
Joint BA/MA in Middle Eastern Studies

Students in the College may pursue the master of arts degree in Middle Eastern Studies leading to the award of a four-year undergraduate degree in their declared major and a two-year graduate degree in Middle Eastern Studies after five years of studies at the University of Chicago.

Undergraduate students who wish to complete both degrees in five years should begin by discussing this option in the Autumn Quarter of their third year with their College adviser and with the BA adviser in their major, followed by a conversation with the deputy director for academic programs of the Middle Eastern Studies program (Paul Walker, 773.702.4619, pwalker@uchicago.edu) and the dean of students representative of the Social Sciences or Humanities Division, depending on the student's undergraduate major.

Undergraduate students pursuing this option are in "concurrent residence" beginning in the Autumn Quarter of their fourth year at the University and remain in this status for three contiguous quarters. Upon completion of the BA at the end of the fourth year, the students continue to be registered as graduate students for three contiguous quarters in the second year of the Middle Eastern Studies program.

Qualifications and Eligibility

Permission to receive both the BA in a major field and the MA in Middle Eastern Studies is not an automatic prerequisite of undergraduate study at Chicago. It is a privilege extended only to those undergraduate students who have demonstrated, in their undergraduate work, a record of uncommon excellence and who are sufficiently advanced in the fulfillment of the undergraduate degree requirements. The academic demands on these students are significant, and applicants are carefully reviewed in the context of both their undergraduate major and the master's degree requirements.

Applicants should have a minimum GPA for their undergraduate work comparable to that required for honors in their major and have completed the College general education requirements as well as 39 courses, including some graduate-level courses.

Furthermore, applicants are required to have completed by the end of their third year:

- one year (three courses) of a Middle Eastern language, and
- three courses related to Middle Eastern studies

Applicants who are pursuing an undergraduate major that requires a BA thesis will be permitted to register for the BA thesis workshop as a fourth course during the fourth year of undergraduate studies.

In addition to a distinguished record of achievement during their time in the College, applicants must convincingly demonstrate that they will be able to complete all requirements for the two degrees by the end of the allotted six quarters of full-time residence. For this purpose, potential applicants should meet with their adviser in the College and fill out a BA/MA Worksheet. The adviser's signature certifies that prospective applicants are far enough along in their College program to complete the course requirements for both degrees within five years.

Time Limits

This course of study prolongs registration at the University to five years. Students are expected to complete the BA requirements at the end of the fourth year in the College to be allowed to continue into the second year of the MA program and receive their BA at the end of the fourth year in the College.

Students enrolled in the second year of the Middle Eastern Studies program as part of this BA/MA program will be enrolled as any other students in the second year of the Middle Eastern Studies program and subject to the same rules and requirements for graduation.

Registration, Tuition, and Financial Aid

To receive both the BA in an undergraduate discipline and MA in Middle Eastern Studies requires that the last three quarters of the regular undergraduate course of study be spent in full-time (three courses per quarter) registration status in the Middle Eastern Studies program and an additional three quarters of registration in the Middle Eastern Studies program. For each of the six quarters in which students are registered in the MA program, the students are charged the graduate tuition rate, which is somewhat higher than the undergraduate tuition rate.

Students are not eligible for financial assistance from the Social Sciences or Humanities Division in the first year of the MA program (their fourth year in the College). Therefore, students admitted to this program should consult the College Aid Office to determine if their financial aid will be affected. In the second year of the MA program, students are eligible for financial aid from the Social Sciences or Humanities Division on the same terms as any other second-year graduate student in the Middle Eastern Studies program.

A minimum of six quarters of undergraduate residence in the College is required, including the three quarters of registration of the first year in the Middle Eastern Studies program.

Courses and Requirements

No more than three graduate-level courses taken in the fourth year in the College may be double-counted; that is, applied to both the College requirements and the MA requirements. Graduate courses taken during the second or third year in the College may not be counted toward the BA/MA in Middle Eastern Studies. Once admitted to the BA/MA program, students will be required to complete the core course requirements of the MA degree.

During their fourth year in the College (first year of the MA program), students retain their undergraduate privilege of registering for four courses per quarter. However, students are encouraged to take no more than three, if possible. During the second year of the MA program, students must follow MA rules, which restrict enrollment to three courses per quarter. The MA program requires a master's thesis which must be planned, researched, and written, and this requires a significant amount of time.

Application Procedures

Third-year students in the College who have been certified by the BA/MA adviser that they are prepared to pursue both the BA and MA degrees in Middle Eastern Studies in five years should obtain a graduate program application. Depending on the undergraduate major of the student, the graduate application should be obtained from either the Dean of Students Office in the Social Sciences (Foster 103) or Dean of Students office in the Humanities (Walker 111). The application should be completed, signed, and returned to the same office with all the necessary supporting documents by February 1.

The following documents must be on file with the divisional Dean of Students Office before the application will be reviewed:

1. the application
2. two letters of recommendation
3. a writing sample
4. official transcript(s)
5. BA/MA Worksheet: Filled out and signed by the College adviser
6. BA/MA Form: Top portion filled out

Applicants are not required to pay the application fee nor are they required to sit for the Graduate Record Examination. Applicants will be interviewed by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies deputy director for academic programs. These conversations will focus on the program's requirements and the applicant's qualifications and objectives.

Admissions decisions are usually not released before College preregistration for the following year takes place. Admissions committees often wish to see Winter Quarter grades before making decisions. Thus, applicants should preregister for the coming academic year as any other undergraduate student.

Other Guidelines

- Students who begin work towards the MA degree in Middle Eastern Studies and then leave the University without completing the program will not be allowed to complete the MA at a later date.
- Once a student has begun to pursue both the BA and the MA degree, a leave of absence is not normally possible. Students who find that they must take a leave of absence for a medical or family emergency during this period must obtain the approval of the dean of students of the applicable graduate division as well as the dean of students in the College.

Contact

For more information, please contact Paul Walker, Deputy Director for Academic Programs (pwalker@uchicago.edu; 773.702.4619).



Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

Times was used instead of Trajan.

Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.