

**The University Senate of Michigan Technological University
Proposal 18-24**

Revisions to the Accelerated Master's Policy

**Submitted by:
Graduate School**

The accelerated master's program at Michigan Tech is designed to encourage well-qualified students from Tech (and other institutions through negotiated agreements) to pursue a master's degree by counting a predetermined number of credits (six as of January 2024) toward both the undergraduate and graduate degrees. Table 1 shows enrollment in the accelerated master's program since 2018; enrollment has increased 71% since then, 10% in the last year alone.

Table 1. Enrollment in accelerated master's program in the fall semester of the year indicated.

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Enrollment	94	93	135	132	146	161

To promote further growth in the accelerated master's program, the following revisions to the program are adopted:

1. Recommended curricula for accelerated master's programs can allow students to apply up to nine of the credits earned while an undergraduate to both their bachelor's and master's degree.
2. Students can apply for admission to an accelerated master's program at any time after they attain sophomore-level class standing and up until six semesters (including summer) after they are awarded their bachelor's degree.
3. Any new master's program at the university (after spring 2024) will be accelerated by default. Note that item 1, above, allows a maximum of nine credits to count for both the bachelor's and master's. Programs may elect to allow fewer than nine, including zero.

Financial impact to the University

The goal of the accelerated master's program was and is to attract well-qualified undergraduates at Michigan Tech (and other institutions through negotiated agreements) into our graduate programs. (Note that some accelerated master's students have been further recruited into PhD programs at the university.)

Under the current accelerated master’s program, there are six credits of foregone revenue. Students pay the undergraduate tuition rate for six credits, which are then counted toward the master’s degree, leaving 24 credits at the graduate tuition rate.

Revenue for an undergraduate degree and a master’s degree (both from Michigan Tech) can be calculated as:

$R1 = (T_{total,undergraduate} + 30T_{graduate})$ and $R2 = (T_{total,undergraduate} + 24T_{graduate})$, where $T_{total,undergraduate}$ is the total revenue from the undergraduate degree $T_{graduate}$ is the cost of one credit of graduate tuition. R1 is the revenue from one student without the accelerated master’s; R2 is the revenue from one student with the accelerated master’s. The breakeven point in this scenario is an increase of 25% in the number of students who pursue a master’s degree at Michigan Tech after receiving a bachelor’s degree from Tech. As the table above shows, that criterion has been exceeded, just since 2018. (Note that the accelerated master’s program was adopted in 2011.)

In the scenario proposed here, $R3 = (T_{total,undergraduate} + 24T_{graduate})$ and $R4 = (T_{total,undergraduate} + 21T_{graduate})$. The breakeven point is an increased enrollment of 14%. The numbers in the Table above indicate that such an increase is feasible.

We estimate that the lost revenue from extending the window for the accelerated master’s program to six semesters after graduation is minimal. We do not have reliable data on students coming back for a master’s after they graduate and leave, but anecdotally, the number is small. With more and more programs available online, through Global Campus, we anticipate that the accelerated master’s program could be an attractive option for recent graduates who enter the workforce and discover that an added credential would enhance their professional prospects.

Benchmarking

Most of the institutions which Michigan Tech considers as peers (see this [page](#)) have an accelerated master’s program. The number of credits which those institutions will double count are shown in the table below.

Table 2. Number of credits which can be double counted between undergraduate and graduate programs in select peer institutions.

Institution	Credits double counted
Clarkson	6 (2 courses)
Colorado School of Mines	12
New Jersey Institute of Technology	6-9 (depends on gpa)
Stevens Institute of Technology	9

University of Alabama Huntsville	9-12 (depending on program)
Grand Valley State University	12
Central Michigan University	9-18 (up to 50% of credits for degree)
Western Michigan University	12
Wayne State University	16

Policy 413.1

ACCELERATED MASTER'S PROGRAMS

[\(Proposal 13-11\)](#) [\(Proposal 1-12\)](#) [\(Proposal 20-17\)](#) [\(Proposal 27-22\)](#)

Senate Policy 413.1

Goals of the Proposed Policy:

- Develop a flexible policy framework that will allow individual departments/programs to offer integrated bachelor's/master's degree programs that meet the needs of their students, faculty, and academic discipline.
- Allow students in coursework degree programs (those that require neither a thesis nor a report) to apply a limited number of credits towards both the bachelor's and master's degrees.
- Allow outstanding undergraduate students to pursue an accelerated research-based master's degree and apply up to three undergraduate-level research credits earned as a senior-level student toward the research requirement for a master's degree (thesis or report option).
- Attract outstanding Michigan Tech bachelor's students into our master's programs.
- Attract outstanding bachelor's students from accredited institutions outside of Michigan Tech into our accelerated master's programs through negotiated agreements.

Policy Guidelines:

For Programs:

- The recommended curriculum for an accelerated master's program must be established in advance by each department or program that wishes to offer an accelerated master's program to their students.
- Recommended curricula for accelerated master's programs can allow students to apply up to a maximum of ~~six~~ nine of the credits earned while an undergraduate to both their bachelor's and master's degree.
- A maximum of three of the double-counted credits may be research credits. Programs may choose to not allow or limit the double-counting of either coursework or research credits or both.
- Any research credits earned by an undergraduate and applied toward a master's degree must be earned after the student has attained senior-level standing.
- Undergraduate students may not enroll in graduate research courses. Undergraduates who participate in research should enroll in undergraduate research courses.
- Up to a maximum of three credits of undergraduate research earned during the senior year may be substituted for graduate-level research credits if allowed by the graduate program.
- Only students in a research-based (thesis or report option) master's program may apply any undergraduate research credits toward a graduate degree.
- The maximum time to degree for students in an accelerated master's program is 5 years from the time the student is accepted into the program.
- Proposed accelerated master's programs that will result in students earning bachelor's and master's degrees that are both currently offered by Michigan Tech do not have to be reviewed or approved by the University Senate as they do not involve development of new degree programs.
- This policy cannot be used to develop stand-alone accelerated master's programs.

- ~~After fall of 2024, all new master's programs will have an accelerated option by default. Programs may designate that no credits be double counted between the bachelor's and master's degrees.~~
- Each plan for an accelerated master's programs must be reviewed by the Graduate School prior to the time it is made available to students. The Graduate School will ensure that the plan conforms to this policy and will make information about programs available to the Graduate Faculty Council and the University Senate and will advertise the programs on the Graduate School website.

Additional Guidelines for Programs Participating in Negotiated Agreements:

- The agreement must be supported by the academic program housing the Michigan Tech Accelerated Master's program.
- The faculty of the academic program at Michigan Tech will review the participating college/university's program curriculum and coursework and identify the coursework credits which will be double-counted.
- The academic program will determine admission requirements for students participating in the negotiated agreement.
- The academic program will review the students' final transcripts to ensure they meet the prescribed GPA requirements for accelerated programs.

For Students:

- Only students who intend to complete both their bachelor's and master's degrees at Michigan Tech can enroll in an accelerated master's program, with the exception of students participating in a negotiated agreement.
- Students already enrolled in a graduate program may not retroactively use this policy.
- In order to be formally accepted into an accelerated master's program students must apply to and be accepted into the Graduate School at Michigan Tech. Applications will be reviewed by departments and programs according to their normal procedure.
- Students can apply for admission to an accelerated master's program at any time after they attain sophomore-level class standing and up until **six semesters (including summer) after** they are awarded their bachelor's degree.
- Only students with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above are eligible to enter an accelerated master's program. Programs may set higher admission requirements. For example, programs may require a cumulative GPA of 3.5 for admission to a research-based (thesis or report option) master's program.
- Students who are accepted to the program will not be allowed to continue if their cumulative undergraduate GPA falls below 3.0. A higher GPA may be required by the program.
- ~~Students must enroll within one semester of receiving their bachelor's degree.~~

Additional Guidelines for Students Participating in Negotiated Agreements:

- Students who are seeking admission to accelerated master's programs through a negotiated agreement will need to apply through the Graduate School's application process and be accepted by the academic programs.
- ~~Students must apply and be accepted before receiving their bachelor's degree at their home institution.~~

For University Administration:

- Students will be considered undergraduates for the purposes of financial aid, tuition, and class standing until their undergraduate degree has been awarded.
- Once students are awarded their undergraduate degree, they will be considered graduate students for the purposes of financial aid, and tuition.
- Prior to completion of the master's degree, students must indicate on their master's degree schedule which undergraduate-level courses (if any are allowed by the program) and credits (up to a maximum of **six nine**, if allowed by the program for an accelerated master's degree) should be applied to both their bachelor's and master's degrees.

- The Dean of the Graduate school will report to the Senate on the number of accelerated master's programs, enrollment in these programs, the number of enrolled master's students who received their undergraduate degree from Michigan Tech and the number of these that are in accelerated master's programs. In addition, this report will include a comparison with the data from previous years.

Additional Guidelines for University Administration Participating in Negotiated Agreements:

- The Dean of the Graduate School will review and approve each new Accelerated Master's negotiated agreement, before forwarding for appropriate signatures.
- The Dean of the Graduate School will periodically report to the Senate on the number of accelerated master's students through negotiated agreements and the institutions that participate in the agreements.
- The Graduate School will review and approve departmentally approved degree schedules that identify specific courses to be double-counted.