Concurrent undergraduate and graduate degree programs can provide opportunities for well-qualified ISU juniors and seniors to apply for a program leading to both a masters and bachelors degree at the end of a fifth year of study. Students interested in research may apply for a graduate research assistantship during their fourth and fifth years of study. Individualized concurrent degree programs are available.

The following material describes the procedures to obtain approval for a recognized concurrent undergraduate and graduate degree program when both the undergraduate and graduate majors have already been approved. For students pursuing a concurrent undergraduate bachelor’s degree and graduate degree, a maximum of 6 graduate credits can be double counted for both the bachelor’s degree and the graduate degree subject to the Program of Study committee approval.

The proposal will be reviewed by the Graduate Curriculum and Catalog Committee, by the Graduate Council, by the Graduate College, and by the Dean of the Graduate College.

**The Proposal for Concurrent Degree Programs**

The proposal for concurrent degree programs should include the following information:

1. Name of the programs or majors: Political Science
2. Name of the degrees: Concurrent BA and MA in Political Science
3. Name of the department(s) which administer(s) the program: Political Science
4. Rationale for the concurrent degree program

There are several reasons for adding this concurrent BA/MA option for students in Political Science.  First, majors in Political Science include some of the best students at the University.  Our alumni are frequent recipients of College and University Awards as both students and alumni.  This option would provide a path for our best students to get additional value for their time at ISU.  It would also better position them for both additional post-graduate education and the job market.  Receiving a Master’s degree during their time at ISU would increase their competitiveness for top law schools and Ph.D. programs.  Each year we send approximately 25 students on to these programs and we are well served to provide added programs which increase the ceiling on their opportunities.  A second major option for our majors is work in the public or non-profit sector.  In each case, they are finding that their options, both immediately after graduation and in the near future are limited if their highest degree is a BA.   Many federal, state, and local government jobs, for instance, require at least a Master’s degree for certain levels of employment.  The concurrent program would enable these students to start at a higher level of employment and not feel the need to return to school for an advanced degree later in life when they are no longer connected to Iowa State.  Our students who are strong in quantitative skills could include a graduate minor in statistics which would significantly increase their competitiveness for top Ph.D. programs relative to applying with a BA alone and would also increase marketability for government jobs. This program would also provide additional challenges to our best students.  Graduate education in Political Science is simply different than undergraduate education because it is much more research focused.  This concurrent program would enable our top students to engage with research more fully and have a stronger opportunity for conducting their own research.  This would not change the rigor of our current program, but open up “capstone” opportunities for our best students.  Finally, the concurrent program would provide us with a comparative advantage for recruiting undergraduates.  Our undergraduate degree in Political Science is not qualitatively different from the one offered by the University of Iowa.  A concurrent Master’s program, however, would give us unique leverage for recruiting the set of students who would see this as an attractive option.

1. Admission procedures and requirements

Students wishing to apply for the concurrent degrees would apply by March 1 of their junior year. The faculty would review the application in the same way that we review other applicants for the MA program. Currently the department requires transcripts, GRE or LSAT score, three letters of recommendation, and a personal statement included in the application. Eligible students must have an overall GPA of 3.5 or an overall GPA of 3.2 with a political science GPA of 3.7 including at least 18 credits of political science coursework. Students should have taken Pol Sci 101, Pol Sci 301, and Stat 101 at the time of application or be taking these courses during the semester in which they apply. Students who are accepted will meet with both the undergraduate advisor and the DOGE in political science to plan courses for the fourth year. Students interested in this option will be encouraged to notify the political science undergraduate advisor prior to the junior year so that they can select courses that will facilitate the fulfillment of both degrees in five years. Students who wish to apply for the concurrent degree program who deviate from this timeline (for example a student with enough credits to apply in the fall of the junior year rather than the spring) may do so with special approval from the DOGE and Department Chair.

1. Requirements of the program

The MA degree requires 30 credits including 3 credits of either thesis or creative component. Concurrent degree students would be allowed to count six credits toward both degrees provided they meet the requirements for each degree. Students would take at least 12 credits that can be listed on their graduate program of study during the fourth year including Stat 587 and Pol Sci 502 Research Methods. During the seventh semester they would identify a major professor and by the eighth semester they would have an approved proposal for their thesis or creative component and have an approved POS committee. Students who are unable to take six additional credits not required for the BA during the fourth year (to supplement the six credits that double count) would need to take additional qualifying credits in the summer between years four and five (Stat 587, Pol Sci 590 Graduate Independent study, 598 Graduate Internship Credit, and qualifying classes would be used for these students). In the fifth year students would complete the remaining coursework requirements: two required courses in their concentration area, one elective in their concentration area, and at least 21 credits in political science including the thesis or creative component. They would also complete the thesis or creative component.

1. Expected enrollment: 4-8 students
2. If not already addressed, answer the following:
3. How will the undergraduate degree plan and graduate program of study be developed?

Students will work with the undergraduate advisor to determine whether the student has room to take graduate courses not required for the B.A. during the fourth year. The student will consult with the DOGE of political science about which graduate course to take during the fourth year. In the fifth year the graduate program is overseen by the POS committee.

1. When will the student have a major professor?

Students will be matched with a major professor during the fourth year with first semester of the fourth year preferred.

1. Will graduate assistantships be provided?

Concurrent degree students will be eligible for assistantships on the same basis as other graduate students but are not guaranteed an assistantship. Political Science normally admits some students with funding and some students without funding.

1. Will a thesis be required?

Students must complete a thesis or creative component.

1. Who will be responsible for the administration of the program?

Alex Tuckness, DOGE in Political Science, will administer the program.

1. How much time is required to complete the program? Show a sample semester-by-semester plan.

5 Years (all courses 3 credits except Stat 587 which is 4 credits). Political Science requires 33 credits for the B.A. and does not have a tight set of undergraduate requirements such that we can predict which courses a student will still need to take in the fourth year to complete the BA. The main requirements are POLS 101 and 301, one course from each of four five subfields, 18 credits 300 and above, 9 credits 400 and above, and a Stat course. There a vast number of ways students can meet these requirements and many students have most of these requirements completed prior to the fourth year. The program below assumes a standard course load of 15-16 credits for the fourth year. It also assumes prior completion of Stat 101 and Pol Sci 301 as specified above. Keep in mind that a student who did summer courses, or came in with AP credits, or took higher loads in years 1-2 could take lower course loads in year four. A student following the standard four year plan would only need to take one 400 level political science course each semester and all the remaining credits would be electives. The following thus represents a “worst-case scenario” as we would anticipate that most students interested in this option will be in a position to take fewer electives in year 4. The standard four year plan can be viewed at:

<http://catalog.iastate.edu/collegeofliberalartsandsciences/politicalscience/#fouryearplantext>

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Fall Year 4 | Spring Year 4 | Fall Year 5 | Spring Year 5 |
| POLS 502 (3 credits) | POLS 581 (3 credits) | POLS 504 (3 credits) | POLS 699 (3 credits) |
| POLS 505 (3 credits) | STAT 587 (4 credits) | POLS 522 (3 credits) | POLS 553 (3 credits) |
| POLS 235 (3 credits) | POLS 340 (3 credits) | Stat 588 (3 credits) | Stat 407 (3 credits) |
| POLS 442 (3 credits) | POLS 215 (3 credits) |  |  |
| POLS 358 (3 credits) | POLS 487 (3 credits) |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

1. Will students be allowed to double count credits? If so, how many?

Students may double count six credits.

9. Attach memos showing approval by appropriate department and college committees, faculty, and administrators.

10. Proposal Contact: Alex Tuckness, 529 Ross Hall, 294-8910, tuckness@iastate.edu