

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 19, 2015

TO: Deans, Directors, Department Heads, and Advisors

FROM: Dennis Ray, Chair, Undergraduate Council (UGC)
Celeste Pardee, Assistant Director for Academic Policies and Organizations

RE: **Second Bachelor's Degree Policy Revisions**

In Fall 2014, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Gail Burd asked the Undergraduate Council to consider revising the Second Bachelor's Degree Policy. A comparison of UA's second degree policy with those at peer institutions revealed similarities but also a few significant differences. For example, UA's policy discouraged second degrees with the same degree title (e.g., two BS Degrees), but that is allowed under certain circumstances among the University's peers. To update and align the UA's policy with its peers, UGC members agreed on two policies—one for degrees awarded concurrently and another for those awarded sequentially (with different award dates). The faculty's final proposal evolved with input from academic advisors and academic administrators and was ultimately approved by the Faculty Senate on March 2, 2015. The revised policies (see the 2015-16 Catalog text below) applies to all incoming and enrolled students as of Summer/Fall 2015.

Revised [Second Bachelor's Degree Policy](#):

Sequential Degrees. Candidates for a second bachelor's degree at The University of Arizona **with a different award date than the first** must earn no fewer than 30 units of University Credit in addition to the units required for the first degree, and must meet all requirements for the second degree. **For partly overlapping but sequential degrees--when the second award date differs from the first--the 30 additional units are added to the first degree's total units for a minimum of 150 units, although some of the additional units may have been completed before conferral of the first degree.**

Students may apply for a **sequential** second degree **with a degree title that is the same as the first (e.g., B.S. in Plant Sciences and B.S. in Microbiology)**. For sequential degrees, students must complete at least 50 percent of all course work required in the major (as defined on the Academic Advisement Report) of the second degree after conferral of the first degree.

Concurrent Degrees. **If the degrees are completed at the same time, the 30 additional units of University Credit are not necessary. The student may earn concurrent (simultaneous) degrees with a minimum of 120 units and the completion of all major, minor, and General Education requirements, as long as both degrees are awarded on the same date.**

Students may apply for a **concurrent** second degree only if the degree title and major differ from the first. Students pursuing another academic program that would lead to the same degree title as the primary program must declare that program as an additional major, not a concurrent degree. Two or more majors may be completed within one academic degree program as long as these majors lead to the same degree title. However, after the first degree is awarded, another major cannot be appended to it

Rationale for the Revisions:

- Previously, students pursuing a second program with the same degree title as the primary program (e.g., B.A. in Spanish and B.A. in Latin American Studies) had to declare that program as a second major, not a second degree. This policy is justified for concurrent programs—those completed at the

same time—but is unnecessary for sequential degrees, when many students return with new career goals that might be attained with a different major but the same degree title.

- The faculty’s philosophy in 2006 (when the policy was last revised) was that a second degree should be substantially different from the primary degree. Two degrees with the same title (e.g., two B.A. programs or two B.F.A. programs) were perceived as largely the same, regardless of different majors, so they didn’t meet this criterion.
- With increased demand for sequential baccalaureate degrees and the option of fully online programs for returning students, the faculty recognizes that there are valid reasons for students to enroll in a second baccalaureate program with the same degree title.
- Most peer institutions, like the UA, require 30 additional units of University Credit for a sequential second degree to ensure that students’ second degrees consist of updated course work, primarily in the major. However, more universities (including ASU and NAU) waive the additional University Credit requirement for concurrent degrees—as long as both are awarded on the same date.
- Previously, even if all major, minor, and General Education requirements for simultaneous degrees were met with fewer units, students had to take electives to attain a minimum 150 units for dual degrees.
- The 30 additional unit requirement was a deterrent for concurrent degrees, even for students whose career goals could be achieved with two different baccalaureate degrees.
- The previous policy encouraged students with one bachelor’s degree to apply for a graduate program. But the faculty now recognizes valid reasons for students to pursue two baccalaureate degrees instead of (or prior to) enrolling in a graduate program.

Management of Concurrent and Sequential Degrees:

- For concurrent-degree students, Graduation Services will not backdate one of the degrees if it were completed before the requested award date, provided that it was not completed earlier than 6 months prior to the requested concurrent-degree award date.
- Concurrent-degree students who do not complete one program by the date for which they applied have a grace period of one regular semester, during which they may complete any remaining courses. If all requirements for the concurrent degrees are not satisfied within one regular semester, then the first degree is awarded and the second program becomes a sequential degree.
- Concurrent-degree students who need more than one regular semester to complete the requirements for both programs may request an additional term through the General Petition process. Students may petition to retain concurrent-degree status only for circumstances beyond their control that precluded them from completing both degrees simultaneously.
- Sequential-degree students who have completed more than 50% of the major coursework for the second degree at the time when they become sequential degree candidates may file a college petition to request an exception to the major coursework policy, if they believe an exception is warranted.

Questions about the amended Catalog policy statement may be addressed to Celeste Pardee, Curricular Affairs, at 621-5375, or at cpardee@email.arizona.edu. Questions about management of the policy may be addressed to Jody Payne, Registrar’s Office, at 621-0976, or jmpayne@email.arizona.edu.