

## **OSFA Forms: Advisor FAQ**

### **Fall 2019**

#### **Double Dawgs/Graduate Coursework Form Questions**

1. How does OSFA define “satisfying an undergraduate degree requirement”? For example, would an advisor check Yes or No for:
  - a. A DoubleDawgs class, if the student has already satisfied all general electives and the 39-hour rule, and the pathway class doesn’t fulfill any major requirements
  - b. A class taken for a certificate or minor that goes beyond the 120 hours needed for the degree?
  - c. An undergraduate class that doesn’t fulfill any degree requirements but is needed as a prerequisite for graduate or professional school admission?

OSFA follows the university’s definition of satisfying an undergraduate degree requirement (i.e., will fulfill a course requirement and count toward the total hours needed to graduate with the degree, based on the credit hour and curricular requirements of the major/program). Based on our understanding, we do not believe any of the three scenarios presented above would qualify as satisfying a degree requirement.

2. Should this form be completed by the Undergraduate Advising Contact listed on the DD website, or by the student’s academic advisor?
  - a. If the advisor is expected to complete the form, how will they know if a student is accepted into a Double Dawgs pathway? This information is not currently available to advisors.

Whoever is the most appropriate authority to determine. OSFA will accept the form from either.

3. How will advisors know if a class satisfies a certificate requirement, as there is no record of these requirements (or of the student’s enrollment in a certificate program) in DegreeWorks?

This form will not ask about certificate courses/requirements unless the course is also fulfilling a requirement for the student’s bachelor’s degree (i.e., it overlaps with a requirement such as a general elective, etc.). Federal financial aid cannot be used to pay for courses that solely satisfy certificate requirements. If the course is not satisfying an undergraduate degree requirement, then it should not be classified as satisfying a student’s undergraduate degree requirement.

4. For students with two majors, are both advisors required to sign the form? An advisor in one program can’t necessarily confirm whether a class satisfies a degree requirement for another program.

If one advisor cannot answer for both programs then yes, we would need a form from each advisor.

5. Is this form required only for students admitted to a DD pathway? Or will it also be sent to students taking graduate classes who are not in a DD pathway?

It will be required of all undergraduate federal financial aid recipients taking graduate-level courses, but the majority of them will be DD based on what OSFA has seen so far.

6. How does OSFA know if a student is admitted to a DD pathway?

We don't, which is part of the issue.

7. If a class is an elective, how can an advisor verify whether it satisfies a degree requirement, especially in the student's sophomore or junior year? At that point a student may not have completed all general electives or 39 upper-division hours, and the class will count toward the degree. However, subsequent curricular choices (within the major, minor, certificate, or DD pathway itself) may satisfy all remaining electives/upper-division hours, rendering the class unnecessary, which the advisor can't foresee.

OSFA only asks advisors to make this determination based on the student's current earned and enrolled courses; i.e., OSFA knows advisors cannot predict the future. ☺ If the course is currently eligible to fulfill needed general elective/upper-division hours/etc., it should be marked as satisfying a degree requirement.

8. When will students receive this form, and what is the deadline for them to submit it?  
Will advisors fill it out after drop/add? At the end of the semester?

Students get a requirement for this form in Athena once: 1. they apply for federal aid, and 2. OSFA determines there may be an issue with their hours of registration. (For example, an undergraduate student receiving a Pell Grant who enrolls in 12 hours of undergraduate coursework and 3 hours of graduate coursework is already full-time without the graduate-level hours, so they will not get a requirement in Athena and will not need the form.) There is not a deadline per se, but we cannot disburse their federal financial aid until the form is received and processed. Advisors can fill it out as soon as they receive it. OSFA will be monitoring whether the student adjusts their schedule from the approved hours. This semester the forms were distributed later than typically they will be in future semesters. Regardless of the timing, the advisor should not worry about rushing to complete the form if they need more information—taking time to ask questions in order to complete the form accurately will not penalize the student.

9. Will advisors write down the courses they advise the student to take or the courses the student has actually registered for? What if the student subsequently drops/adds, late adds, or withdraws from a course?

Student's actual registration is monitored. OSFA will monitor their schedules through drop/add and if they adjust their schedule to include a non-approved graduate-level course, they would have to have the advisor again confirm it will satisfy an undergraduate degree requirement. However, if the student has multiple options to complete a requirement and the advisor thinks the student may switch, they are welcome to include all approved options on the original form; this would not necessitate another form if the student decided to change to another approved option.

If an advisor receives this form from a student and doesn't believe the student fits into either of these categories (registered for a graduate-level course or pursuing a second degree), OSFA encourages the advisor to reach out directly to Nancy Ferguson in OSFA ([nferg@uga.edu](mailto:nferg@uga.edu)) to confirm whether the form is actually needed for this particular student. It could be that the student has changed their registration since the form was issued, or the student was mistaken about the need for the form, etc.

10. Having students contact their advisor to complete an OSFA form will prompt students to ask advisors financial aid-related questions. Students (and advisors) remain VERY confused about where HOPE, Zell, etc. does and does not apply in relation to DD. Can OSFA prepare a facts sheet related to financial aid and DD for advisors to share with students? Specifically, can the sheet explain what financial aid does and (especially) does NOT cover in relation to DD, and suggest how students can research funding options for the graduate portion of DD?

As always, refer financial aid questions to OSFA. A Tip Sheet is being drafted collaboratively. OSFA will also add language to the form instructing students that advisors can only confirm which courses count toward their degree; any financial aid questions that arise from completing this form should be directed back to OSFA.

11. The boxes on the form respond to the question “Required for Undergraduate Degree Program?” A better phrasing would be, “Will this course count toward the student’s undergraduate degree?” Specific classes chosen to satisfy core requirements, college requirements, major electives, general electives, and the 39-hour rule are not “required for the degree program.”

OSFA will adjust the language to make it clear that any course fulfilling a requirement for the student’s undergraduate degree at the time the form is completed is eligible, including all of the above depending on each major’s degree requirements. The new language will be, “Does the course fulfill an undergraduate degree requirement?”

12. What will be the advisor’s liability if they make a mistake on this form, given that it influences the disbursement of federal financial aid?

Compliance with federal and state regulations is an institutional responsibility, not solely one office’s responsibility. OSFA determines financial aid eligibility in accordance with guidance and expertise from relevant offices.

13. Will faculty advisors be expected to complete this form?

Yes, if the faculty advisor is the student’s primary advisor and/or DD advisor (whoever is deemed to be most appropriate by the department).

14. Were any advisors consulted in the creation of these new practices or forms?

Yes, this topic was discussed at an advisors’ meeting during Spring 2019 and with academic advising staff in other colleges that requested meetings with OSFA on this issue.

## Second Degree Form Questions

1. What is meant by “a second or subsequent bachelor's degree program”?
  - a. Does this include students pursuing two or more majors or degrees at the same time? If so, which major or degree is considered primary? (If these students are included, we have many other questions.)

No. It is a student who has completed one bachelor's degree completely, and is now enrolled in a second or subsequent bachelor's degree.

- b. Does it include students who have satisfied all requirement for one major and then add a second major/degree, without having graduated with the first? (Again, this would raise a number of additional questions.)

Although it currently includes only students who have graduated with a baccalaureate degree, please note that students who have completed all degree requirements (for their first baccalaureate) without graduating may be subject to Satisfactory Academic Progress. If it appears that a student has completed all degree requirements, the student's advisor may be asked to confirm which courses are still needed for the student to complete their current (first) degree program.

- c. Or does it include only students who pursue another degree *after* graduating with the first?

Yes, that is correct, but note the exception above in *b*.

2. What qualifies as “accepted” credit that must be included on the form? Does this include general electives?

As long as it is satisfying a degree requirement for the second degree. Here is the example I recently provided: “We have a student who earned a BSFCS degree at UGA, and is now in a BBA program. In Banner, the student is showing 121 earned hours, because that is how many total hours the student earned for the BSFCS degree. The BBA has used 66 of those 121 credit hours earned prior to the BBA program to satisfy the BBA degree requirements (Core, electives, etc.), so the advisor would write 66 hours on the form. The hours listed would include all hours earned through Summer 2019 that are counting toward the second degree, but would not count hours registered for Fall since they are not yet earned.”

3. From what source will advisors identify the total credit hours accepted? Should they use the “Credits Earned Toward Graduation” information on DegreeWorks?

Please see steps below for calculating:

1. View the student's DegreeWorks audit for the degree they are currently pursuing. Note the total hours required for this degree (usually 120, but may be higher depending on the degree).
2. Total the number of credit hours remaining for the student to complete the requirements for this current degree, including in progress courses.
3. Subtract this number from the total credit hours required for the current degree (usually 120, but may be more for some bachelor's degrees like ENGR, etc.). This is the number OSFA needs.

4. Check for two situations:
  - a. Make sure you are only counting all in-progress/registered courses if all courses are fulfilling a degree requirement, including needed general electives and courses needed to fulfill the 39-hour rule for upper-division credit hours. (Although it is unlikely a second degree student would be lacking either of these things, it is possible!)
  - b. Note the distinction between meeting graduation requirements and fulfilling degree requirements. Classes that don't count toward degree requirements but are necessary to raise a student's cumulative GPA to the required 2.0 should not be counted as fulfilling degree requirements.
4. At what point in time will advisors complete this form? Will it always be before the student has enrolled in any classes for the second degree? What if a second-degree student doesn't seek financial aid upon enrollment, but applies for aid a semester or two later? DegreeWorks will no longer provide an accurate count of credits accepted from the first degree.

Advisors would need to complete this form once and at whatever point the student applies for federal aid, which may or may not be at the beginning of their second degree. Regardless of whether it's the student's first semester pursuing the second degree or a subsequent semester, the advisor should always calculate the number of remaining (IP and unsatisfied) credits at the present time and subtract that from the total hours required for the new degree, following the steps above. This gives OSFA a base on which to determine their initial loan level.

5. The question on this form doesn't seem to provide useful information. For example:
  - a. The total credit hours accepted won't indicate whether the credit is from UGA or another institution, and therefore doesn't capture implications for the residency requirement.
    - i. A student with 80 UGA hours accepted into the addition program presumably needs 40 more hours (but see 5b).
    - ii. A student with 80 *transfer* hours accepted will need 45 additional hours to satisfy the residency requirement, even if only 40 are needed to satisfy all other requirements.
    - iii. A student with 80 hours of combined UGA and transfer credit may need between 40 and 45 additional hours, depending on the timing of the non-credit coursework.
  - b. However, the number of hours accepted doesn't account for college and university requirements that don't have credit hours associated with them (for example, the Franklin College requirements, the Experiential Learning requirement, Cultural Diversity, etc.). So one student with 80 hours accepted may have only major-related courses to complete, while another student with 80 hours accepted may have the same major-related courses plus a significant number of additional hours needed to satisfy college or university requirements.
  - c. Given these variables, total credit hours accepted will not indicate the number of credit hours remaining for degree completion.

We only need the initial base by which to start their loan level calculations; when and where the credits were earned don't matter for OSFA purposes, only the number of credits they have applied toward their current degree regardless of when/where they were earned.