge in the appendix to this document.

3. What are the deficiencies of the current structure?
   a) The current structure has led to inequities in the amount of graduate tuition paid by students across programs and even within the same program (i.e. some students pay more graduate tuition than others, depending on factors such as when they enroll in the Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s Program, how much transfer/AP/IB credit they come in with, which school/college they are in). For example, students in the program currently transition to graduate status on the completion of 130 hours (145 in the College of Engineering and Applied Science). Students who come in with substantial AP/IB credit are disadvantaged, because they transition far more quickly to graduate status, regardless of whether their transfer/AP/IB credit actually counts toward major or core requirements.
   b) There have been isolated incidents in which students find that after several years of study at CU Boulder, they have completed neither the Bachelor’s nor the Master’s.
c) There have been some impediments to students’ ability to do undergraduate honors theses.

d) The current structure has led to some anomalies in students’ graduate transcripts. For example, students who are accepted late into Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s programs have very little graduate coursework on their graduate transcript (since in the current structure, much of their graduate work would appear on their undergraduate transcript).

e) The current structure is detrimental to time-to-degree metrics.

4. What are the benefits of the new structure?
   a) Students have the reassurance that they have the bachelor’s degree in hand once they have completed the undergraduate requirements.

   b) Graduate status and amount of graduate tuition paid will be more standardized within each program, and will be based upon completion of the bachelor’s degree instead of a number of hours which may or may not be indicative of progress toward completion. Instead of transitioning to graduate status (and graduate tuition) at 130/145 hours, all students whose intent application is approved will be allowed (as undergraduates and at undergraduate tuition rates), to take up to and including 12 credit hours of coursework which can later be applied to the accelerated master’s portion of the BAM. (This would typically be graduate level credit, but in programs where the use of 6 hours 3000/4000 level is allowed to double-count toward the bachelor’s and master’s degrees, those credits would be part of the 12 allowed.) Graduate credits taken by the student as an undergraduate in excess of the allowable amount will not be allowed to count toward the master’s.

c) The new structure may better facilitate innovative Bachelor’s-Accelerated Master’s combinations across disciplines or types of degrees, e.g. professional master’s.

   d) The new structure will more accurately convey the length of time that students in BAM programs take to receive their bachelor’s, thus facilitating more accurate graduation and time-to-degree statistics.

   e) The BAM structure will ease some of the current graduate transcripting issues with Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s programs resulting in more complete graduate records.

5. What are potential drawbacks to the new structure?
   Some students will likely pay more graduate tuition (while others may pay less than in the current structure). Some students might withdraw from the program after receiving their bachelor’s, but some students already withdraw from Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s programs.

6. Will some coursework continue to double-count?
   Yes, the amount of credit overlap between bachelor’s and master’s degrees, as previously approved in the initial concurrent degree proposal, will continue to be allowed.
7. When will the new structure go into effect?
   If approved, the new structure is anticipated to go into effect in fall 2018.

8. What transition is anticipated for students currently enrolled in Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s Programs?

   a) Students currently enrolled in an existing Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s Program, or admitted to an existing program during AY 2017-2018 fall into two categories:
      o Students graduating during AY 2017-2018 (including summer): As is current practice, students will receive bachelor’s degree and master’s degree at the same time upon graduation.
      o Students eligible to graduate with a bachelor’s degree in fall 2018 or later: May opt to receive the bachelor’s degree along the way once complete, or may receive both degrees at the same time. (Whichever selection is made, these transition/grandfathered students would need to apply online to graduate and will not be picked up in the automatic degree posting process). The earliest these students could apply for formal admission to the master’s program using the new BAM admission procedure would be spring 2019. (Bachelor’s degree would have been awarded in fall 2018.)

   b) Students admitted to BAM program/existing concurrent program starting summer 2018 or later will receive the bachelor’s degree along the way to the master’s degree and apply for formal admission to the master’s degree using the new BAM admission and degree posting procedure. The earliest these students could apply for formal admission would be spring 2019.

9. My unit has an existing Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s program. Will we need to go through a new approval process to convert our program into a BAM?
   No. Existing programs will be converted to BAM programs. Each unit will complete a BAM Inventory Form to assist in the conversion process.

10. My unit would like to make some revisions to our current Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s Program. Can we propose these revisions at the same time that we transition to the BAM structure?
    Yes. Any additional revisions that you would like to propose should be listed and explained on the BAM Inventory Form. Any approved revisions should be reflected in the 2018-2019 University catalog.

11. Will BAM students be allowed to hold RA/TA appointments?
    Yes, students whose bachelor’s degree has been conferred will be eligible, at the discretion of their department, for RA/TA appointments, scholarships,
fellowships, or other types of support or recognition for which graduate students would ordinarily be eligible to apply. Professional Masters students are eligible for hourly student assistant work, but not positions with tuition remission such as RA/TA/GPTI.

12. How will the intent application be handled?
   We anticipate using an OnBase electronic form, which will be similar in content to the current Concurrent Bachelor's/Master's one page application form. It will require departmental approval. While the format may change, an early draft of the content which may be needed on that form is attached.

13. How will the bachelor's degree be automatically posted?
   A report will identify undergraduate students with BAM subplans who have met degree requirements according to their degree audits. These students will automatically be placed on the graduation roster at the beginning of a given semester, in “in review” status. Graduation coordinators from each school/college will still need to confirm that all requirements are met, and either confirm the student for graduation or deny them on the roster. If denied, the report will identify the student in an upcoming semester.

14. How will students formally apply to the master's degree?
   We anticipate creating a streamlined application for Accelerated Master’s degrees through Slate. This would be similar to the current readmit application, and it would require departmental review and approval. It would not require documents such as letters of recommendation and personal statements, and anything of this nature would need to be collected off-line if your department chose to require it. Requirements for this application will be reviewed in the coming months.

Whom should I contact if I have questions?
   Contact Ann Schmiesing (Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs, ann.schmiesing@colorado.edu) and Ginny McNellis (Assistant Dean), ginny.mcnellis@colorado.edu).
APPENDIX

CHARGE GIVEN TO CONCURRENT BACHELOR’S/MASTER’S WORKING GROUP
JANUARY 2017

Background and Working Group Charge: The University of Colorado Boulder first developed Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s degree programs in the late 1990s. Although these programs are commonly called “BAMAs,” many at CU Boulder are actually BS/MS degree programs, not BA/MA. There are currently around three dozen Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s at CU Boulder, and a list of them can be found here: http://www.colorado.edu/graduateschool/programs/concurrent-bachelorsmasters-degree-programs

Graduate School guidelines concerning Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s programs at CU have remained mostly unchanged since the late 1990s. These guidelines can be found here: http://www.colorado.edu/graduateschool/academic-resources/guidelines-concurrent-degree-program. Exceptions are frequently granted to some of the provisions listed in the guidelines; for example, the rule that students in Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s degree programs may not pursue double majors or double degrees is frequently waived.

In response to recent queries from a variety of CU Boulder departments and offices, and in consultation with the Boulder Faculty Assembly, the Graduate School Executive Advisory Council, the Office of Undergraduate Education, the Registrar, and Institutional Research, I am convening the Working Group to make recommendations regarding questions including the following:

1. Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s or 4+1 structure: A variety of concerns have been expressed from CU Boulder departments and offices about our current practice of awarding both the undergraduate and the graduate degree at the end of the Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s program, instead of enabling students to receive the Bachelor’s degree along the way, as some peer institutions do. These concerns will be discussed at the Working Group’s first meeting. Should CU Boulder enable students in Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s degree programs to receive the Bachelor’s degree before they graduate with a Master’s? Note: At many institutions, concurrent degrees in which the Bachelor’s is awarded along the way are called 4+1 degree programs, although the term is not uniformly used in that way.

2. Graduate status and assessment of graduate tuition: Current Graduate School guidelines stipulate that “To comply with Title IV Higher Education regulations, CU Boulder students pursuing a concurrent bachelor’s/master’s degree will automatically be changed to graduate status after the completion of 130 credit hours (or 145 credit hours for a student in the College of Engineering and Applied Science).” If the current
structure is maintained and students do not receive the bachelor’s degree upon completion of undergraduate requirements, at what point in a Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s degree program should students change to graduate status and be assessed graduate tuition? Should graduate status continue to be tied to the number of credit hours completed, or should it be tied to another metric (e.g. number of semesters in the program)? Should graduate status policies for students in Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s be the same across all schools and colleges?

3. Other changes: Should other changes be made to the Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s guidelines? For example, since the rule that students in Concurrent Bachelor’s/Master’s degree programs may not pursue double majors or double degrees is frequently waived, should this rule be dropped altogether? Should we examine guidelines related to leave of absence, GPA, overlap of courses?

4. Operational aspects: If changes are made, when should they go into effect, how should they be communicated to departments and students, and what institutional and operational changes would they require? This would include admission of students, monitoring, approval, and equity of course overlap, graduation, etc.

WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP
Ann Schmiesing, Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs (Working Group chair)
Ginny Borst McNellis, Assistant Dean, Graduate School
Bill Kaempfer, Senior Vice Provost
Rebecca Scarborough, Associate Chair of Linguistics, College of Arts & Sciences
Keith Molenaar, Associate Dean, College of Engineering and Applied Science
Mary Steiner, Assistant Dean for Students, College of Engineering and Applied Science
Maria Nondorf, Director, MSBA Accounting Program, Leeds
Ofelia Morales, Director of Financial Aid
Kristi Wold-McCormick, Registrar
Kyle McJunkin, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, College of Arts & Sciences
Shelly Bacon, Assistant Vice Provost for Advising and Academic Services
Rob Stubbs, Director, Institutional Research