

## **FAQ for Accelerated Master's Program (Feb 27, 2019)**

### **Q. Should I apply for the submatriculation or accelerated master's program?**

A: If you entered Penn as an undergraduate student in Fall 2018 or later, you must apply for the new accelerated master's program. Students that entered prior to Fall 2018 apply to the existing submatriculation program.

### **Q. What is the key difference between the old submatriculation and new accelerated master's program?**

A. The main substantive difference is that under the new accelerated master's program, applicants who are single-degree undergraduate students must complete and graduate with the undergraduate degree in their first eight semesters to be eligible for this degree program. Coordinated dual-degree students in M&T and VIPER have to complete and graduate with both undergraduate degrees in their first ten semesters.

### **Q. Do I have to complete my accelerated master's program in the first eight (or ten) semesters?**

A. No. The eight semesters (for single degree) and ten semesters (for coordinated dual degree) requirements apply only to the *undergraduate degree(s)*. The AM itself can be completed beyond the stipulated eight/ten semesters. For example, a single degree undergraduate can take eight semesters to complete the undergraduate degree, and then two more semesters to complete the AM program, for a total of ten semesters. For the vast majority of students, the total time required to complete both the undergraduate and AM degree remains unchanged, except that the courses towards the undergraduate degree will be taken earlier and the master's courses later during their time at Penn.

### **Q. Can I still double count three classes towards both my undergraduate and master's degrees?**

A. Under the AM, Students can still double count up to three courses (four for biotechnology master's) towards their undergraduate and master's degrees. Undergraduates are also allowed take master's level courses.

### **Q. What is the rationale behind the accelerated master's program?**

A. The AM program retains the flexibility in the current submatriculation program while achieving the following educational goals:

- a. Ensures students graduate on time with their undergraduate degree within eight semesters for single degree students, and ten semesters for students who are admitted into a coordinated 5-year dual degree program. We only require that students complete their undergraduate degrees in a timely manner to be eligible for the AM program. The eight semesters (for single degree students) and ten semesters (for dual coordinated students) do not include the additional time required to complete the AM program. If

students are not eligible for the AM, they can still apply for the traditional master's programs offered by our school.

- b. Encourages students to complete their undergraduate degrees first before pursuing a master's degree, while retaining the flexibility of the submatriculation program. Students can still double count up to three courses (or four for biotechnology master's) towards their undergraduate and master's degrees. Undergraduates are also allowed take master's level courses.
- c. Reduces the stress level of students, particularly when the stress is induced by students trying to gain multiple degrees concurrently over a compressed period of time.
- d. Ensures that students go through a thoughtful process of deciding whether to do a master's degree. This process should include a plan to complete one's undergraduate degree on time, and to achieve a clear understanding of how a master's program fits into one's career and professional goals.

**Q: When is the latest that I can apply for the accelerated master's program?**

A: The latest you may apply is by the drop deadline of your seventh semester. This is a **HARD deadline**. If you miss the deadline, you can still apply for a Penn master's program but you will need to go through the regular admissions process as an external applicant following external application rules and requirements. This deadline is enforced for all degree students, whether they are pursuing single, coordinated, or dual degrees.

**Q: When is the earliest that I can apply for the accelerated master's program?**

A: You may apply anytime before the drop deadline of your seventh semester, but only after you have completed at least two semesters of coursework. We prefer that you take the time in your classes at Penn and make a thoughtful decision on your chosen program application after discussing this with your undergraduate advisor(s). Students who are still in Curriculum Deferred (CD) status are not eligible to apply for the accelerated master's program as you must first declare an undergraduate major.

**Q. I came to Penn as an undergraduate in Fall 2018, but I have enough credits to qualify as a sophomore. Should I apply for submatriculation or accelerated master's?**

A: You should still apply for the accelerated master's program.

**Q. I have some questions regarding the new accelerated master's program. Who should I contact?**

A: You should start by contacting your current program's undergraduate curriculum chair, undergraduate advisor, undergraduate coordinator, and/or the master's coordinator for the program in which you are interested in applying to. If your questions cannot be answered, please come to 109 Towne to meet with one of the RAS staff or email us. Details are available here:

<https://ras.seas.upenn.edu/staff-advising-information-hours/> Non-engineering students should consult the advising office in their home school first prior to applying.

**Q. What requirements must I follow to graduate with my undergraduate engineering degree in eight semesters (or ten semesters for coordinated dual degree students) to make sure I am eligible to continue on with the accelerated master's?**

A: Single degree undergraduates must submit an academic plan approved by your undergraduate chair when applying for the accelerated master's. Your transcript will be audited at the advanced registration deadline of your senior year. For coordinated dual degree students (VIPER and M&T), you will likewise need to submit an academic plan approved by the undergraduate chairs in both schools.

**Q. I realize I am unable to finish my undergraduate engineering degree in eight semesters. Am I still allowed to earn a master's degree?**

A: If you are deemed unable to finish your undergraduate degree in eight semesters, you will be withdrawn from the accelerated master's degree. You can still apply to an engineering master's program as an external applicant.

**Q. I am a dual-degree student (coordinated or uncoordinated). Do I need to finish all my undergraduate degrees in eight semesters to be eligible for the accelerated master's?**

A: Coordinated dual degree students in M&T and VIPER, who have ten semesters to complete their undergraduate degrees, must complete their undergraduate degree in their first ten semesters to be eligible for this degree program. While there is no penalty for completing your undergraduate degree sooner, you will not be allowed to overload (7/7.5 CUs) to accomplish this. Uncoordinated dual degree students are not eligible for the accelerated master's degree by default. However, they can submit a petition after their sophomore year, and we will consider the merits of each petition on a case-by-case basis based on the student's academic progress. Uncoordinated dual degree students are welcome to apply to the traditional master's program as an external applicant.

**Q. I am graduating with an undergraduate degree at the eight semester mark, and my accelerated master's after that. Should I apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) using my undergraduate or master's degree?**

A: Please check with ISSS for detailed information.

**Q. Who should I consult regarding financial aid questions?**

A: All financial aid related questions should be referred to SRFS (<http://www.sfs.upenn.edu/>). See <http://www.srfs.upenn.edu/special-policies/policies-eight-semester-undergraduate-aid.htm> for more details on institutional financial aid guidelines.

**Q. I am unable to complete my undergraduate degree in eight semesters, but it is due to extenuating circumstances. What should I do?**

A: Engineering students will need to first file a petition with the RAS Graduate Office and the committees of both undergrad and graduate will review your petition. Non-engineering students should consult the advising office of your home school first obtaining their permission prior to completing an Engineering school petition.

**Q. I am a student currently enrolled in submatriculation (entered as an undergraduate student prior to Fall 2018) on track to finish my undergraduate degree and master's degree in four years. How does the new accelerated master's program impact me?**

A. The old submatriculation policy and new accelerated master's are identical for you.