



To: Matt Hudelson, Executive Secretary
Beth Doyle, Principal Assistant

From: Tammy Barry, Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Education

Date: September 10, 2026

RE: 4+1 Accelerated Master's and Related Graduate Credit Policies – Proposal to Align Credit Limits at Nine Credits

Summary:

This proposal was brought forward by Professor Rachel Horowitz, Department of Anthropology, and is supported by the Graduate School. The Graduate School requests Faculty Senate approval to streamline and align related graduate-credit limits governing the use of coursework in thesis master's Programs of Study and the number of shared credits between a bachelor's and master's degree in 4+1 Accelerated Master's Programs.

No other substantive changes to course-level requirements, degree requirements, approval processes, or other academic standards are proposed. If approved, these policy changes will take effect in the fall term 2026 so that current students could benefit.

Current Graduate School Policies and Procedures:

The provisions addressed by this proposal contain three related six-credit limits. Based on current policy:

- Eligible WSU seniors may reserve up to six credits for a thesis master's degree, compared with nine credits for non-thesis master's or doctoral study; reserved credits must be in excess of those required for the bachelor's degree and therefore are not shared between degrees.
- A student may have up to six credits of 300- or 400-level undergraduate coursework in a thesis master's Program of Study, compared with nine credits for non-thesis and professional master's degrees.
- Students in approved 4+1 Accelerated Master's Programs may share up to six 400- or 500-level credits between the bachelor's and master's degrees.

Request

The Graduate School proposes aligning these three limits at nine credits. The proposal does not modify the existing course-level requirements, grade requirements, approval processes, timing requirements, degree-credit requirements, or other conditions associated with these policies. Specifically, it is requested to:

1. Align thesis master's credit limits at nine credits by increasing from six to nine both the number of credits an eligible WSU senior may reserve for a thesis master's degree and the amount of 300- or 400-level undergraduate coursework that may be included in a thesis master's Program of Study. These changes align the thesis master's limits with the existing nine-credit allowances for non-thesis master's and, as applicable, professional master's and doctoral study.
2. Increase the maximum number of eligible credits that may be shared through an approved 4+1 Accelerated Master's Program from six to nine credits.
3. Make corresponding six-to-nine conforming changes where these provisions are repeated in the Graduate School Policies and Procedures manual and in the standardized 4+1 policy and MOU materials.

Rationale

The proposed changes would streamline Graduate School policy by aligning related credit limits at nine credits while preserving the academic distinctions among degree types and pathways.

For thesis and non-thesis master's degrees, the Graduate School Policies and Procedures manual maintains distinct graded coursework and research-credit requirements. Both require a minimum of 30 total credits; thesis master's degrees require a minimum of 21 graded credits and 4 credits of 700-level research, whereas non-thesis master's degrees require a minimum of 26 graded credits and 2 credits of 702-level research. Aligning the related six-credit limits at nine credits does not change the 30-credit minimum or the existing graded coursework and research credit requirements.

Modifying the Reservation of Graduate Credit policy from six to nine credits for the thesis master's degree would align it with non-thesis master's or doctoral degrees while preserving the existing requirement that reserved credits be earned in excess of those required for the bachelor's degree.

For 4+1 Accelerated Master's Programs, increasing the shared-credit limit from six to nine credits would allow up to three typical three-credit courses to apply toward both degrees when those courses meet all requirements of the approved pathway. The change would better support the accelerated structure while retaining the existing safeguards governing course level, timing, approved MOUs, and Program of Study documentation as well as program, college, and Graduate School approval.

Taken together, these changes create a more consistent nine-credit framework without reducing the total credits required for a graduate degree or otherwise changing existing academic standards.

APPENDIX A

REDLINE OF PROPOSED CHANGES

1. Chapter 4, Section 4.6.1 — Undergraduate Senior Students

Seniors who have at least a 3.0 grade point average in the last 60 semester hours of graded undergraduate work at WSU may register for up to **9** semester hours toward any graduate degree. These **nine** semester hours may not be simultaneously counted as required credits toward both a baccalaureate degree and an advanced degree.

2. Chapter 4, Section 4.6.2 — 4+1 Accelerated Master's Program

Up to **nine** 400- or 500-level credits may be shared, subject to a Memorandum of Understanding between the Graduate School and the academic program.

3. Chapter 6, Section 6.7.4 — Courses Taken as Excess Undergraduate Credit at WSU

Seniors who have at least a 3.0 grade point average in the last 60 semester hours of graded undergraduate work at WSU may reserve up to **9** semester hours for a graduate degree in excess of that required to complete the bachelor's degree providing the student earned the grade of "B" (3.0) or better in the course(s).

4. Chapter 6, Section 6.7.5 — Students in 4+1 Programs

Students in approved 4+1 Accelerated Master's Programs may apply up to **nine** 400- or 500-level credits taken as undergraduates to their Program of Study.

5. Chapter 7, Section 7.3.1 — Master's Program Requirements

In the **Master's Program Requirements by Degree Type** table, under "Undergraduate Coursework Allowed," the Thesis Master's entry would change to:

Up to **9** credits (300-400 level)

The Non-thesis Master's and Professional Master's entries remain at "Up to 9 credits (300-400 level)."

APPENDIX B

CLEAN PROPOSED POLICY LANGUAGE

1. Chapter 4, Section 4.6.1 — Undergraduate Senior Students

Seniors who have at least a 3.0 grade point average in the last 60 semester hours of graded undergraduate work at WSU may register for up to **9** semester hours toward any graduate degree. These **nine** semester hours may not be simultaneously counted as required credits toward both a baccalaureate degree and an advanced degree.

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