

# AD HOC COMBINED DEGREES

Students in The Graduate School are admitted to approved PhD programs and must follow a plan of study related to that academic program.

Doctoral students may propose to pursue a secondary (supplemental) master's degree administered by The Graduate School that is not a part of their existing program of study.

## Eligibility

- Doctoral students in The Graduate School may petition to pursue a master's degree outside of their approved academic program when:
  - the secondary master's degree is administered by The Graduate School;
  - the secondary master's degree relates to the student's area of specialization and can enhance the student's scholarship; and
  - it would be impossible for a student to fulfill academic/intellectual goals solely through the program into which they were initially admitted, or through an existing cluster or certificate.
- Students proposing to pursue a master's degree outside of their approved PhD program must be in good academic standing.
- The petition (<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/documents/policies/adhoccombineddegreeapplicationform.pdf>) to pursue a secondary master's degree **must be submitted at the beginning of the proposed plan of secondary study** and requires permission from the student's Director of Graduate Studies, the student's faculty adviser, the Director of Graduate Studies for the master's degree, and The Graduate School, per the procedure outlined below.
  - Students petitioning for a master's degree along the way to a PhD within their approved academic program do not follow the process below. Rather, they should follow the policies and procedures outlined in their program's handbook and The Graduate School's catalog. A student who plans to receive or has already received a master's degree along the way to a PhD within an approved academic program may propose to pursue an additional master's degree outside of the approved academic program by following the procedure outlined below.
- In order to receive a master's degree outside of the approved academic program, students must satisfy The Graduate School's minimum requirements for each of the degrees without double-counting courses or other requirements. For each degree - the PhD degree and the master's degree outside of the approved academic program - the student must minimally complete nine, quality letter graded (ABC, not P/NP) course units authorized by The Graduate School for graduate credit.
  - Each program may, at its discretion, allow the double counting of courses for work beyond The Graduate School's minimum requirements.
- The master's degree outside of the approved PhD program may not be conferred before the PhD is conferred. A student who departs (withdraws, is dismissed, or otherwise discontinued from) the PhD program to which the student was originally admitted becomes ineligible for the secondary master's degree.
- A limited number of introductory courses taken at Northwestern prior to approval of the petition may be accepted to satisfy graduate degree requirements. No more than four units of coursework taken prior to admission into the master's degree program can be counted toward the master's degree requirement.

## Procedure for Requesting Permission to Pursue an Ad Hoc Combined Degree

To request permission to pursue concurrent degrees outside of an existing combined degree program, students must submit the Permission to Pursue an Ad Hoc Combined Degree form (<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/documents/policies/adhoccombineddegreeapplicationform.pdf>) to Student Services at the beginning of the proposed plan of study that provides:

- An explanation of the academic/intellectual rationale for the plan of study
- A written description of the student's plan to fulfill all published requirements for each degree without double counting The Graduate School's minimum requirements for courses and other work
- A statement from the student's faculty adviser(s) supporting the rationale for pursuing a master's degree outside of the approved PhD program and confirming that the student is making acceptable progress in the approved PhD program
- Statements from the Directors of Graduate Studies (DGSes) in both the student's PhD program and the master's degree program confirming that the outlined plan of study is acceptable and that the student has permission to pursue the degrees concurrently.