Combined Undergraduate/Graduate Degree Programs

A. Overview

Many degree programs offer Mines undergraduate students the opportunity to begin work on a Graduate Certificate, Professional Master’s Degree, Master’s Degree or Doctoral Degree while completing the requirements for their Bachelor’s Degree. These combined Bachelors-Masters/Doctoral programs have been created by Mines faculty in those situations where they have deemed it academically advantageous to treat undergraduate and graduate degree programs as a continuous and integrated process. These are accelerated programs that can be valuable in fields of engineering and applied science where advanced education in technology and/or management provides the opportunity to be on a fast track for advancement to leadership positions. These programs also can be valuable for students who want to get a head start on graduate education.

The combined programs at Mines offer several advantages to students who choose to enroll in them:

1. Students can earn a graduate degree in their undergraduate major or in a field that complements their undergraduate major.
2. Students who plan to go directly into industry leave Mines with additional specialized knowledge and skills which may allow them to enter their career path at a higher level and advance more rapidly. Alternatively, students planning on attending graduate school can get a head start on their graduate education.
3. Students can plan their undergraduate electives to satisfy prerequisites, thus ensuring adequate preparation for their graduate program.
4. Early assignment of graduate advisors permits students to plan optimum course selection and scheduling in order to complete their graduate program quickly.
5. Early acceptance into a Combined Degree Program leading to a Graduate Degree assures students of automatic acceptance into full graduate status if they maintain good standing while in early-acceptance status.
6. In many cases, students will be able to complete both a Bachelor’s and a Master’s Degrees in five years of total enrollment at Mines.

Certain graduate programs may allow Combined Degree Program students to fulfill part of the requirements of their graduate degree by including up to six hours of specified course credits which also were used in fulfilling the requirements of their undergraduate degree. These courses may only be applied toward fulfilling Doctoral degree or, Master’s degree requirements beyond the institutional minimum Master’s degree requirement of 30 credit hours. Courses must meet all requirements for graduate credit, but their grades are not included in calculating the graduate GPA. Check the departmental section of the Catalog to determine which programs provide this opportunity.

B. Admission Process

A student interested in applying into a graduate degree program as a Combined Degree Program student should first contact the department or division hosting the graduate degree program into which he/she wishes to apply. Initial inquiries may be made at any time, but initial contacts made soon after completion of the first semester, Sophomore year are recommended. Following this initial inquiry, departments/ divisions will provide initial counseling on degree application procedures, admissions standards and degree completion requirements.

Admission into a graduate degree program as a Combined Degree Program student can occur as early as the first semester, Junior year, and must be granted no later than the end of registration, last semester Senior year. Once admitted into a graduate degree program, students may enroll in 500-level courses and apply these directly to their graduate degree. To apply, students must submit the standard graduate application package for the graduate portion of their Combined Degree Program. Upon admission into a graduate degree program, students are assigned graduate advisors. Prior to registration for the next semester, students and their graduate advisors should meet and plan a strategy for completing both the undergraduate and graduate programs as efficiently as possible. Until their undergraduate degree requirements are completed, students continue to have undergraduate advisors in the home department or division of their Bachelor’s Degrees.

C. Requirements

Combined Degree Program students are considered undergraduate students until such time as they complete their undergraduate degree requirements. Combined Degree Program students who are still considered undergraduates by this definition have all of the privileges and are subject to all expectations of both their undergraduate and graduate programs. These students may enroll in both undergraduate and graduate courses (see section D below), may have access to departmental assistance available through both programs, and may be eligible for undergraduate financial aid as determined by the Office of Financial Aid. Upon completion of their undergraduate degree requirements, a Combined Degree Program student is considered enrolled full-time in his/her graduate program. Once having done so, the student is no longer eligible for undergraduate financial aid, but may now be eligible for graduate financial aid. To complete their graduate degree, each Combined Degree Program student must register as a graduate student for at least one semester.

Once admitted into a graduate program, undergraduate Combined Program students must maintain good standing in the Combined Program by maintaining a minimum semester GPA of 3.0 in all courses taken. Students not meeting this requirement are deemed to be making unsatisfactory academic progress in the Combined Degree Program. Students for whom this is the case are subject to probation and, if occurring over two semesters, subject to discretionary dismissal from the graduate portion of their program as defined in the Unsatisfactory Academic Performance (bulletin.mines.edu/graduate/generalregulations/academicperformance) section of this Catalog.

Upon completion of the undergraduate degree requirements, Combined Degree Program students are subject to all requirements (e.g., course requirements, departmental approval of transfer credits, research credits, minimum GPA, etc.) appropriate to the graduate program in which they are enrolled.

D. Enrolling in Graduate Courses as a Senior in a Combined Program

As described in the Undergraduate Catalog, seniors may enroll in 500-level courses. In addition, undergraduate seniors who have been granted admission through the Combined Degree Program into thesis-based
degree programs (Masters or Doctoral) may, with graduate advisor approval, register for 700-level research credits appropriate to Masters-level degree programs. With this single exception, while a Combined Degree Program student is still completing his/her undergraduate degree, all of the conditions described in the Undergraduate Catalog for undergraduate enrollment in graduate-level courses apply. 700-level research credits are always applied to a student's graduate degree program.

If an undergraduate Combined Degree Program student would like to enroll in a 500-level course and apply this course directly to his/her graduate degree, he/she must be formally accepted as a combined program student through the Office of Graduate Studies and notify the Registrar of the intent to do so at the time of enrollment in the course. The Registrar will forward this information to Financial Aid for appropriate action. Be aware that courses taken as an undergraduate student but applied directly toward a graduate degree are not eligible for undergraduate financial aid or the Colorado Opportunity Fund. If prior consent is not received or if the student has not been accepted by OGS as a combined program student, all 500-level graduate courses taken as an undergraduate Combined Degree Program student will be applied to the student's undergraduate degree transcript. If these are not used toward an undergraduate degree requirement, they may, with program consent, be applied to a graduate degree program as transfer credit. All regular regulations and limitations regarding the use of transfer credit to a graduate degree program apply to these credits.