Fast Track Program for Master of Arts (M.A.)
Degree in Economics

The Fast Track program will enable outstanding senior undergraduate business and economics students to satisfy degree requirements leading to a master's degree (M.A.) in economics while completing their undergraduate studies. The Fast Track program applies to all Business undergraduate degrees (BBA, BA-Economics, BS-Economics, BS-Accounting, and BS-Information Systems). The program is designed to encourage our most gifted students to complete a master's degree at UTA and is intended to offer these gifted students, who are highly sought after by other institutions, incentives in money and time saved to remain and complete an advanced degree at UTA. We also hope that this program will help build a relationship with these students that will increase the likelihood that they will remain and pursue doctoral degrees.

Overview of the Fast Track Program

The Fast Track program is designed to ensure that gifted students will complete and receive their bachelor's degrees on time while simultaneously making substantial progress in master's level studies. The guidelines presented below will be used to develop applicant screening practices and degree requirements that will ensure student success and preserve the educational quality of their undergraduate and graduate degrees. Once applicants have been screened and selected to participate in this program, they will complete a rigorous and carefully selected set of organized advanced undergraduate and graduate courses. These courses may be used to satisfy both undergraduate and graduate degree requirements. The guidelines contained in this document set an upper limit on the number of hours that a student might count toward both the bachelor's and the master's degree. In no case may the jointly counted credit hours exceed the maximum specified below. The College of Business will ensure that only outstanding and academically capable students will be allowed to pursue the Fast Track program.

Undergraduate Business students will apply when they are within 30 hours of completing their bachelor's degrees. They must have completed at least 30 hours at UTA, achieving a GPA of at least 3.2 in those courses, have an overall GPA of 3.2 or better in all college courses (at all schools), and have a GPA of at least 3.3 in all business courses taken at UTA. Additionally, they must have completed twelve hours of specified undergraduate Fast Track foundation courses at UTA that are listed below with a minimum GPA of 3.5 in these courses. If one of these courses is transferred from another school it will not be included, and another 3000-level course determined by the undergraduate advisor will be used as a Fast Track foundation course.

Foundation Courses Required for Admission into the Fast Track Program in Economics:

1. ECON 3310 MICROECONOMICS (3-0)
2. ECON 3312 MACROECONOMICS (3-0)
3. FINA 3313 BUSINESS FINANCE (3-0)
4. BSTAT 3321 BUSINESS STATISTICS I (3-0) or
   BSTAT 3322 BUSINESS STATISTICS II (3-0) (whichever is taken first at UTA)

These Fast Track foundation courses are those that the business faculty believes are necessary and have predictive value regarding success in advanced coursework prior to making application. Once admitted, students will be allowed to take select graduate courses that may be used to satisfy both bachelor's and master's degree requirements.
Students need not complete the program to receive their bachelor’s degrees and may elect to end participation at any time. Graduate and undergraduate courses completed while participating in the Fast Track program will be selected so that they may be applied to the bachelor’s degree even if the student exits the program before completing all available courses. Those who successfully complete the program will be automatically admitted to the Graduate School prior to completing remaining requirements for the M.A. degree in economics. They will not be required to take the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) or the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), complete an application for admission to the Graduate School, or pay an application fee for admission.

The Fast Track program differs in two important ways from five-year “stacked” programs currently offered at UTA. It allows students who do not complete the program to use any of the specified graduate course credit in their undergraduate degree plan. This will ensure their graduation will not be delayed by taking graduate courses. Thus, the Fast Track program avoids a problem with timely undergraduate degree completion that can arise in many five-year programs. Additionally, unlike five-year programs, the Fast Track program will enable students to receive their bachelor’s degrees prior to receiving their master’s degree and being admitted into a graduate program.

**Key Elements of the Fast Track Program for the MA in Economics**

Participating students will be permitted to use graduate course work to satisfy both undergraduate and graduate degree requirements. When senior-level students are within fifteen hours of completing their undergraduate degree requirements, they may take up to nine hours of graduate level coursework designated by the College of Business to satisfy both undergraduate and graduate degree requirements. This will be the maximum amount of credit that can be used as joint credit. A student who takes nine graduate hours during their undergraduate program may only need 27 additional graduate hours to meet minimum requirements for graduation in the M.A. program.

Students pursuing the Fast Track MA in economics degree will be allowed to take up to three 5000-level ECON classes to replace as many as three advanced undergraduate elective courses. If a student enrolls in the Fast Track program for a term in which ECON 5301 is offered, and the student has not previously taken ECON 4323, then ECON 5301 will be a required course and will serve as a substitute for ECON 4323 toward the undergraduate degree. If an approved graduate course, such as ECON 5301, is offered only once a year, students meeting all requirements except the “within fifteen hours of completion of bachelor's” requirement will be allowed to enroll in that course as a part of the Fast Track program. Alternatively, if a student enrolls in the Fast Track program in a term in which ECON 5301 is not offered, then the course may be postponed until the next term in which it is offered and the student may take any 5000-level ECON course for which prerequisites have been met and which count toward the MA in economics.

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1 At present, credits cannot be applied to more than one degree’s requirements. This will change under the current program and specified credits will be counted in both the bachelor’s and master’s degree plans.

2 Current rules allow undergraduate students with a GPA of at least 3.0 who are in their final semester of study and who are within twelve hours of completing their degrees (six hours in one summer session) to take up to twelve hours graduate level coursework and apply these credits toward their master’s degrees. Total registration may not exceed fifteen semester hours in a semester (or twelve hours in the summer sessions). The current program will relax this rule for Fast Track participants, allowing them to take graduate level courses when they are within fifteen hours of completing their undergraduate degrees. The current limit on the number of graduate credit hours (twelve-hours) taken as an undergraduate that can be counted toward the master’s degree will not be altered under this program. Similarly, the current maximum number of credit hours that can be taken in a long (fifteen-hours) or summer session (twelve-hours) will remain in effect. However, undergraduates will not be allowed to enroll in more than nine graduate credit hours per long semester or six graduate credit hours per summer session.
No other courses may be substituted for those selected for screening applicants or for joint credit toward both degrees unless approved by the MA ECON Graduate Advisor, the College Graduate Studies Committee and the Dean of Graduate Studies once a degree program has designated these courses. Changes in the courses used to select students or to satisfy degree requirements will take effect in the semester following final approval by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

**General Rules of Fast Track Program**

1. All applicants must complete twelve hours of specific prerequisite Fast Track foundation coursework at UTA and earn a minimum GPA of 3.50 in these courses.

2. Unconditional admission requirements:
   (a) must be within 30 hours of graduation with a bachelor's degree from UTA
   (b) must have completed at least 30 hours at UTA with a minimum GPA of 3.2
   (c) must have an overall GPA of at least 3.2 for all college courses (all schools)
   (d) must have a GPA of at least 3.3 for all business college courses taken at UTA

3. Accepted Fast Track students will take a selected set of graduate courses that will meet the educational requirements of both graduate and undergraduate degrees. A total of up to nine hours of graduate coursework will be allowed for both degrees.

4. Fast Track students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 for all graduate classes to remain in and graduate from the master's program. They must earn grades of B or better in all Fast Track-approved graduate courses that will be used to satisfy undergraduate and graduate degree requirements.

5. A student must take at least two graduate courses and earn grades of B or better in all graduate courses before the student graduates with the bachelor's degree to be eligible to remain in the Fast Track program.

6. If, at any time, a student fails to satisfy these requirements, the student will be removed from the Fast Track program. Any graduate credits earned will be applied only to the undergraduate degree, and none of the other benefits of membership in the Fast Track program will apply.

7. An undergraduate student who successfully completes their Fast Track graduate coursework with grades of B or better to graduate with their undergraduate degree will be automatically admitted to the Graduate School at that time. They will not be required to take the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) or the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), will not have to complete the normal Graduate School application for admission, and will not have to pay the related application fee.

**Student Qualifications and Admission Procedures**

**Qualifications:** All applicants must complete twelve hours of prerequisite foundation coursework at UTA as specified by the College of Business and earn a minimum GPA of 3.5 in these courses.

**Unconditional Admission:** Additional minimum qualifications are specified below.

1. Must be within 30 hours of graduation with an undergraduate business degree from UTA.

2. Must have completed at least 30 hours of study at UTA with a 3.2 GPA or better.
3. Must have an overall GPA of at least 3.2 for all college courses (at all schools).

4. Must have a GPA of at least 3.3 for all business courses taken at UTA.

**Provisional Admission:** A student may gain provisional admission if, during the semester in which application is made, he or she will complete any remaining courses needed to satisfy prerequisite requirements. Provisional admission will be changed to unconditional admission upon satisfactory completion of remaining requirements. Students failing to meet all requirements at the end of their semester of application will be removed from the Fast Track program. Any credits earned prior to removal from the program will be applied to the undergraduate degree only. None of the other benefits of the Fast Track program will apply. Provisionally admitted students who have been removed from the program may subsequently apply to graduate programs via the normal application process, paying all fees and meeting all relevant admission criteria. Admission will not be automatic as it will be subject to the normal admission practices of the program to which application is made and the Graduate School.

**Denial:** Students who are not admissible under the conditions specified above shall be denied admission to the Fast Track program. They may apply to graduate programs via the regular application process, paying all required fees and meeting all relevant admission criteria. Admission will not be automatic as it will be subject to the normal admission practices of the program to which application is made and the Graduate School.

**Application Procedures**

**Application to the Fast Track Program:** Undergraduate students apply to their academic program by completing a Fast Track application form available from their academic advisor. The student will be notified by the academic program of their acceptance into the Fast Track program.

**Admission to the Graduate School:** Students who are completing their undergraduate degree requirements may request to continue their studies toward their master’s degrees if they are in good standing in the Fast Track program. After census date of the student’s final undergraduate semester, the academic program forwards the Fast Track application form to the Graduate School which uses the form as an application into graduate school. No fees, transcripts, or test scores will be required and, with the consent of the program’s graduate advisor, admission will be automatic. The starting semester typically will be the long semester immediately following the graduation semester. However, students may delay their starting date as specified below.

Students planning to pursue a master’s degree in a program other than the one in which they participated as Fast Track students must apply as a regular student, completing a full application, paying all fees and meeting all admission requirements. In such cases, admission will not be automatic and will be subject to the normal admission practices of the program and Graduate School.

**Good Standing and Course Enrollment Clearance**

**Good Standing:** Students must maintain an overall GPA of at least 3.00 and must earn grades of B or better in all Fast Track-approved courses that will be used to satisfy undergraduate and graduate degree requirements. Students must enroll in at least two graduate courses and earn a B or better in all graduate courses taken prior to receiving their bachelor’s degree. If a student does not complete the two required graduate courses or fails to make adequate grades, he or she will be obliged to leave the program and apply as a regular graduate student after receiving the bachelor’s degree.
Course Enrollment Clearance: Students must obtain clearance each semester from the graduate advisor to take graduate courses that will be used to satisfy degree requirements. The advisor will monitor student progress carefully and advise accordingly.

Transition to the Master’s Degree

Assuming that a student completes the undergraduate degree in good standing as a Fast-Track student, a graduate matriculation will have already been created for them. A student is not required to apply for admission to graduate school, pay an application fee, provide letters of reference, or take the GMAT or GRE exam. The hours required for them to complete their master’s degree will be adjusted according to the number of Fast Track graduate hours they have completed with grades of B or better. Graduating Fast Track students should see the MA Advisor to ensure a smooth transition.

Time Limit to Begin Graduate Studies

A student may take off one long semester plus a summer after receiving the undergraduate degree before starting as a graduate student. An application for graduate admission must be completed and approved before post-baccalaureate studies can begin. Students returning after longer delays will have to apply as a regular student, completing a full application, paying all fees and meeting all admission requirements.

Taking Breaks during Graduate Studies; Minimum Course Load

Once a student is a graduate student, they are governed by the rules for all graduate students. There is no minimum course load, and they can take breaks, as outlined in the graduate catalog, but they must complete their master's degree within six years. Consult the graduate advisor for more details.

Limits on the Number of Graduate Courses

Before graduating with the bachelor's degree, Fast Track students must complete at least two and at most three Fast Track graduate courses with grades of B or better. The number of hours required to complete the master's degree will be reduced by the number of hours of Fast Track graduate courses taken during the bachelor's degree.

Applying to Take Graduate Courses

To register for graduate courses, students must obtain the signature of the graduate advisor on a special course registration form. The graduate advisor and Business Undergraduate Advisor will check that the student is eligible for the classes that are on the list, and that these courses fit into their undergraduate and graduate degree plans.

Requirements for Staying in the Program

1. A student must maintain an overall GPA (graduate and undergraduate) of at least 3.0.
2. A student is expected to get grades of B or better in graduate courses. If the student earns a grade less than B in a graduate course before earning the undergraduate degree, the student will lose eligibility to remain in the Fast Track program.

3. A student must pass at least two graduate courses with grades of B or better before the student graduates with the bachelor's degree to be eligible to remain in the Fast Track program.

4. During the entire undergraduate experience at UTA, including the period of membership in the Fast Track program, a student cannot repeat more than three courses, and cannot repeat any course more than once. This requirement applies only to undergraduate courses; graduate courses cannot be repeated.

If, at any time, a student fails to satisfy these requirements, the student will be removed from the Fast Track program. Any graduate credits earned will be applied only to the undergraduate degree, and none of the other benefits of membership in the Fast Track program will apply. Students dismissed from the Fast Track program will be eligible to apply to Masters programs as a regular applicant. However, graduate courses taken for credit in the undergraduate program cannot be applied towards a graduate degree. Students will have to pay the required fee for the application, as well as meet all the requirements of admission to graduate school as outlined in the Graduate Catalog.