What Are Dual Master's Degree Programs?

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A Master of Business Administration (MBA) remains one of the most sought-after degrees for aspiring business leaders and professionals seeking to bolster their credentials. More than 120,000 students were enrolled in MBA programs in 2023-24, according to the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). The Graduate Management Admission Council reports that applications to MBA programs

rose by 12 percent during the same period.

In a competitive job market, business students look for any opportunity to gain an edge. One way to do this is by earning dual degrees. Dual degree program, also referred to as joint programs, enable students to pursue two distinct degrees at the same time, often in different areas of study. One common example is pairing an MBA and a Juris Doctor (JD), which prepares students to practice law. By enrolling in such a program, students can develop a varied skill set and gain unique expertise in different fields, boosting their career prospects.

Earning dual master's degrees can be particularly beneficial for ambitious professionals, because it opens doors to new opportunities and prepares them to tackle complex challenges in business and beyond.

What Does a Dual Degree Program Entail?

A dual degree program merges diverse yet often complementary fields of study into a single academic program, allowing students to pursue two separate degrees simultaneously.

Dual degree programs may confer different degree levels, such as a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN), or degrees from distinct disciplines, potentially from different departments or schools within the same institution.

Because it combines two different fields, the curriculum of a dual degree program is typically quite comprehensive, providing in-depth, specialized knowledge of each area. Coursework is generally balanced, covering each area of study in equal measure to shape students into well-rounded professionals.

Dual Degrees vs. Double Majors

Although they bear some surface similarities, a dual degree is different from a double major. Students who are double majoring earn a single degree in two major areas of study — biology and chemistry or business and engineering, for example. Graduates of a dual degree program earn two separate degrees.

Additionally, students typically have the flexibility to double major in whichever subjects they choose, whereas dual degree programs are generally predefined.

Either educational path can be worthwhile, depending on a student's interests and goals. Understanding what's involved in each will help students decide which path is the right fit, as there are key differences in terms of the breadth of the curriculum, the depth of knowledge students gain, and the time commitment involved.

Benefits of a Dual Master's Program

Enrolling in a dual master's program can have several potential benefits for students, including the opportunity to pursue multiple passions and develop a specialized skill set that stands out in the job market.

Pursue Multiple Interests

A dual master's program may be an appealing option for students with diverse interests who can't decide what graduate degree they should get. For example, someone who works on the clinical side of health care but also wants to learn about the business of health care can pursue an MBA/MD dual degree, for instance. By undertaking a dual degree, students can merge their various passions and develop a niche skill set that sets them apart from other professionals.

Gain a Diverse, Unique Skill Set

The curriculum of a dual degree program balances distinct areas of study, comprehensively covering each subject to help students develop skills that straddle multiple disciplines. By gaining expertise in two different fields, graduates can boost their employability, particularly for specialized roles. Health care employers may view individuals with MBA/MHA dual degrees, for example, as more qualified for executive or administrative positions than graduates who only have one of those.

Enhance Career Prospects

Graduate-level business programs, such as MBAs, already have a reputation for boosting students' professional prospects. In a survey of alumni of graduate business programs, the Graduate Management Admission Council found that 70 percent of alumni rated the value of their education as "excellent" or "outstanding." Respondents cited various reasons for this, with many saying it improved their employability, prepared them for leadership positions, and increased their earning

potential.

Earning dual master’s degrees can elevate their professional potential even further, qualifying them for numerous roles in growing industries.

Develop a Broad Professional Network

One of the other advantages of enrolling in a dual master’s program is the ability to connect and forge relationships with students, alumni, faculty, and professionals from a wide range of disciplines. This allows students to develop an extensive professional network, giving them access to more resources and support and potentially aiding in their job search and career advancement.

How Do the Dual MBA Programs at Tulane Work?

Tulane University’s Freeman School of Business offers several dual master’s programs, pairing its full-time MBA with other specialized programs covering a wide spectrum of subjects. These programs are designed to equip students with the expertise and skills to succeed in various arenas.

To apply to the dual MBA programs at Tulane, prospective students must apply to both schools offering the degree and need to submit the following items:

- Official transcripts, reflecting conferral of an undergraduate degree
- Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) or GRE scores
- Letter of recommendation
- Personal essay

Students may also need to submit a resume and participate in an in-person or phone interview with admissions staff as part of the application process.

While traditional dual degree programs often take upwards of four years to complete, students can graduate from most of the dual MBA programs at Tulane in less time, including some that take two years or less.

MBA/Juris Doctor

The four-year MBA/JD program enables students to earn a JD from Tulane Law School and an MBA from the Freeman School. Students spend the first two years of the

program in law school, year three is dedicated to MBA coursework, and the final year covers courses for both degrees concurrently.

The MBA/JD program is designed to help students hone their business acumen as well as legal and ethical expertise. This program prepares them for roles that intersect with both disciplines, whether that’s providing legal counsel for a large organization or running a law firm.

MBA/Master of Health Administration

The MBA/MHA program blends finance and management training, with a focus on health care analytics and economics. This dual master’s program prepares students to lead the business side of health care organizations. As health care becomes increasingly complex, it’s crucial to equip students with the technical expertise, leadership skills, and business savvy to address the industry’s challenges. Students can complete the program in approximately three years.

MBA/Master of Management in Energy

The MBA/Master of Management in Energy (MME) dual degree program is strategically designed around the energy industry, with coursework that explores finance, trading, analytics, and risk management. Elements of the program focus on sustainability and renewables, which prepares students to pursue roles across various sectors of the energy industry.

MBA/Doctor of Medicine

The MBA/MD dual degree program is designed to help students develop the specialized skills to excel in roles where business and health care intersect. Students in the program work with professional-level equipment in laboratory environments and class sizes are kept small to give students more one-on-one time with highly experienced faculty. The program takes five years to complete.

Advance Your Professional Potential With a Dual MBA Degree

In today’s dynamic and complex business landscape, there’s great demand for versatile leaders who can think strategically and adapt to evolving challenges. Pursuing dual master’s degrees enables students to develop advanced expertise in distinct yet complementary fields, enhancing their employment opportunities and positioning them as well-rounded thought leaders who can make a meaningful impact.

At Tulane’s Freeman School of Business, the dual MBA programs pair our renowned business education with another specialized program, which will help you hone a diverse skill set that can serve you as a leader in health care, energy, law, and more.

Discover how Tulane can prepare you for business success.

Sources:

- ACT, Dual Degrees vs. Double Majors
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- Graduate Management Admission Council, Application Trends Survey 2024
- Indeed, “Dual Degree vs. Double Major: What Are the Differences?”
- Investopedia, “3 MBA Double Majors That Boost Your Value”