

FAQ: GGS BAM programs

From <https://science.gmu.edu/academics/departments-units/geography-geoinformation-science/advising>

BAM - General

What does BAM stand for and what is it in a nutshell?

- A BAM program is a Bachelor's-to-Accelerated Master's. It's a hybrid undergraduate-graduate program in which you concurrently take undergraduate and graduate coursework and are able to complete a master's degree in a shorter amount of time than you could if you waited to complete your undergraduate degree before beginning your master's degree.

What different BAM programs does GGS offer?

- We offer pathways to our MS in Geographic and Cartographic Sciences (GECA) and MS in Geoinformatics and Geospatial Intelligence (GEOI). If you are pursuing a BS in Geography you are eligible to apply for either of the master's programs. If you are pursuing a BA in Geography, you are eligible to apply for the MS in GECA only.

Who is eligible to enroll in a GGS BAM program?

- GGS majors (BS or BA) who have completed at least 90 undergraduate credits towards their undergraduate degree are eligible. At least 24 of those credits must have been completed at GMU. You must have open degree requirements, meaning requirements within your GGS major that are not yet completed, which graduate level courses can fulfill.

Can I enroll in the BAM if I am not a GGS major?

- Not at this time. Our BAM programs are designed as pathway programs for students obtaining a GGS undergraduate degree. This restriction may be lifted in the future. Check with the BAM advisor to learn more.

What are the benefits of enrolling in a BAM program instead of a stand-alone master's program?

- The graduate application fee is waived.
- No GRE scores are required.
- You can double count up to 6 credits of coursework taken at the graduate level while completing your undergraduate degree to both your undergraduate degree AND your master's degree requirements.
- You have the option of reserving an additional 6 credits of coursework taken at the graduate level while completing your undergraduate degree to count exclusively towards your master's degree, called "reserve graduate credit".

- It is possible to complete a bachelor's and a master's degree within 5 years.

Can I break between my undergraduate degree and master's if I am enrolled in a BAM program?

- No, as a BAM student, you must continue taking graduate level courses the semester directly following the completion of your undergraduate degree. If you graduate in May, you are not required to take graduate courses during the summer semesters, but you are required to take graduate courses during the fall semester directly after you graduate.

BAM - Application Process

When should I apply?

- You should meet with the BAM advisor and your undergraduate advisor during the fall of your junior year, or the semester before you will have obtained at least 90 credits of undergraduate coursework to discuss the program and consider applying.

What's the latest I can apply?

- There is rolling admission, but you need at least one full (spring or fall) semester in which you are enrolled in the BAM program as an undergraduate senior plus student taking graduate coursework before transitioning exclusively to a master's student. This means that if you want to graduate in May and begin full-time master's work in the fall, the latest you can apply for and enroll in the BAM program is the fall semester prior to the spring semester in which you will complete your undergraduate program requirements.

What is the application and decision timeline?

- Applications are reviewed by the university, the College of Science, and the GGS department, so it can take some time for all the paperwork to be processed. The goal is one month turn-around the from time of submission to time of decision.

What are the overall steps to apply?

- Meet with your undergraduate advisor and the BAM Advisor to discuss the program.
- Indicate your interest by filling out a [BAM Declaration of Interest Form](#).
- Complete the [online application](#).
- Submit the application and await decision.

What other resources should I review to help figure out if this program is right for me?

- Review the [How to Apply Guide](#) which pertains to all BAM programs at GMU.

BAM - Undergraduate v. Graduate

Do I have to take 6 credits of graduate coursework while still an undergraduate if enrolled in the BAM?

- No. You can take as few as 3 credits of graduate coursework while still an undergraduate if enrolled in the BAM.

What is "reserve graduate credit"?

- Credit you receive from taking graduate courses that don't count towards your undergraduate degree. You are permitted to take up to 6 credits worth of reserve graduate credit on top of the 6 credits of graduate coursework you can take that will double count towards your undergraduate and your master's degree. You must fill out the [Reserve Graduate Credit form](#) during the semester you are taking reserve graduate credit.

Do I have to take any "reserve graduate credits" while enrolled in the BAM?

- No. If you start the program more than 1-2 semesters before graduating your undergraduate degree, you may find the use and possibility of taking 3-6 credits of reserve graduate credits, but you do not have to take any "reserve graduate credits".

How do I count graduate credit I obtain while taking a hybrid undergraduate/graduate course as an undergraduate as "reserve graduate credit"?

- You must have the professor enroll you in the graduate section of the course at the time of registration and fill out the [Reserve Graduate Credit form](#) during the semester you are taking reserve graduate credit. *Beware: this process cannot necessarily be done retroactively, so it is essential that you are enrolled properly and fill out the paperwork at the time of enrollment.*

Will I be an undergraduate student or a master's student?

- While completing both undergraduate and graduate coursework, you will be a hybrid undergraduate/graduate student and will be classified as a "senior plus". Upon completing your undergraduate degree requirements, you will be a graduate student.

What will my undergraduate status be while enrolled in a BAM program?

- Upon acceptance and enrollment into the GGS BAM program, your undergraduate status according to the university as indicated on PatriotWeb will be "senior plus".

When will I participate in my undergraduate graduation?

- At the end of the semester in which you complete all the requirements for your undergraduate degree.

When will I receive my undergraduate degree?

- You will receive your undergraduate degree upon completion of all your undergraduate degree requirements. You need to work with your advisor(s) to ensure you are meeting all requirements to graduate from your undergraduate degree.

How do I transition from undergraduate work to graduate work?

BAM - Tuition + Housing

Can I continue to live in the undergraduate dorms while enrolled in a BAM program?

- It depends. You will need to contact your current housing unit to inquire and make arrangements.

Do I get in-state tuition if I enroll in the BAM program?

- You may need to re-apply for in-state tuition.