

Accelerated Pathways to Graduate Programs Standards and Guidelines

Catalog Policy

Graduate Courses for Undergraduate Students

Undergraduate matriculated students must be a senior with at least 90 earned credits and have a minimum 3.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA), or higher as determined by the department, to be eligible to enroll in graduate coursework (500-level or above). Graduate courses must fulfill a student's current undergraduate program requirements to be eligible for financial aid. Approval to start graduate coursework during an undergraduate program does not guarantee future admission to the graduate program.

Graduate course grades will be recorded on the undergraduate transcript, computed in the undergraduate GPA, and credit may be earned towards completion of the bachelor's degree. If the student earns a 'C' or better in a graduate course, the grade will also be recorded on the graduate transcript, computed in the graduate GPA, and credit may be earned towards completion of the master's degree. Some programs may have higher grade requirements in place for certain courses which will require the student to retake the course for a higher grade later.

Students will meet with their faculty advisor to prepare a graduate course plan based on their intended graduate program of study for accelerated pathways. Students may take up to 6 graduate credits per semester and up to 12 graduate credits overall (the specific number of credits may vary by program and student). The Department Chairperson for the student's undergraduate program must approve the graduate courses to be applied to the bachelor's degree requirements. The Graduate Coordinator for the student's intended graduate program of study must approve the plan to authorize registration in the graduate courses. The ability for undergraduate students to take graduate level courses may be limited by seat availability.

Curriculum Proposals

Departments may propose a new or revised undergraduate accelerated program, accelerated pathway, concentration, or minor that includes graduate courses. All graduate courses successfully completed in an undergraduate program with a grade of 'C' or higher earn dual credit; the grades are applied to the undergraduate and graduate transcript and are computed in both GPAs.

Accelerated Program

An accelerated program, such as BS-Accelerated Athletic Training, is designed to be completed in less than 4 years. Additional credits are required each fall/spring semester and/or enrollment in summer/winter terms may be required. Accelerated programs may include more than 12 credits of graduate coursework based on programmatic accreditation standards.

Accelerated Pathway Option

A pathway may include up to 12 credits of graduate coursework to replace free electives or to substitute for courses in the major/concentration. A pathway does not constitute a new major/concentration.

Concentration or Minor

A concentration or minor, such as School Health Education in Physical Education, may require courses at the graduate-level, not to exceed more than 12 credits in combination with the major. This is not a pathway option: graduate coursework is required for this area of study.

Accelerated Pathways to Graduate Programs Standards and Guidelines

First Year and Transfer Admission

Students interested in any major/concentration will be asked about their interest in an accelerated pathway option on the admissions application:

Southern Connecticut State University welcomes motivated undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds to apply for admission with an [accelerated pathway](#) option. Accelerated options vary by program but are open to most majors offered. Accelerated pathways allow students to earn dual credit towards completion of both their bachelor's and master's degree, saving both time and money.

Are you interested in pursuing an accelerated pathway option?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Students who answer “Yes” to the accelerated pathway option, will receive an additional communication with their acceptance letter ([see sample Admissions letter](#)), and an accelerated attribute will be added to the student's Banner record for tracking and to allow eligible and participating major lists to display this indicator.

Note: Students in accelerated programs or concentrations with required graduate coursework will also receive this additional communication and attribute.

Advising

Advisors are encouraged to discuss the addition of the pathway with students as early as possible, to reserve the credits in the program for graduate coursework and assist students with the considerations below. Please review the full [Accelerated Pathways Advising Guide](#) as well.

- Students must have, or can reasonably attain, the required minimum overall 3.0 GPA, or higher as outlined in the catalog for certain majors, prior to registering for graduate courses in their senior year once 90 or more credits are earned.
- Up to 12 credits in the undergraduate program will be designated for graduate level coursework, depending on their major/concentration, and this will reduce the number of free electives available, unless substituted for major requirements as outlined in the catalog.
- Like the addition of a minor, or a dual major, the pathway adds requirements to a program and may delay graduation if these additional credits are not substituted in the major, or if the additional requirements will exceed the free electives needed to reach 120-credits overall for bachelor's degree completion.

If approved, advisors must request an audit memo to the Registrar's Office to add the accelerated pathway option to the student's degree evaluation. If the student no longer wishes to pursue the accelerated pathway option, it may also be removed via an audit memo, or the student may notify the Registrar's Office directly.

Accelerated Pathways to Graduate Programs Standards and Guidelines

Academic Progress Review

Departments must review the overall GPA and degree evaluation for students in accelerated pathways to prepare for advising in late February (for fall advising) and late September (for spring advising). Accelerated students are identified on the Major List (Argos report).

Department must take the actions outlined below based on each student's academic progress in the accelerated program.

Students under 75 credits or 62.5% program completion:

- [Accelerated Pathway Letter](#)
Issued as a reminder of the accelerated pathway criteria.

Students with at least 75 credits or 62.5% program completion:

- [Graduate Course Plan Reminder](#)
Issued to students who meet the department CGPA, minimum 3.0 or higher, and can enter their senior year in the pathway; or
- [Accelerated Pathway Warning](#)
Issued to students who do not meet the department CGPA, minimum 3.0 or higher, but may be eligible in one more semester; or
- [Accelerated Pathway Removal Notice](#)
Issued to students who do not meet the department CGPA, minimum 3.0 or higher, and you must also submit an audit memo to remove the pathway to the Registrar's Office.

Note: This is also a good time to remind your major advisors to discuss accelerated pathways with eligible students who do not have this attribute already.

Graduate Course Plan

Students approved to continue in the accelerated pathway must meet with their faculty advisor in their junior year and complete a [Graduate Course Plan](#) to receive permission to register for graduate courses for their senior year. Faculty advisors must verify eligibility and endorse the plan as follows:

- ☐ Student must meet the minimum overall 3.0 GPA, or higher for certain majors; and
- ☐ Student must be completing 90+ credits prior to beginning graduate courses; and
- ☐ Submit graduate courses that fulfill free electives or the undergraduate major as substitutions; and
- ☐ Submit graduate courses that also apply to the student's graduate program of interest; and
- ☐ Verify that the student meets the necessary prerequisites for the graduate courses listed.

The Department Chairperson for the student's undergraduate program must approve the graduate courses to be applied to the bachelor's degree requirements; the Graduate Coordinator for the student's intended graduate program of study must approve the plan to authorize registration in the graduate courses. Final approved plans are submitted to the Registrar's Office for processing course registration permissions and to verify the degree evaluation requirements.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Are non-accelerated pathway students able to register for graduate-level courses?

Generally, students looking to pursue graduate courses as an undergraduate student must select the accelerated pathway option and have an approved graduate course plan to register.

Note: Students in accelerated programs, concentrations, or minors (i.e. not pathway students) with required graduate coursework in their program are not required to complete a Graduate Course Plan. The department can issue a level override for registration permission when students reach senior year with a 3.0 CGPA.

2. What is the tuition rate for graduate courses taken as an undergraduate student?

Students will pay undergraduate rates for all attempted courses, including graduate courses, while they are still enrolled in the bachelor's degree program.

3. When can accelerated pathway students apply to a graduate program?

Students with an approved Graduate Course Plan are encouraged to apply to the School of Graduate & Professional Studies during the first semester of their senior year for early decision.

4. When will accelerated pathway students be considered graduate students?

Students in an accelerated program, concentration, or pathway will first complete the 120-credit bachelor's degree program as undergraduate students. Students accepted to graduate school will transition to the master's degree program as a graduate student after their bachelor's degree has been awarded.

5. Can students take additional graduate courses in an accelerated pathway?

Students may only take up to 12 credits of graduate-level course work in an accelerated pathway option, some programs have more restrictive limits.

6. Will graduate courses taken as an undergraduate student be eligible for financial aid?

Yes, the student's degree evaluation will include the graduate level pathway courses as academic requirements of the undergraduate program; therefore, the courses are aid eligible.

**Accelerated Pathways to Graduate Programs
Standards and Guidelines**

Addendum (Sample Letters)

First-Year and Transfer Admission Letter

Dear «Student Preferred Name»

Welcome to Southern! We are excited to welcome you to campus and are writing to offer some additional information about the program of study that you selected on your application.

«Student Preferred Name», you have indicated that you would like to be enrolled in the «Program» with an accelerated pathway to graduate school. Accelerated pathways allow you to earn a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in a shorter amount of time, saving both time and money. Here are the key points about this program:

- Accelerated pathway students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0, or higher as determined by the department, to be eligible to enroll in graduate coursework during the senior year of your undergraduate program. Students who do not maintain this GPA may complete a traditional bachelor's degree program but will not be eligible to start graduate coursework their senior year.
- Accelerated pathway students receive dual credit for successfully completed graduate courses; these count towards both your bachelor's and master's degree to save you both time and money. Students pay undergraduate tuition for graduate credits taken during their senior year.
- Accelerated pathway students are eligible to apply for early admission to the School of Graduate & Professional Studies during their senior year. Admission to a graduate program requires a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA); admission to the Master of Arts in Teaching program requires a cumulative GPA no less than 2.7 including courses from all colleges that you attended.

The accelerated pathway is an excellent option for students who hope to earn both a bachelor's and master's degree at Southern; however, if you selected this option by mistake, please contact your Admissions Officer to change your selection.

Dynamic for Transfer Letter: A review of accelerated program criteria and major selection may also be discussed during your first academic advising appointment.

Sincerely,

«Admissions»

Accelerated Pathways to Graduate Programs Standards and Guidelines

Accelerated Pathway Letter

Dear «Student Preferred Name»

We are excited that you have decided to enroll in the «Program» with an accelerated pathway to graduate study. **We are writing to remind you about the academic criteria to remain enrolled in this pathway.**

- Accelerated pathway students must maintain a cumulative GPA of «3.0 or higher for certain majors» or higher to be eligible to enroll in graduate coursework during the senior year of your undergraduate program.
- Dual credit graduate courses in your pathway will count towards both the bachelor's and master's degree, where a grade of 'C' or higher is earned and will be calculated in both the undergraduate and the graduate grade point average (GPA).
- Accelerated pathway students are eligible to apply for early admission to the School of Graduate & Professional Studies during their senior year. Admission to a graduate program requires a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA); admission to the Master of Arts in Teaching program requires a cumulative GPA no less than 2.7 including courses from all colleges that you attended.

It is time for you to review your degree evaluation or academic transcript to check your progress towards meeting the required GPA of «3.0 or higher for certain majors». The [GPA calculator](#) can also be used to help determine the grades needed to reach your goal or reach out to your advisor for assistance with planning your path to a higher GPA. Your academic advisor has also been copied and may be reached here: «Name, Telephone, Email».

The accelerated pathway is an excellent option for a student who hopes to earn both a bachelor's and master's degree at Southern; however, if at any point your plans change or you plan to apply to graduate school under the traditional path, please notify us to remove the accelerated option.

Sincerely,

«Department»



Accelerated Pathway Warning

Dear «Student Preferred Name»

We are excited that you have continued in the «Program» with an accelerated pathway to graduate study. We are writing to remind you about the academic criteria to remain enrolled in this pathway.

The accelerated pathway requires a minimum «3.0 or higher for certain majors» cumulative GPA by the time you have earned 90 credits or completed 75% of your program. A review of your records indicates that you are **not currently meeting this GPA requirement, but you still have time to reach this goal.**

- We want to help support your academic success in your undergraduate program. The intent of this letter is to inform you of the requirements and offer support as you seek to improve your overall GPA.
- You should speak with your advisor and use the [GPA calculator](#) to help plan your upcoming semester. Your academic advisor has also been copied and may be reached here: «Name, Telephone, Email».

The accelerated pathway is an excellent option for a student who hopes to earn both a bachelor's and master's degree at Southern; however, if at any point your plans change or you plan to apply to graduate school under the traditional path, please notify us to remove the accelerated option.

If you do not meet the minimum «3.0 or higher for certain majors» cumulative GPA by the time you have earned 90 credits in the program, we will remove the accelerated option and you will complete your bachelor's degree program without the graduate course requirements.

Sincerely,

«Department»



Graduate Course Plan Reminder

Dear «Student Preferred Name»

We are excited that you have continued in the « Program» with an accelerated pathway to graduate study. Our records show that you will soon be entering your senior year with at least a minimum «3.0 or higher for certain majors» GPA, congratulations on your academic success in the program!

It is now time to plan your senior year registration in graduate courses and application for early decision to Southern's School of Graduate & Professional Studies:

- Create a [Graduate Course Plan](#) with your advisor to outline the courses you will take senior year for dual credit to count towards both your undergraduate and graduate degrees.
- Mark your calendar to [Apply Here](#) for early decision to your graduate program of interest during the first semester of your senior year.
- As a reminder, admission to a graduate program requires a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA); admission to the Master of Arts in Teaching program requires a cumulative GPA no less than 2.7 including courses from all colleges that you attended.

Your academic advisor has also been copied and may be reached here: «Name, Telephone, Email». Please be sure to consult with your advisor regarding any questions that you have and have a great senior year!

Sincerely,

«Department»



Accelerated Pathway Removal Notice

Dear «Student Preferred Name»

We are excited that you have continued in the « Program». Our records show that you will soon be entering your senior year, but you are not meeting the minimum «3.0 or higher for certain majors» GPA required to register for graduate courses in the accelerated pathway option.

Your degree evaluation will be updated, you will no longer see the accelerated pathway requirements, and **you will complete your bachelor's degree in the traditional program.** We are here to support your successful completion of your bachelor's degree program and want you to have a great senior year!

Your academic advisor has also been copied and may be reached here: «Name, Telephone, Email». Please be sure to consult with your advisor regarding any questions about your remaining course requirements, GPA requirements, and application options for graduate school.

Sincerely,

«Department»