



Proposal to the Senate Educational Policy Committee

PROPOSAL TITLE: Joint Degree Program between the online MBA Program (iMBA) and online Master of Science in Accountancy Program (iMSA) in Gies College of Business.

SPONSOR: Brooke Elliott, Accountancy Department Head, Gies College of Business, 217-300-9247, wbe@illinois.edu, and Arshad Saiyed, Assistant Dean of Online Programs, Gies College of Business, 217-244-3652, asaiyed@illinois.edu.

COLLEGE CONTACT: Dean Jeff Brown and Prof. Mark Peecher, Gies College of Business via Mary Schultze (333-5423 or mlschltz@illinois.edu)

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: Gies College of Business proposes the establishment of a joint iMBA/iMSA program. Both degrees will require 92 hours of total coursework, rather than the 104 hour total required if each degree were to be completed separately, in succession. The difference in total hours required stems from joint degree program students being allowed to count 12 hours toward both degrees, if learning outcomes are met, in line with Graduate College policy. Further details are given in the Statement for Programs of Study Catalog information.

JUSTIFICATION: Over the last year, since the launch of the iMSA, Gies' Online Programs staff has fielded many inquires in particular from current iMBA students about a joint iMBA/iMSA degree option. Most of these students are interested in acquiring the technical accounting knowledge necessary to sit for the Uniform Certified Public Accountant (CPA) examination. The student inquiries sparked mutual interest between administrators of the iMBA and iMSA programs. This proposal addresses this expressed need. It also presumes that when the joint degree becomes available, it might attract students who may otherwise have taken accounting courses elsewhere to become eligible to sit for the CPA exam and students who are interested in combining an accounting degree with a more well-rounded business education.

A sample course plan for the joint degree program is included in **Appendix I** of this proposal.

BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS:

1) Resources

- a. How does the unit intend to financially support this proposal?

We do not expect any significant additional financial burdens on either program as a result of the joint degree. Students will enroll in already existing classes in both the iMSA and iMBA programs, and no additional staff will be required to accommodate the joint degree students (see details below). Any excess demand and additional investments needed to support this proposal can be funded by tuition dollars generated and returned to Gies College of Business.

- b. How will the unit create capacity or surplus to appropriately resource this program? If applicable, what functions or programs will the unit no longer support to create capacity?

Current admissions and student services staff already support both programs. Applicants to the joint program will be vetted through the same admissions team and process already in place for the two programs, and students will have a designated advisor familiar with the requirements of both programs.

Due to the scalability of online programs, the impact of the demand for the joint degree is expected to be minimal. During the start-up phase we expect an annual joint degree enrollment of no more than 20 students and at maturity approximately 40 students. This enrollment level would not impact current staff and faculty resources deployed.

In the event that demand for the joint degree significantly exceeds expectations and requires additional staff or faculty, Gies College of Business will use tuition dollars returned to the CoB from the Office of the Provost to fund additional instructional or staff resources.

- c. Will the unit need to seek campus or other external resources? If so, please provide a summary of the sources and an indication of the approved support.

No. Both programs are self-supporting and do not rely on external resources.

- d. Please provide a letter of acknowledgment from the college that outlines the financial arrangements for the proposed program. (see Appendix II).

2) Resource Implications

- a. Please address the impact on faculty resources including the changes in numbers of faculty, class size, teaching loads, student-faculty ratios, etc.

Given our demand expectations outlined above, the joint degree program should have limited impact in terms of our existing faculty teaching loads and minimal impact on class sizes and student-faculty ratios. Any increase in enrollment that exceeds anticipated demand can be absorbed by hiring additional course assistants.

- b. Please address the impact on course enrollment in other units and provide an explanation of discussions with representatives of those units. (A letter of acknowledgement from units impacted should be included.)

This proposal does not affect enrollment in other units. All joint degree requirements will be fulfilled within Gies College of Business.

- c. Please address the impact on technology and space (e.g. computer use, laboratory use, equipment, etc.)

The joint degree does not require any new space or technology as it will utilize the same resources deployed to deliver our existing online programs.

UNIFORM CPA EXAM ELIGIBILITY AND LICENSURE CONSIDERATIONS

While the Uniform CPA Examination is the same across all states, every state can have a slightly different set of education and experience requirements for the exam and to gain licensure. However, the Uniform Accountancy Act established that in every state CPA candidate must complete the three E's to qualify for licensure: education, examination, and experience. Prospective CPAs must complete at least 150 semester hours of college credit, pass the Uniform CPA exam, and gain at least one year of verifiable accounting work experience prior to licensure. The education requirement in most states includes a specific number of semester credits in accounting coursework. The joint iMSA/iMBA degree will help students who do not have an academic accounting background meet this education requirement.

CPA EXAM PASS RATES AND IMPACT ON RANKINGS

The degree requirements for the online MSA program (iMSA) are the same as those for the on-campus MSA program. Thus, similar to the MSA, the iMSA curriculum prepares students to be eligible to sit for and successfully pass the CPA exam. Those students who choose to pursue the joint iMSA and iMBA program will be required to take all accounting courses necessary to be eligible for and successfully pass the CPA exam. Further, there is not an expectation that those students pursuing an online joint degree will represent a significant portion of the students graduating with an Illinois accountancy degree who sit for the CPA exam. Nonetheless, if this outcome were to occur, we are confident that these students would exhibit CPA pass rates similar to our on-campus programs.

The most notable rankings for accountancy undergraduate and graduate programs are the *U.S. News & World Report* and *Public Accounting Report* rankings. The *U.S. News & World Report* rankings are based on a qualitative survey of business school deans and prominent faculty members, while the *Public Accounting Report* rankings are based on a qualitative survey of qualified accounting professors (irrespective of title and/or reputation). While CPA pass rates affect the general perception of the quality of any accountancy program, neither ranking system uses a formulaic approach where CPA pass rates are considered as an input.

LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

iMSA: Joint degree students will complete the 32 credit hours of coursework required for the separate iMSA degree. Current iMSA students already take iMBA courses to satisfy their non-accounting elective courses requirements. We will use the same systems and processes that we currently have in place for the separate online MSA and the on-campus MSA degree. All courses will be evaluated by students with ICES Online. Additional data will be collected using several instruments used by the Department of Accountancy to measure achievement learning objectives, which include discipline-based competency, social and communication skills, and teamwork skills.

iMBA: All students in the iMBA program, in order to earn an MBA, must complete the CORE/Required courses and a set of elective coursework. The choice of electives provides students an opportunity to take a deeper interest in domains of marketing, entrepreneurship, analytics, global business and now with the iMSA courses, accountancy as well. Joint degree students similarly will be required to complete the same CORE credits as well as an elective course set. Joint degree students will be evaluated on the same learning outcomes as degree students would be, if separately enrolled in the respective programs. Given that fact, the joint degree students can be allowed, if approved, to use 12 credit hours of iMSA coursework toward their MBA requirement, the maximum possible allowed by the Graduate College.

Assurance of Learning Plan – iMSA Program

Learning Objectives	Measures
Discipline-Based Competency	
One goal of the MSA degree is to impart competency in traditional accountancy topics (financial reporting, cost accounting, federal income tax, and auditing), with an expectation of performance at a level higher than undergraduates. Besides providing a technical foundation for career success, a secondary goal of this learning objective is to prepare students to pass the AICPA Uniform CPA Examination.	Uniform CPA Examination results by exam section. Scores on final examinations in ACCY 501, 502, 503, 504, and 505. Final exam performance will be used in conjunction with CPA exam scores by section to determine whether material is appropriate in terms of rigor and to identify areas of weakness in specific core courses.
Social and Communication Skills	
Students should be able to communicate with others regarding technical accounting topics.	Individual paper assignments from a core course are used to assess written communication skills. The Learner Engagement Score from core course is used to assess verbal communication skills. The score is determined by input from faculty, teaching assistants, and student peers, and it is based on participation in live class sessions and group projects.
Teamwork Skills	
Students should demonstrate the ability to collaborate as an effective team member in varying roles in a diverse group and in diverse tasks.	Scores from the group case analysis and peer evaluations in a core course, as well as end-of-school-year survey that assesses the students' perception of how their teamwork skills have improved over the course of the year.

Assurance of Learning Plan – iMBA Program

Learning Outcome	Measures
Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	
Students should be able to apply the perspective of their chosen areas of study to develop fully-reasoned arguments on contemporary issues in business. Students should also be able to employ appropriate analytical models and apply reasoning to evaluate evidence, select among alternatives, and generate creative options	Quantitative/analytical skills are acquired throughout the iMBA program. Assessment occurs in the midterm of first course in CORE 2 (ECON 528) and then with the final in the last course of CORE 4 (FIN 580). It provides a reasonable means of measuring knowledge acquisition and the impact of course sequencing.
Teamwork and Leadership	
Students should be able to determine the effectiveness with which goals are defined and achieved in team environments, to assess the contributions made by themselves as well as by their peers within those environments, and to identify and resolve conflicts.	Students will demonstrate learning in group dynamics, team contribution, and conflict resolution. The program can monitor increases in this learning objective through a group's summative improvements in group activities and peer evaluations, which contribute to a student's overall grade. Though projects are graded group-to-group, individual contributions are considered toward final grading, and peer evaluations provide a means for faculty and peers to provide unique feedback and assessment
Communication Skills	
Students should be able to demonstrate the ability to listen and read attentively, express ideas with clarity in both oral and written communications, and communicate effectively in diverse business settings.	While communications skills are honed in all courses, two assessments from BADM520: Marketing Management provide a holistic view of communications. Success in the final paper and related peer evaluation represents a thorough understanding of internal and external team communications.
Leadership and Organizational Skills	
Students will apply management tools, techniques, and behaviors to demonstrate effective leadership performance. Students will also apply the skills needed to integrate these functions into an organization.	Summative assessment of learning in a foundational business leadership course, in this case, BADM509: Managing Organizations. Assessment is the final examination administered to all students as part of their Core 1: Strategic Leadership & Management specialization.

STATEMENT FOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY CATALOG:

Online MBA (iMBA) and Online Master of Science in Accountancy (iMSA)

This fully online joint master's degree provides students with a broad, deep knowledge in business and accounting. Students will build and master skills in the following areas: technical accounting, business management, data analytics, finance, leadership, marketing, and strategy. The joint degree delivers a high-quality program that is accessible to a global audience. The highly-engaging delivery format and our world-renowned faculty provide students with a hands-on, practice-oriented, and team-based learning experience. It caters to learners who need flexibility and convenience in order to balance work with academic life. [The residential MBA can be earned jointly with most on-campus master's or PhD programs.](#) The joint iMBA/iMSA program is a new option that will be available for students enrolled in Gies College of Business' online programs.

The degree allows students to minimize time and cost by earning both degrees simultaneously. It also provides students both a well-rounded business education and the accounting knowledge needed to prepare for the Uniform CPA exam. The joint degree requires 92 credit hours divided between iMBA and iMSA courses (60 for iMBA and 32 for iMSA). A minimum GPA of 3.0 must be maintained in order to remain in good standing.

Students who do not meet the requirements for the joint degree can petition to switch to one of the two individual programs, and then they would complete the degree requirements of either the iMSA or the iMBA program. Any credits already earned toward the stand-alone degree can be counted toward degree completion. Any remaining credits can be either counted toward completion of an iMBA or iMSA specialization – a series of related courses – if those credits are aligned with an existing specialization, or transferred to another program or university which accepts transfer credits.

Students interested in the joint iMBA/iMSA degree program can initially apply to either program. Students entering the joint degree through the iMBA program must first complete the ACCY 500 course at a grade B or higher. They must also have been enrolled in the iMBA program for three consecutive semesters with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 in order to become eligible to petition for the Department of Accountancy's approval to officially become a joint-degree student. A potential joint-degree student entering through the iMSA program must complete 20 semester credits of required accountancy coursework in the iMSA program at a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. At that point, they would become eligible to petition for the iMBA program's approval to officially become a joint-degree student.

BADM 508	Leadership and Teams	4	Required
BADM 509	Managing Organizations	4	Required
BADM 520	Marketing Management	4	Required
BADM 544	Strategic Management	4	Required
BADM 567	Process Management	4	Required
BADM 572	Statistics Management for Decision Making	4	Required
FIN 511	Investments	4	Required
FIN 580	Corporate Finance	4	Required
ECON 528	Microeconomics for Business	4	Required
ECON 529	Macroeconomics for Business	4	Required

ACCY 500	Financial Accounting	4	Required
¹ BADM 590	<i>(Substitute credit requirement for iMBA Core 3)</i>	4	Required
² BADM 590	Seminar in Business Admin.	12	Elective
³ ACCY 501	Accounting Analysis I	4	Required
ACCY 502	Accounting Analysis II	4	Required
⁴ ACCY 503	Managerial Accounting	4	Required
ACCY 504	Auditing	4	Required
ACCY 505	Federal Taxation	4	Required
ACCY 506	Advanced Financial Reporting	4	Elective
ACCY 507	Taxation of Business Entities	4	Elective
⁵ Non ACCY elective course		4	Elective
Total Credit Hours:		92	

Other Requirements

¹ Students should select a course in consultation with an Online Programs advisor to meet the iMBA Core 3 requirement (see footnote 4 below for additional information).

² Focus area in the iMBA program consisting of three 4-credit-hour courses. The focus area should be selected in consultation with an Online Programs advisor.

³ Joint degree students are required to demonstrate proficiency to lead instructors for iMSA ACCY 501 Part A and only take Part B of iMSA ACCY 501. An additional 2-credit-hour elective to satisfy iMSA degree requirements will be required and should be selected in consultation with an Online Programs advisor.

⁴ Joint degree students are required to take the 16-week iMSA version of ACCY 503 and will be required to complete an additional 4-credit-hour elective course to meet the iMBA Core 3 requirement. The additional elective should be selected in consultation with an Online Programs advisor.

⁵ This course should be selected in consultation with an Online Programs advisor. Electives may include, BADM 403 or another non-accounting course.

Complete any two specialization capstones plus an integrated capstone final project in the iMBA program.

Minimum GPA: 3.0

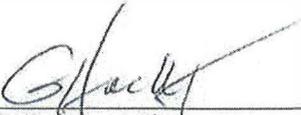
Appendix I

Sample Course Plan for the Joint iMBA/iMSA degree program with ‘Global Challenges in Business’ Focus Areas and Accounting Tax Focus Area

First Semester (Fall) iMBA		Second Semester (Spring) iMBA	
BADM 520: Marketing Management (Core 3)	4	ECON 528: Microeconomics for Business (Core 2)	4
BADM 567: Process Management (Core 3)	4	BADM 572: Stats Management Decision Making (Core 2)	4
BADM 590: Global Strategy (Focus Area 3)	4	BADM 590: Global Business Horizons (Focus Area 3)	4
Total Hours	12	Total Hours	12
Third Semester (Summer) iMBA		Fourth Semester (Fall) iMBA	
ECON 529: Macroeconomics for Business (Core 2)	4	ACCY 500: Financial Accounting (Core 4)	4
BADM 590: Global Impact: Cultural Psychology & Business Ethics (Focus Area 3)	4	FIN 511: Investment Finance (Core 4)	4
BADM 544: Strategic Management (Core 1)	4		
Total Hours	12	Total Hours	8
Fifth Semester (Spring) iMBA		Sixth Semester (Summer) iMBA	
BADM 508: Leadership & Teams (Core 1)	4	BADM 590 (Core 3)	4
BADM 509: Managing Organizations (Core 1)	4		
FIN 580: Corporate Finance (Core 4)	4		
Total Hours	12	Total Hours	4
Credit Hours iMBA: 60			
Seventh Semester (Fall) iMSA		Eight Semester (Spring) iMSA	
ACCY 501: Accounting Analysis I, Part II	2	ACCY 502: Accounting Analysis II	4
ACCY 505: Federal Taxation	4	ACCY 507: Taxation of Business Entities	4
ACCY 570: Data Analytics Part I	2	ACCY 503: Managerial Accounting	4
Total Hours	8	Total Hours	12
Ninth Semester (Summer) iMSA		Tenth Semester (Fall)	
BADM 403: Commercial Law	4	ACCY 504: Auditing	4
		ACCY 506: Advanced Financial Reporting	4
Total Hours	4	Total Hours	8
Credit Hours iMSA: 32			
Total Overall Credits: 92			

CLEARANCES: (Clearances should include signatures and dates of approval. These signatures must appear on a separate sheet. If multiple departments or colleges are sponsoring the proposal, please add the appropriate signature lines below.)

Signatures:



Unit Representative:

10/23/18

Date:



Unit Representative:

10/24/18

Date:



College Representative:

11/19/18

Date:

Graduate College Representative:

Date:

Council on Teacher Education Representative:

Date:

Appendix II

Financial Arrangements for the Proposed Joint Degree:



Office of the Dean
260 Wohlers Hall
1206 South Sixth Street
Champaign, IL 61820

January 16, 2019

RE: Financial Arrangements for the Proposed Joint Degree: iMBA/iMSA (APPENDIX II)

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to provide acknowledgement from the Gies College of Business that outlines the financial arrangements for the proposed joint iMBA/iMSA program. The Gies Online programs (iMBA and iMSA) are financially sound self-supporting programs and no changes are being made to the financial structure of either program. The financial structure is based on a tuition model in line with self-supporting programs on the Urbana-Champaign campus, wherein students are not eligible to receive tuition and fee waivers except statutory waivers.

Students will enroll in classes already offered in each program separately, and we have the staff and faculty capacity to support students participating in the joint degree program. The financial arrangement will continue to be in line with self-supporting programs on the Urbana-Champaign Campus.

Sincerely,

Jeff Brown
Josef and Margot Lakonishok Endowed Professor and Dean

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor
for Academic Affairs

Swanlund Administration Building
601 East John Street
Champaign, IL 61820



November 20, 2018

Gay Miller, Chair
Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Office of the Senate
228 English Building, MC-461

Dear Professor Miller:

Enclosed is a proposal from the Gies College of Business and the Graduate College to establish the joint online Master of Business Administration (iMBA) and online Master of Science in Accountancy (iMSA).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Kathryn A. Martensen'.

Kathryn A. Martensen
Assistant Provost

Enclosures

c: A. McKinney
J. Hart
B. Elliott
A. Saiyed
M. Schultze
A. Edwards
E. Stuby

Graduate College

110 Coble Hall
801 South Wright Street
Champaign, IL 61820-6210



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Becky Fuller
Animal Biology

Justine Murison
English

Denice Hood
Education

Tania Ionin
Linguistics

Brian Bailey
Computer Science

Lori Raetzman
Molecular & Integrative
Physiology

Katie Ranard
Graduate Student, Nutritional
Sciences

Sandra Rodriguez-Zas
Animal Sciences

Sela Sar
Advertising

Mark Steinberg
History

Terri Weissman
Art & Design

November 19, 2018

Kathy Martensen
Office of the Provost

Dear Kathy,

Included is a proposal from the Gies College of Business to **“Establish a Joint Degree program between the online MBA program (iMBA) and online Master of Science in Accountancy (iMSA)”**.

The proposal was received on November 8, 2018 and reviewed at the Graduate College Executive Committee meeting on November 16, 2018. The committee approved the proposal without revision.

We find that this proposal meets the standards of Graduate Education at Illinois and we now forward for your review.

Sincerely,

Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko
Dean
Graduate College

c: B. Elliott
A. Saiyed
M. Schultze