COMBINED DOCTORAL DEGREES

1) Combined Degree defined. A combined degree results in the award of one PhD with two departments named. It is not two separate degrees, and the student is not expected to fulfill all the requirements of both departments.

2) Purpose. Combined degrees are intended to provide a sufficiently broad training program for a student wishing to complete an interdisciplinary dissertation.

3) Who designs a combined degree program. Combined degree programs are designed on an ad hoc basis by the student, the DGSs of the two departments, and the appropriate associate deans of the Graduate School.

4) Timing. Most combined degrees are proposed by students during the summer after the first year of study. Students are not given extra time or funding to complete combined degrees. In particular, students must advance to candidacy by the end of their third year of study.

5) Degree of Integration. A combined program should synthesize the knowledge and methods of the two departments into a single study. Ideally the dissertation should be equally strong in both fields. For example, a dissertation with the first half focused on economics and the second half focused on political science would not be acceptable.

6) Administrative requirements. An ad hoc combined degree program is established in the following steps.

   a) A program is initiated by writing of a pre-prospectus by the student. This is a document that describes how and why the two fields are to be integrated.

   b) The student recruits a faculty dissertation advisor from each department and obtains their approval of the pre-prospectus, perhaps modified in response to their advice.

   c) The student recruits two other faculty members to serve on the dissertation committee, one from each department.

   d) The student discusses the requirements for a combined degree with both departmental DGSs.

   e) The student prepares a comprehensive study plan that contains a list of courses and examinations agreed on by both DGSs and approved by both departments. The goals of the course selection are to give some breadth of knowledge of both fields and prepare the student to complete the dissertation. A key to success in combined programs is not to require too many courses and to focus on preparation for dissertation research. Requirements include successful completion of Econ 500a, 510a, 501b, 510b with grades of at least HP- (please see Section 1.2 under Economics Department Requirements for complete requirement description). Normally the two departments administer qualifying examinations. This procedure may require the production of examinations that both departments evaluate.
simultaneously. The plan of study should contain the following: i) A cover sheet for approvals by both dissertation advisors, both DGSs, and by the appropriate associate dean of the Graduate School, ii) an introduction where the student explains the rational for proposing the ad hoc combined degree, and iii) a semester-by-semester time line listing all classes, teaching, and required examinations.

f) Both departments must accept the dissertation prospectus.

g) The plan of study is a contract, and the student must receive written permission in advance from both DGSs and the appropriate associate dean of the Graduate School for any changes to the plan.

h) Once everyone agrees and the plan of study is approved, the combined program is recorded in Banner.

7) Funding and Teaching. The department that first admitted the student is the “primary department.” The student’s funding is from the primary department as is the teaching expectation. Ideally students should obtain teaching experience from both departments.

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