4.9.1 Joint Degree Programs: Policy

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**Summary**

This chapter outlines the procedures for students enrolled in joint degree programs.

**Rationale**

Many Stanford graduate students pursue several graduate degrees while enrolled.

In conferring its graduate degrees, Stanford University affirms that its students have completed specified course work and other degree requirements, and immersed themselves in the intellectual life of this University. To assure this, each type of graduate degree offered at Stanford (for example, Master of Science, Doctor of Philosophy) has a residency requirement based on the number of academic units required for the degree (see GAP 3.2, Residency Policy for Graduate Students [1]). It continues to be Stanford University's general policy that units are applicable toward only one degree. Units may not normally be duplicated or double-counted toward the residency requirement for more than one degree. Exceptions to this general policy for specified combinations of degree types may be approved by agreement of the Faculty Senate and the deans of the schools affected, with review by the Committee on Graduate Studies. These specified exceptions that reduce the total number of residency units are called Joint Degree Programs (JDPs).

**Authority:**
- Vice Provost for Graduate Education [2] (policy)

**Applicability:**
To all graduate students and programs.

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1. Definition

A Joint Degree Program (JDP) is a specified combination of degree programs or degree types in which a student is enrolled in two graduate degree programs concurrently. JDPs are developed and proposed by the relevant academic units with agreement of the deans of the schools affected.

An approved JDP includes a set of agreements between the participating programs and schools about matters such as admissions, advising, curricula, and tuition. In a JDP, a specified number of units may be double-counted toward the minimum University residency requirements for both degrees reducing the total number of residency units required to complete both degrees. Students pursuing a Joint Degree that includes a PhD may not also count a Stanford master’s degree or transfer units towards residency for the PhD. Application deadlines for each program or degree apply. Students must be admitted to the JDP no later than the study list deadline of the term prior to the term of expected degree conferral. In a JDP, both degrees are conferred concurrently since the units required for each degree are linked to the completion of both degrees. The sole exception is the J.D. degree which may be awarded prior to the second degree.

Up to 45 units completed at Stanford toward a master’s or Engineer degree may be used toward the 135 required for the doctoral degree (Ph.D. or D.M.A.). This is not considered a JDP, and the two degrees need not be conferred simultaneously (see GAP 5.1, Changes and Additions of Degree Programs [4] for policies and procedures governing adding a master’s degree in the same or different department to a doctoral degree program of study).

With the exception of the School of Law, Stanford University does not have Joint Degree Program agreements with other universities (see GAP 5.8, Exchange Programs [5], for information on exchange and cross-registration programs with other universities).

A complete list of approved JDPs [6] resides with the Office of the Registrar.

2. Creation of Joint Degree Programs

Creation of additional Joint Degree Programs that are combinations of J.D./M.A., J.D./M.S., and Ph.D./M.P.P. degrees have been authorized by the Academic Senate. New JDPs from among these combinations may double-count up to 45 units towards residency requirements. JDPs from these combinations are proposed by the coordinating programs and schools. Once approvals from the chairs of the programs and deans of the relevant schools are obtained, approval on behalf of the Committee on Graduate Studies is granted by the Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and final approval is documented by the Office of the Registrar. JDPs combining other degree types or programs may be proposed, but require review by the Academic Senate Committee on Graduate Studies and must be approved by the Academic Senate.
New JDPs may be created, and are proposed with the Joint Degree Program Proposal form [7] (downloadable Word file), available from the Office of the Registrar.

The deadline to submit the Joint Degree Proposal form to the Office of the Registrar for JDPs which fit into the pre-approved degree combination template, and must be approved by the Office of the Registrar, is the first day of one quarter prior to the creation of the JDP. The deadline to submit the Joint Degree Proposal form for JDPs which do not fit into the pre-approved degree combination template, and must be reviewed by the Committee on Graduate Studies and approved by the Academic Senate, is the first day of two quarters prior to the creation of the JDP.

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3. Application and Admissions

Application deadlines of each program or degree apply. Students must be admitted to the JDP no later than the study list deadline of the term prior to the term of expected degree conferral.

To enter a joint degree program, a student must be admitted separately to both participating Stanford schools, departments, or programs as well as to the particular joint degree program.

Students already pursuing a graduate degree at Stanford apply to the second degree program (and JDP) either through the professional school admissions process, including applicable fees, to add the J.D., or M.B.A.; or through the degree authorization process (see GAP 5.1, Changes and Additions of Degree Programs [4]), to add the M.S., M.A., M.P.P., or Ph.D.

Some JDPs also permit concurrent application for admission to both programs at the time of the initial application for admission to Stanford. In this case, students must indicate this at the time of application.

Each JDP determines the allowable sequence and timing of applications for the JDP.

Application and admissions procedures are managed by the participating departments and programs. Application deadlines of each program or degree apply. Students must be admitted to the JDP no later than the study list deadline of the term prior to the term of expected degree conferral. JDPs may specify earlier deadlines. Admissions decisions for a Joint Degree Program are made by each degree program.

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4. Course Enrollment

Students should use the Joint Degree Program Student Checklist [8] (MS Word file) as a guide to plan their program of study. Consultation with faculty and staff in both departments is strongly encouraged. The form does not need to be submitted to the University.

For all JDPs that include either the J.D. or the M.B.A., students have two active careers in PeopleSoft Student Administration. Students must use the correct graduate career to enroll by the published academic deadlines in courses which count toward each degree in order to satisfy program requirements. No transfer of courses from one career to another is permitted.

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5. Residency Requirement

Each type of graduate degree offered at Stanford (for example, Master of Science, Doctor of Philosophy) has a residency requirement based on the number of academic units required for the degree (see GAP 3.2, Residency Policy for Graduate Students [9], for more information about the minimum requirements for each degree). In a JDP, a specified number of units may be double-counted toward the minimum University residency requirements for both degrees permitting students to earn two graduate degrees for fewer residency units than if each degree were pursued separately. The specific maximum number of allowable “double counted” units approved for each JDP resides with the Office of the Registrar.

Up to 45 units completed at Stanford toward a master’s degree (M.A. or M.S.) may be used toward the 135 required for the doctoral degree (Ph.D. or D.M.A.). This is not considered a JDP (see GAP 5.1, Changes and Additions of Degree Programs [4], for policies and procedures governing adding a master’s degree in the same or different department to a doctoral degree program of study).

6. Degree Progress

Students should use the Joint Degree Program Student Checklist [8] as a guide to plan their program of study. Consultation with faculty and staff in both departments is strongly encouraged. The form does not need to be submitted to the University.

All university requirements for the specific degrees, such as time limits for degree completion and timing of milestones, must be met. (See GAP 4 Degree-Specific Requirements, Progress and Milestones [10] for requirements for all graduate degree types)

7. Advising

By the start of their first term, students should be paired by the department with a faculty advisor in each program of the JDP who will assist them in planning a program of study to meet degree requirements. More information about graduate advising can be found in GAP 3.3 Academic Advising [11].

8. Withdrawal from a Joint Degree Program

Students who wish to terminate study in a graduate program should submit a properly endorsed Request to Permanently Withdraw from Degree Program [12] form, to the Office of the Registrar at the Student Services Center. This form authorizes the Registrar to close the student’s degree program and cancel the authorization to register. It must be received by the Registrar’s Office prior to the start of the quarter in which authorization to register is cancelled.
Students may withdraw from both degree programs, and thus withdraw from graduate studies at Stanford. Alternately, the student may withdraw from one of the two degree programs. In the latter case, the student must meet all requirements of the remaining degree, including the complete required residency requirement, before being eligible for degree conferral. Tuition is charged at the tuition rate for the degree program in which the student is enrolled.

9. Transfer Credit

Transfer credit policies for each participating degree program apply, unless the particular JDP applies additional requirements (see GAP 3.2, Residency Policy for Graduate Students [9]).

10. Tuition Assessment

Each Joint Degree Program (JDP) has a pre-approved tuition agreement detailing which graduate tuition level is paid at which point in a student’s career. JDP tuition agreements approved for each JDP reside with the Office of the Registrar. All students enrolled in a JDP must submit the Tuition Agreement for Students with Multiple Programs [13] form to document the tuition agreement and ensure that correct charges are applied each quarter.

TGR Tuition

Students enrolled in JDPs who have completed all degree requirements other than the university oral exam and dissertation (doctoral degree programs) or a required project or thesis (master’s degree programs) and meet the conditions for Terminal Graduate Registration status may request TGR tuition status (see GAP 6.1, Graduate Tuition Categories [14]).

11. Eligibility for Appointment to Assistantships

Students must meet university eligibility requirements (see GAP 7.3, Assistantships [15]) to receive a Research Assistant (RA) or Teaching Assistant (CA/TA) appointment. Students with RA and CA/TA awards, who have not reached TGR status, will be expected to enroll at the 8, 9, 10 unit tuition rate. Note that some JDPs may require enrollment at higher unit levels for all or part of the JDP, and students may not be eligible for assistantships during those quarters.

12. Degree Conferral and Diplomas

In a Joint Degree Program, both degrees are conferred at the same time since the units required for each degree are linked to the completion of both degrees. In the case of JDPs involving the Law School, the JD degree may be
awarded before the second degree, if all requirements for the JD have been met.

When two degrees are earned, two diplomas are issued, one for each degree. JDPs do not result in a single diploma.

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Related Content:

Related Policies

- GAP 3.2, Residency Policy for Graduate Students [1]
- GAP 5.1, Changes and Additions of Programs [16]
- GAP 5.3, Leaves of Absence [17]
- GAP 5.4, Program Discontinuation and Reinstatement [18]
- GAP 5.8, Exchange Programs [19]
- GAP 6.1, Graduate Tuition Categories [20]
- GAP 7.3, Assistantships [21]

Related Bulletin Sections

- Joint Degree Programs [22]

Related Information and Forms

- Joint Degree Programs (information page) [23]
- Joint Degree Program Student Checklist [8] (MS Word)
- Approved Joint Degree Programs and Tuition Schedules [6]
- Joint Degree Program Proposal form [24] (downloadable Word file)
- Tuition Agreement for Students with Multiple Programs [13] (pdf)
- Request to Permanently Withdraw from Degree Program [12] (pdf)

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Links

[2] mailto:vpge@stanford.edu?subject=GAP%20Inquiry
[14] https://sites.stanford.edu/jumpstart-vpgehandbook/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-6/subchapter-1/page-6-