



AN HONORS UNIVERSITY IN MARYLAND

## UNDERGRADUATE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE COMPLETION POLICY UMBC Policy #III-8.02.01

### I. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy articulates the standards and requirements for the conferral of an undergraduate baccalaureate degree with the goal of degree completion within four years.

### II. PURPOSE FOR POLICY

In accordance with the University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents [Policy on Degree and Curricular Requirements](#) (III-7.00) and the USM [Policy on Standard Credit Requirements for Baccalaureate Degree Programs](#) (III-8.02) and [The College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013](#) (Senate Bill 740), this policy articulates the requirements and standards for the completion of an undergraduate baccalaureate degree.

### III. APPLICABILITY AND IMPACT STATEMENT

This policy addresses all UMBC students who are pursuing an undergraduate baccalaureate degree at UMBC.

### IV. CONTACT

Subject	Contact	Telephone	Email
Policy Clarification/Questions	Office of Undergraduate Education	410-455-3874	undergraduatepetitions@umbc.edu

### V. UNIVERSITY POLICY

UMBC confers baccalaureate degrees on undergraduate students who successfully complete a course of study that meets minimum university requirements (Section V.B.), general education requirements (Section V.C.), major requirements (Section V.D.), and if elected, minor (Section V.E.) and/or certificate requirements (Section V.F). Students may elect to complete the requirements, if applicable eligibility requirements are met, of multiple majors (Section V.G) and/or degree programs (Section V.H), post-baccalaureate degrees (Section V.I), combined degrees (Section V.J), and/or accelerated bachelor's/master's programs (Section V.K).

#### A. STANDARDS FOR COMPLETION OF AN UNDERGRADUATE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE WITHIN FOUR YEARS

- 1) Students will be expected to make consistent academic progress and complete the requirements of a baccalaureate degree in a timely fashion. To this end, full-time degree seeking undergraduate students will be expected to complete all degree requirements in four years.

- 2) While the university will take every reasonable effort to ensure student success within four years, it is ultimately the responsibility of the student to satisfactorily complete the requirements for a baccalaureate degree.
- 3) To satisfy the requirements of a major program, students are expected to follow the [four-year degree pathways](#) and meet designated benchmarks as established by each academic department.
- 4) In consultation with an academic advisor, and in accordance with the four-year academic pathways, students shall develop and file an individualized degree plan by completion of 45 credit hours of coursework. Transfer students must develop an individualized degree plan in consultation with an academic advisor during the student's first semester at UMBC.
- 5) Students not meeting designated benchmarks will be required to meet with an academic advisor to revise their individualized degree plans.
- 6) Timely completion of undergraduate degrees is fostered through effective and meaningful partnerships between students and academic advisors. Students are expected to meet periodically with an academic advisor at least once per semester.
- 7) It is recognized that individual circumstances may change and, in some cases, a student's progress toward a baccalaureate degree may be interrupted. In such circumstances, students should consult with an academic advisor to minimize any delays toward degree completion.
- 8) If an interruption occurs, the student has the option of following the requirements in the Undergraduate Catalog in effect at UMBC when he or she began public higher education within the state of Maryland for the first time, provided continuous enrollment (without a two-year break). This option applies to major requirements as well as to minimum university requirements and general education requirements as outlined in this policy.
- 9) The university reserves the right to change any provision or requirement at any time within a student's period of enrollment.

#### **B. MINIMUM UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS FOR AN UNDERGRADUATE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE**

- 1) **MINIMUM ACADEMIC CREDITS:** Without exception, students must complete a minimum of 120 academic credits to receive a UMBC degree. Academic credits exclude developmental level coursework and physical-activity courses.
- 2) **MINIMUM GRADE POINT AVERAGE:** Without exception, students must have a minimum cumulative UMBC grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 to receive a UMBC degree. The UMBC GPA excludes LRC, ELC, pre-college-level coursework, physical-activity courses when a grade of "P" is earned, and academic courses taken as P/F earned with a "P."

- 3) **MINIMUM UPPER LEVEL CREDITS:** Without exception, at least 45 of the minimum 120 credits required for graduation must be in UMBC courses numbered at the 300-level or above or their equivalents.
- 4) **MINIMUM RESIDENT CREDITS:** Without exception, students must complete at least 30 credits of course work at UMBC (referred to as resident credit) to receive a UMBC degree. Of the 30 resident credits, 15 must be upper-level (courses numbered at the 300-level or above).
- 5) **WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE (WI):** Without exception, students must complete one writing intensive course; a designated WI course may count for the major or a general education requirement, or it may be taken as an elective. The WI course must be completed at UMBC; transfer courses may not be used to fulfill this requirement.
- 6) **PHYSICAL EDUCATION COURSES:** Students must pass two activity courses in physical education. Credit for physical education courses is considered institutional credit, and, as such, the credits do not count toward the 120 academic credits required for graduation.

### C. GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Recommended competency areas for General Education Programs have been established by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and adopted by the [Maryland Higher Education Commission](#).

UMBC's general education requirements enable students to develop functional skills and competencies important for academic and lifetime success which include the following areas: written and oral communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency and information literacy. Additional information regarding the general education requirements at UMBC is available at: <http://oue.umbc.edu/home/general-education/>

- 1) Students must complete all general education requirements with a grade of "C" or better.
- 2) Courses taken on a Pass/Fail basis may not be applied toward general education requirements.
- 3) To fulfill the general education requirements, UMBC students will complete courses distributed across six broad areas of academic inquiry:
  - **ENGLISH COMPOSITION (ENGL 100):** Students must complete one English composition course with a general education designation within the first 30 credit hours of enrollment at UMBC.
  - **MATHEMATICS:** Students must complete one mathematics or statistics course with a general education designation within the first 30 credit hours of enrollment at UMBC.

- **ARTS AND HUMANITIES:** Students must complete three arts and humanities courses with a general education designation; courses must come from at least two different academic disciplines.
- **SOCIAL SCIENCES:** Students must complete three social science courses with a general education designation; courses must come from at least two different academic disciplines.
- **SCIENCES:** Students must complete two science courses and one laboratory course with a general education designation.
- **LANGUAGE AND CULTURE:** Students must complete foreign language through the 201 level or demonstrated proficiency at that level; B.A. students must also complete two culture courses with a general education designation; B.S./B.S.E. students must also complete one culture course with a general education designation.

#### **D. MAJOR REQUIREMENTS**

Students must satisfy the requirements of a major program which provides the focal point of a student's undergraduate study and ensures depth of knowledge in that field.

Students may choose to major in an established discipline within one of the available major curricula or develop a self-designed program within the framework of the Interdisciplinary Studies Program. A list of major programs, with links to departmental websites is available at: <http://www.umbc.edu/academics/degrees.php>

Students shall declare a major program as soon as practical but not later than by the completion of 45 credit hours of course work by filing a Declaration of Major form in the Registrar's Office. Students who transfer to UMBC with at least 45 credit hours of course work shall declare a major program during their first semester.

#### **E. MINOR REQUIREMENTS (IF APPLICABLE)**

Students may elect to declare a minor, which is a survey of an academic field, but in less depth than a major program. Students are encouraged to discuss the opportunity with an academic advisor to determine if it is appropriate. Some programs may require completion of a minor in conjunction with the major. A list of minor programs, with links to departmental websites is available at: <http://www.umbc.edu/academics/degrees.php>

Minor programs are recognized only when completed concurrently with and as part of a bachelor's degree program.

#### **F. CERTIFICATES (IF APPLICABLE)**

Students may elect to declare a certificate as part of their degree program to achieve mastery of a skill or content area. Students are encouraged to discuss the opportunity with an academic advisor to determine if it is appropriate. A list of certificate programs, with links to departmental websites is available at: <http://www.umbc.edu/academics/degrees.php>

In general, students must complete the requirements of a certificate in conjunction with and as part of a bachelor's degree program. Special exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Registrar's Office at the point of a student's graduation audit.

#### **G. MULTIPLE MAJOR PROGRAMS**

- 1) Students who elect to complete the requirements of multiple majors must submit a Declaration of Major form with the Registrar's Office to declare their major intent. Upon filing the form, the primary, secondary, third or more major will be specified.
- 2) When pursuing multiple major programs involving the *same bachelor degree type* (e.g., Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Arts [or] Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Science), the student must complete the requirements of both major programs, complete the general education requirements for only one major since they result in the same degree *and* a minimum of 120 degree credits. All requirements of both major programs must be completed at the time of graduation.
- 3) When pursuing multiple major programs involving *different bachelor's degree types* (e.g., Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science [or] Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Arts), the student must complete the requirements of both major programs, complete only the general education requirements of the primary major that was specified on the Declaration of Major form *and* a minimum of 120 degree credits. All requirements of both major programs must be completed at the time of graduation.
- 4) Students who successfully complete multiple majors will receive only one diploma with the primary major printed on the diploma. The secondary, third or more major(s) will be listed on the official transcript.

#### **H. MULTIPLE DEGREE PROGRAMS**

- 1) Students who elect to complete the requirements of multiple degrees must submit a Declaration of Major form with the Registrar's Office to declare their degree intent.
- 2) Students electing to concurrently complete programs involving the *same bachelor degree type* (e.g., Bachelor of Arts and a second or more Bachelor of Arts [or] a Bachelor of Science and a second or more Bachelor of Science), must complete the requirements of all degree programs, complete the general education requirements for only one degree since they are the same *and* a minimum of 30 credits above the 120 credit minimum for each additional degree at the time of graduation.
- 3) Students electing to concurrently complete programs involving *different bachelor's degree types* (e.g., Bachelor of Arts and a second or more Bachelor of Science [or] a Bachelor of Science and a second or more Bachelor of Arts), must complete the requirements of all degree programs, the general education requirements applicable to all degrees *and* a minimum of 30 credits above the 120 credit minimum for each additional degree at the time of graduation.
- 4) Students who successfully complete multiple degrees will receive one diploma for each degree earned.

## I. POST-BACCALAUREATE DEGREES

Students who have graduated and wish to complete an additional degree program in a discipline or major not completed during their prior degree program are required to complete all requirements of the additional degree program *and* a minimum of 30 degree credits.

## J. COMBINED DEGREES

If students wish to enroll in a combined degree program in medicine, law or dentistry at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), they must satisfactorily complete 90 credit hours at UMBC, including all general education and major requirements, prior to entrance to the professional school. After completing the first year at UMB and on the recommendation of the dean of the professional school and the provost at UMBC, students will be awarded the baccalaureate degree from UMBC.

## K. ACCELERATED BACHELOR'S/MASTER'S PROGRAMS

Students interested in pursuing an accelerated bachelor's/master's degree program should make their intentions known to an undergraduate academic advisor and the appropriate graduate program director. Additional information regarding the Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's Program is available on the Graduate School website at: <http://gradschool.umbc.edu/admissions/nontraditional/accelerated/>

## VI. DEFINITIONS

<b>Academic Advisor</b>	Academic advising is an interactive process in which an academic advisor helps a student set and achieve academic goals. Academic advising is required before every regular semester registration at UMBC. Students who have declared majors must work with an academic advisor from their academic major. A list of academic advising contacts for each major is available at: <a href="http://advising.umbc.edu/departamental-advising/">http://advising.umbc.edu/departamental-advising/</a> The Office for Academic & Pre-Professional Advising primarily advises students who are undecided/exploratory or who are pursuing professional school programs as well as certain students experiencing academic challenges.
<b>Academic Pathways</b>	Four-year academic pathways have been developed for each degree program (major) at UMBC. Students are strongly encouraged, in consultation with an academic advisor, to use the four-year academic pathway as a guide in developing an individualized degree plan based on student's academic preparation, interests and goals. More information regarding UMBC academic pathways is available at: <a href="https://apps.my.umbc.edu/pathways/">https://apps.my.umbc.edu/pathways/</a>
<b>Declaration of Major Form</b>	Form used by students to declare, change, or update the major(s), minor(s) and certificate(s) on file at UMBC. The declaration of major form is available online through the Registrar's Office at: <a href="http://registrar.umbc.edu/forms/records-updaterequest-forms/">http://registrar.umbc.edu/forms/records-updaterequest-forms/</a>
<b>General Education Requirement</b>	UMBC's <a href="#">general education requirements</a> vary depending upon when students began or resumed higher education as follows: General Distribution Requirements (GDR's): Prior to summer 1989 General Education Requirements (GER's): summer 1989 to spring 1996 General Foundation Requirements (GFR's): summer 1996 to spring 2007

	General Education Program (GEP): summer 2007 or later
<b>Graduation Audit</b>	A comprehensive audit performed by the Registrar's Office to verify that all graduation requirements have been met for the conferral of a baccalaureate degree and/or a certificate.
<b>Individualized Degree Plan</b>	A tailored academic plan developed in consultation with an academic advisor and in accordance with the selected academic pathway that details a course of study to satisfy all degree requirements.
<b>Upper Level Coursework</b>	Upper-level coursework at UMBC is defined as courses numbered 300 or above.

**VII. APPROVAL AND PROCEDURES: Not Applicable**

**VIII. DOCUMENTATION: Not Applicable**

**IX. RESTRICTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS: None**

**X. RELATED ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: None**

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**Administrator Use Only**

**Policy Number: UMBC Policy #III-8.02.01**

**Policy Section: Academic Affairs**

**Responsible Administrator: Vice Provost and Dean, Office of Undergraduate Education**

**Responsible Office: Office of Undergraduate Education**

**Approved by President: April 7, 2016**