

## University of North Texas Grad Track Pathways – Overview, Protocols, and Process

### Overview

A Grad Track Pathway leads to a graduate degree program that offers early provisional admission to exceptional undergraduate students. The Pathway is designed for these exceptional students to first earn a Bachelor's degree (or minor in extremely specific circumstances) and when all degree requirements are met to then progress on the path towards a Master's degree. In all of these cases, there is a clear and logical relationship between a specific Bachelor's degree (or minor) and a specific Master's degree. A Grad Track Pathway is defined by a set of graduate courses that apply towards the bachelor's degree and then the graduate degree associated with the graduate courses. As of Fall 2021, no more than 6 graduate credits may apply to the undergraduate degree.

Graduate course work taken for undergraduate credit will be considered advance credit, included in the student's undergraduate GPA, and assessed undergraduate tuition rates. Advanced credit includes any 5000 or 6000 level courses approved for use in Grad Track Pathways.

Graduate course work taken for undergraduate credit as part of a Grad Track Pathway applies to the associated graduate degree when the student has completed the bachelor's degree and has been unconditionally admitted to the associated graduate degree program.

### Admissions

1. Faculty developing proposals must show that undergraduates who apply and are admitted to a particular pathway will be academically qualified for classes in the associated graduate degree.
2. Application to the Grad Track Pathway program is through invitation by the department. In order for the student to be invited, they must meet the admissions requirements.
3. The standards for admission must be at least the minimum for admission to the associated graduate degree. Programs may set higher standards for students participating in a pathway.
4. After invitation, students seeking admission to a pathway must apply to the program offering the pathway in their junior year and their application fee will be waived. Students must submit the Toulouse Graduate School's "Conditional Admission and Advisor Course Approval Form" to the graduate coordinator of the Grad Track Pathway. The Pathway may require additional documents such as unofficial copies of transcripts, statements of purpose, letters of recommendation and standardized test scores. The signed "Conditional Admission and Advisor Course Approval Form" ensures the pathway courses will satisfy degree requirements for the students' bachelor's degree programs.
5. An applicant must have successfully completed 75 or more credit hours of a bachelor's degree. Students may not apply to a Grad Track Pathway after they have completed 90 undergraduate hours directly related to their degree.
6. Students admitted to a pathway must complete 90 credit hours before taking the courses in the pathway. Students must maintain a GPA of at least 3.50 until they receive their bachelor's degree. Students must complete the bachelor's degree within one academic year of their first pathway course in order to have the graduate course credits transferred to their graduate plan of study.

7. Students may only receive grades of A and B in the graduate courses they enroll in during their senior year as part of their Grad Track Pathway course sequence.
8. Students actively taking pathway courses must apply formally for admission to the graduate program associated with the pathway. This requires submitting a formal application for admission to the Toulouse Graduate School typically during the fall semester of their senior year.
9. If a student does not satisfy the Grad Track Pathway requirements above, then may still be admitted to the Master's program, but will not be able to transfer courses from the bachelor's towards the Master's studies.

## Responsibilities

The full-time faculty member designated to provide oversight of Grad Track Pathway will:

1. Monitor the academic progress of all students admitted to the pathway.
2. Maintain the appropriate academic integrity and rigor of the graduate courses in the pathway.
3. Provide personal advising and supply written materials to all students in the pathway indicating to the participants that:
  - a. they are undergraduates until they meet all undergraduate degree requirements and their bachelor's degrees are posted to their transcripts.
  - b. they are not eligible for most graduate perquisites, including teaching and research assistantships and related health insurance, financial aid, or graduate award programs until their undergraduate degrees are posted.
  - c. they must make satisfactory academic progress and the exact meaning of satisfactory progress must be clearly delineated for them.
  - d. they cannot use their honors theses for their master's theses if the graduate degree requires one.
4. Periodically review content and rigor of the pathway leading to the associated graduate degree program and adjust the curriculum as warranted (through appropriate curricular bodies) by their reviews (as is consistent with all academic programs). These reviews should be done during the normal Graduate Academic Program Review cycle established by the THECB.
5. Ensure that students will be considered undergraduates until their bachelor's degrees are awarded (for all official university reporting purposes).
6. Ensure that all syllabi for Pathway courses clearly indicate that the expectations for performance are at the graduate level. The following suggested syllabi statement should be utilized in these courses:

### ***Grad Track Pathway***

The UNT Grad Track Pathway (GTP) allows admitted exceptional undergraduate students to enroll in a limited number of approved graduate courses. If you are an undergraduate student who takes this course as part of a GTP, you are reminded that you are expected to perform according to the standards of graduate education at UNT, with the understanding that this is a graduate course.

## Awarding/Transfer of Credit

1. Grades earned in graduate level courses while officially registered as an undergraduate student will count towards the student's cumulative undergraduate GPA.
2. Credits earned in graduate level courses will be posted according to established UNT registrar procedures to the undergraduate transcript.
3. Once a student successfully completes all degree requirements for the bachelor's degree and is fully admitted to the associated graduate program, the credits from the pathway courses will be transferred officially as Pass/Fail credits to the student's graduate transcript.

4. Graduate courses taken as an undergraduate cannot be factored into the cumulative graduate GPA and will only count in the undergraduate GPA calculation.
5. Graduate credit will apply toward the student's undergraduate degree hours as needed to obtain the undergraduate degree and thus ensure all stated degree requirements are met.

## Procedures

1. Faculty members prepare the *Request for Grad Track Pathway* form (UCC-GTP-100) and the *Change in Program/Academic Unit* form (UCC-C-109) when needed. The *Change in Program/Academic Unit* form is only needed when a program-to-program linkage is desired (for example, a pathway from a specific undergraduate program to specific graduate program).
2. The proposals follow standard departmental and college or school approval processes.
3. After approval by the college or school, the form is forwarded to the Graduate Council for review and approval. This review is to ensure appropriate criteria for the associated graduate degree will meet the admission standards. Since pathways do not change the associated graduate degree requirements, the Graduate Council reviews may be expedited reviews / consent calendar issues.
4. After approval by the Graduate Council, the graduate dean forwards the pathway form, and when needed the *Change in Academic Unit* form, to the UUCC. As the proposal involves linkages between specific undergraduate and graduate programs, the UUCC must review and approve the linkage and substitutions.
5. After UUCC approval, normal curricular approval schedules and processes follow.

## Completing the Request for a Grad Track Pathway

The following instructions pertain to the various boxes in the request form. Please pay careful attention to the parameters in each section below.

### 1. Rationale for and a description of the proposed Grad Track Pathway:

Please use this space to help the Graduate Council and the UUCC better understand your proposed Pathway. **Your description should not convey that students earn both degrees simultaneously; instead they should indicate that the student "first earns the Bachelor's degree (or minor) and then the specific graduate degree"**. Please iterate that students will not be fully accepted by the Graduate School until meeting all degree requirements and earning their baccalaureate degree. The rationale also should indicate how the proposed pathway and associated graduate degree program align with student learning outcomes at the lower level to ensure that all degree requirements are being met for the undergraduate degree. The rationale can state that the pathway enables students to move more efficiently through their academic career.

### 2. Administration of the Grad Track Pathway (verify that all appropriate undergraduate learning outcomes are met through the approved courses):

Please use this space to help the Graduate Council and UCC better understand how your department and the Full-time faculty designated to provide oversight will administer the proposed pathway. Proposers should indicate how they intend to monitor the academic progress of all students admitted to a pathway. Please briefly describe specific strategies for ensuring all undergraduate learning outcomes are met. Proposers also should document how adequate advising and faculty oversight of students will be managed. Proposers should describe plans to clearly advertise requirements and expectations for admission.

### **3. Admissions criteria:**

Please use this space to help the Graduate Council and UCC better understand how the department will assess prospective students. Articulate the specific qualities or minimum requirements that describe your definition of an “Exceptional Undergraduate Student” beyond a simple GPA assessment. The criteria should re-certify that the graduate program will follow all admissions processes and procedures set forth by the pathway and the Toulouse Graduate School including the specific requirements on initial credit completion (75 or more in the bachelor’s degree program). Criteria should also re-confirm that the student will not be fully admitted into the Graduate School until he/she earns the baccalaureate degree but will be conditionally admitted to the Grad Track Pathway after successfully completing 75 hours. Finally, Proposers should describe how students will gain approval and from whom to seek admission into a pathway.

### **4. Standards and procedures for monitoring and assessing undergraduate student progress to degree completion:**

Please use this space to help the Graduate Council, UCC, and the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness better understand how you will assess and monitor the effectiveness of student performance in the pathway being proposed. Proposers should articulate the process used to ensure how students work with an appropriate undergraduate advisor to monitor all coursework for the baccalaureate degree and ensure all degree requirements are being met. Proposers should describe the process to be used to periodically assess student progress.

### **5. Graduate courses being placed in the pathway:**

Please use this space to help the Graduate Council and UCC codify the exact graduate level courses that can contribute to the up to 6 hour maximum. Likewise, proposers should indicate the exact undergraduate level courses up to 6 hours that are going to be replaced. Proposers should indicate the graduate courses being recommended for inclusion in the pathway. Any special considerations or notes should be clearly described. If the graduate courses selected for the Grad Track pathway replace a required course in the undergraduate program, then you must demonstrate that the selected graduate course also meets the learning outcomes that were part of the undergraduate required course. If however, electives are selected from an undergraduate degree, there is more flexibility in choosing the graduate courses.

**6. Full-time faculty member designated to provide oversight:**

Please use this space to inform the Graduate Council, UUCC, and the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness the designated full-time faculty member designated to provide oversight and who is responsible for administrative and accreditation questions related to this pathway. If the graduate courses selected for the Grad Track pathway cross a program boundary, you must consult with the partnering program and obtain appropriate signatures signifying the partnership. Departments must notify the Graduate Council, UUCC, and the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness if the full-time faculty member responsibility shifts to a different member of the faculty than originally proposed within 90 days.