

## **JOINT A.B./A.M. OR A.B./S.M. PROGRAM FOR ADVANCED STANDING STUDENTS**

The Joint Degree Program at Harvard is in practice a double degree program; it involves earning independent master's and bachelor's degrees at the same time. Joint degree candidates register at the College in the usual way and carry a normal undergraduate bursar's card. Their academic programs are different from those of other fourth-year students in that they are ordinarily focused narrowly on one area of specialization and often involve quite advanced work in that field.

Several Harvard committees and departments accept Advanced Standing students as fourth-year master's degree candidates. Natural Science departments are much more willing to do so than Social Science and Humanities; some departments such as Government, History, and English have a policy against fourth-year A.M.'s.

The procedures for admission to the program and conferral of an A.M. degree by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in conjunction with an A.B. degree from Harvard may seem a bit confusing, for they involve the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, an academic department, and the Office of Undergraduate Education. In an attempt to demystify this program, I outline below the procedures for applying for the master's degree and "bracketing" courses for graduate credit. I refer you to your department for information about academic requirements for the master's degree; each department independently sets its own.

### **Departments Offering the Joint AB/AM or AB/SM to Students with Advanced Standing**

#### **Applied Mathematics, Applied Physics, Computer Science and Engineering Sciences**

Mrs. Sandra Godfrey, Division of Applied Sciences, Academic Office, 5-2833, Pierce Hall 212b, [godfrey@das](mailto:godfrey@das)

#### **Astronomy and Astrophysics**

Professor Dimitav Sasselov, 5-7451, Observatory P-336, [dsasselov@cfa](mailto:dsasselov@cfa)

#### **Biology (Undergraduate Office)**

Mrs. Barbara Cerva, Bio Labs 1087, 16 Divinity Avenue, 5-2319, [barbara@biosun](mailto:barbara@biosun)

#### **Chemistry**

Dr. Gregory Tucci, Science Center 114, 6-5566, [tucci@fas](mailto:tucci@fas)

#### **Comparative Literature**

Professor Jan Ziolkowski, Boylston Hall G-04, 5-2543, [jmziolk@fas](mailto:jmziolk@fas)

#### **Earth and Planetary Sciences**

Professor Richard O'Connell, Hoffman Laboratory 107, 5-2532, [oconnell@geophysics](mailto:oconnell@geophysics), or  
Lorraine Maffeo, Hoffman Laboratory 404, 5-6995, [maffeo@fas](mailto:maffeo@fas)

#### **Germanic Languages and Literature**

Professor Kristin Kopp, HT (German), Barker Center 357, 6-4924, [kkopp@fas](mailto:kkopp@fas)

#### **History of Science**

Professor Stephanie Kenen, Science Center 233, 6-5226, [kenen@fas](mailto:kenen@fas)

#### **Linguistics**

Professor Bert Vaux, 313 Boylston Hall, 6-4516, [vaux@fas](mailto:vaux@fas), or  
Guisat Aygen, 306 Boylston Hall, 5-2549, [aygen@fas](mailto:aygen@fas)

### **Mathematics**

Professor Clifford Taubes, Science Center, 504, Science Center, 5-5579, [chtaubes@math](mailto:chtaubes@math)

### **Physics**

Professor Howard Georgi, 456 Jefferson Hall, 6-8293, [georgi@hphysic](mailto:georgi@hphysic), or  
Dr. David Morin, Lyman, 222, 5-3257, [djmorin@fas](mailto:djmorin@fas)

### **Regional Studies**

Middle East: Laila Parsons, 1430 Massachusetts Ave, 5-7596  
East Asia: Ms. Margaret Lindsey, 9 Kirkland Place., 5-3777

### **Statistics**

Professor David van Dyck, Science Center 712, 495-5617, [vandyk@stat](mailto:vandyk@stat)

Advanced Standing students apply to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences for admission to Harvard's Master's Program. Ordinarily completing a master's degree requires taking eight graduate-level half courses during the fourth year. Those of you considering a joint AB/AM degree should discuss this with the departmental representative listed above early in the fall term.

### **Eligibility and Application for the A.M. or S.M. Degree**

To be eligible for the A.M. or S.M. degree, you must demonstrate that you will be able to complete by the end of your four years at Harvard all A.B. requirements: a minimum of 24 half-course A.B. degree credits, including departmental concentration, Core and language requirements, as well as the eight half-courses that are required for the A.M. degree. It would be prudent to consult with your Senior Tutor and/or the Requirements Office (Office of the Registrar) to be certain that you can meet bachelor's degree requirements before setting out on a master's program. This said, however, joint degree candidates often find that taking a combination of courses for both degrees in the third and fourth years by bracketing some courses toward the A.M. degree in the third as well as the fourth year results in a more manageable work load. This is especially true with A.M. degree programs such as Computer Science, which have intense, time-consuming work loads. The important issue in all cases is sound advising; a student must be certain that he or she can complete all undergraduate and graduate degree requirements by the end of the fourth year.

You must also take the Graduate Record Exam and file an application for admission to Harvard's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS). Applications must be received by:

Natural Sciences (with the exception of Division of Engineering and Applied Sciences):  
December 13

Humanities, Social Sciences and Division of Engineering and Applied Sciences: January 3

Applications are available in the Graduate School Admissions Office, second floor, Byerly Hall. Make clear on your application that you are applying for a joint degree, either A.B./A.M. or A.B./S.M.

### **Bracketing Courses**

Any courses which Advanced Standing students take for graduate credit must be "bracketed," which means they will not count toward the bachelor's degree. Most students earn the majority of their A.M. credits in their fourth year at the College, but students are permitted to

bracket courses earlier in anticipation of the A.M. degree, as long as they have consulted with and received permission from the Head Tutor of their undergraduate concentration as well as the Chairman or designated adviser of the graduate program in which they wish to enroll. Students who bracket courses before they are admitted to a graduate program should understand that they will have to petition the administrative board to “unbracket” these courses if they do not enter an A.M. program.

Students must submit bracketing petitions in each term in which they are taking a bracketed course. Forms are available in the Office for Undergraduate Education, University Hall 1<sup>st</sup> Floor North and on line at: [http://www.fas.harvard.edu/undergraduate\\_education/advanced\\_standing\\_forms.htm](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/undergraduate_education/advanced_standing_forms.htm)). Forms must be returned to the Office of Undergraduate Education by the fifth Monday of the term.

There are three important aspects of bracketing to keep in mind:

1. Bracketing is ordinarily irreversible after the fifth Monday of the term.
2. Under no circumstances may any bracketed course be considered both for undergraduate and graduate credit.
3. Bracketed courses do not affect your undergraduate record. They will not be calculated toward your A.B. degree credit, grade point average or departmental honors.

#### **The Fourth Year**

Even after having been admitted to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, a joint A.B./A.M. student will register as an undergraduate. All courses bracketed for the master's degree will appear on the undergraduate transcript; if you complete and receive the master's degree, the Graduate School will also carry a record of your master's program.

One final procedure in preparing for graduation with the master's degree is submitting a degree application, signed by the Chairman of the Graduate Department, to the Registrar by the beginning of April. Applications are available at the Registrar's Office.

#### **Thoughts on the Joint A.B./A.M.**

There are obvious advantages to pursuing a master's degree as a fourth-year student. You could gain both course and financial credit toward a Ph.D. at Harvard. Other graduate schools may also grant you academic credit for this graduate-level work. Moreover, should you wish to teach at the secondary school level before beginning a Ph.D. program, the master's degree could be useful in obtaining a position.

As a master's degree candidate, however, you will be expected to carry a full load of eight graduate half-courses and meet any of the requirements set by the department for first-year graduate students (e.g., language proficiency). The A.B./A.M. is an ambitious program and the department to which you are applying can only consider the applications of Advanced Standing students who have superior undergraduate records. I encourage you, therefore, to consult with your department before preparing an application for graduate study or making plans to spend your fourth year in the A.B./A.M. program.