



Planning
Accreditation
Board

Reviewing an Accredited Program with a Fast-track Option

All programs applying for accreditation review must meet five preconditions to accreditation. One of the preconditions is Length of Program which states that an undergraduate degree program must be a minimum of four academic years of full-time study or equivalent, and a graduate degree program must be a minimum of two academic years of full-time study or the equivalent. This precondition includes a **fast-track guideline**, which states, “Programs that combine undergraduate education with a graduate degree in planning in a total of less than six academic years or the equivalent shall meet the criteria of an accredited graduate degree.”

Programs with a fast-track option must demonstrate that students enrolled in this accelerated program are exposed to and meet the PAB accreditation standards for the accredited master’s degree. The Program shall have policies and procedures for the fast-track option that, at least, seek to ensure that fast-track students meet the curricular requirements necessary for master’s degree accreditation.

The curriculum offered as part of the accelerated program should meet the PAB curriculum standards and should be appropriate for an accredited master’s degrees. While it is not necessary that students enrolled in the fast-track option take all of the same courses as the regular master’s students, it is expected that the fast-track students will take all of the core courses and will be exposed to all of the PAB curriculum components.

If the Program’s Self-Study Report does not contain detailed information on its fast-track option, the Site Visit Team should request additional information to ensure that the accelerated program meets the PAB standards. Materials that may help in the team’s assessment include a curriculum map of the fast-track courses, any policies and procedures related to the fast-track program, and student work. Comparing fast-track student work with that of the 2-year masters students would help to determine the level of preparedness of these students and the consistency of education delivered.