

Masters in Business Administration (MBA) / Master of Science in Data Science (MSDS)

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
FOR A COMBINATION DEGREE PROGRAM AGREEMENT BETWEEN
THE DARDEN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND THE SCHOOL OF DATA SCIENCE

This is a revision to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)¹ between the Darden School of Business (Darden) and the School of Data Science (SDS), both schools of the University of Virginia, to continue a Combination Degree Program agreement, in which a student may obtain both the *Masters in Business Administration* (MBA) and the *Master of Science in Data Science* (MSDS, residential format only) degrees in three years (33 months).²

The Combination Degree Program (Program) is designed to provide MBA candidates with the opportunity to acquire in-depth understanding of data science tools and techniques to apply to the field of business. Throughout the 11-month MSDS program, students will combine their business education with computer programming, data wrangling, analytics and data science skills to creatively address difficult issues that use increasing amounts of data in both traditional and digital-technology focused industries.

The MOU is executed between the Deans of the Darden School of Business and the School of Data Science.

1. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM: A program committee administers the Program and is composed of one faculty member from Darden and one faculty member from SDS, as designated by the respective program leadership. Each school's registrar serves on the program committee as an ex-officio member.

2. ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM: To be eligible for admission to the Program, a student is required to secure separate admission to both Darden's MBA degree program and SDS' MS in Data Science degree program. Students enrolled in the Darden MBA may apply to the MS in Data Science program during their first year of study. Applicants will be held to the same standards as any other applicant, and the fact that they are a candidate for the Program will not be considered in the admission process. Once admitted independently to the MS in Data Science Program, the interested applicant may apply to the Program. Admission to the Program will be judged according to criteria developed by the program committee and will not be guaranteed by virtue of acceptance into both programs. MBA students may not enroll in the MSDS unless accepted into the formal combination degree program.

3. CURRICULUM: The combination degree program is designed to take three years to complete. Table 1 (Sample Plan of Study) reflects the sequence of enrollment and course schedule by School per term for students in the Program. In this arrangement, all core course requirements in the two degree programs remain the same.

The MBA is a two-year degree requiring 60 credits. The MSDS is a one-year degree requiring 33 credits. Under the Program, Darden will count 7.5 credits from the MSDS to satisfy MBA elective requirements.

Students will complete the first year of MBA instruction as stipulated by that program. In the second year, the students will start their coursework in the Fall term (late August) with SDS. They will follow the curriculum of the MS in Data Science and complete their coursework for that program in August of the

¹ The original MOU is dated 2017 and went into effect for the Summer 2017 term.

² This revision to the 2017 MOU relates to MSDS requirements, specifically approved modifications to the MSDS curriculum to increase the total required credits from 32 to 33 credits; shift the start of the program from summer to fall; and remove the summer term requirement.

second year. At the conclusion of the summer, students who have satisfied the relevant MSDS degree program requirements, which include a minimum of 33 credit hours in SDS, will be awarded the MSDS.

Following the completion of the MSDS degree program, students will enroll in the MBA program in the fall and spring of their third year, to complete the MBA graduation requirements, with anticipated graduation in May of the third year. Table 2 (Term Activation Sequence) reflects the sequence in which students will be term activated for each school.

The registrars from Darden and SDS are responsible for coordinating with each other and UREG to implement the plan of study in SIS. The plan of study documented in Table 1 specifies the student's school of enrollment for each term. The Darden and SDS registrar teams are responsible for ensuring the appropriate "dual degree service indicator" is listed on the student's record prior to term activation twice a year, which ensures the term activation sequence specified in Table 2 is followed. Any proposed changes to this plan must be approved in advance by Student Financial Services (SFS) and the Office of the University Registrar (UREG). Any change to the initially approved plan of study must be documented and provided to the SACSCOC liaison, who will record it as an amendment to this MOU.

4. CHANGE OF STATUS: Students are allowed to terminate their enrollment in the combination degree program at any time during the second year and enroll in either one of the individual degree programs post-termination. Both programs agree to provide credit for the coursework the student took during the combination degree program. Students will need to satisfy the graduation requirements stipulated by the program they elect to complete, which may include credits completed in the other program, as determined by the appropriate officials in the selected program.

Students put on probation or suspended for academic reasons from one program will be evaluated by the other program to verify their good standing for continued enrollment.

Students who are terminated from one of the degree programs because they are unable to meet the requirements of that degree program have the right to complete the other degree program but must satisfy the graduation requirements stipulated by the program in which they remain enrolled. These "change of status" rights will be communicated in writing to students upon initial enrollment into the Combined Degree Program.

5. TUITION AND FEES: Students enrolled in the Program will pay the approved tuition and fees of the Darden School of Business at the time of enrollment for the first and third years of the Program and will pay the approved tuition and fees of the School of Data Science during the time of enrollment for the second year. The intent is for tuition and fees to flow directly to each school, but if this creates an administrative burden on the University, tuition will flow annually from Darden to SDS. Students will be officially enrolled in Darden for 4 terms (Fall, Spring of Year 1; Fall, Spring of Year 3) and SDS for 3 terms (Fall, Spring, Summer of Year 2).

6. FINANCIAL AID: Financial aid is not guaranteed and is subject to individual school and University availability and eligibility criteria. Students may apply for federal financial aid for each program based on individual eligibility. Darden will administer financial aid during the terms in which students are enrolled in the MBA program. Student Financial Services (SFS) will administer financial aid during the terms in which students are enrolled in MSDS and collaborate as needed with Darden to ensure appropriate institutional alignment. Scholarship funding provided by either Darden or SDS will only be applied to the tuition and fees a student incurs when enrolled in the school that awarded the scholarship.

7. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: The student will be eligible to participate in the extracurricular activities of both schools. Because of the time-intensive nature of the Program, however, students are strongly encouraged to seek the advice of the Program Committee before taking on significant extracurricular commitments.

8. GRADING STANDARDS: The student is required to meet the grading standards of both programs independently to remain in good academic standing. Each program retains the right to suspend a student or to require a student to withdraw from its degree program if the student fails to maintain good academic standing as defined by its policies. Any issues that arise in translation of different grading scales resulting from the combination degree program will be addressed and resolved by the Program Committee. Grades will be recorded on the student's transcript under the system in effect at the school in which the course is taken.

9. FACULTY ADVISORS: The leadership of each program will appoint a faculty member from each program to advise students in the combination degree program.

10. REGIONAL ACCREDITATION, SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE: Initial implementation and/or subsequent changes to the combination degree program agreement may be contingent upon notification to or approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Changes to the agreement proposed by the schools must be discussed in advance with the SACSCOC liaison, who will evaluate their impact on accreditation requirements.

11. EFFECTIVE TERM: The requested effective term for the revision to the combination degree program is Fall 2025. UREG will collaborate with the registrar teams at both schools to manage the necessary administrative requirements in the Student Information System and the University Record in advance of the effective term. Once formally approved by the Executive Vice President and Provost, schools may begin to communicate with current and prospective students about the revised terms of this combination degree program offering.

12. EXPECTATIONS OF REVIEW: The schools will assess the combination degree program every five (5) years and re-affirm, modify, or formally end the combination degree program agreement as appropriate. Additional reviews may occur, for example in the case of curricular or operational changes, and may lead to modifications to this MOU.

Approved:

Dean, Darden School of Business
Scott Beardsley

Date

Philip E. Bourne

10/2/2025

Dean, School of Data Science
Philip E. Bourne

Date

Brie Gertler

Date

Interim Executive Vice President and Provost
University of Virginia

[The following are not included as part of the MOU but are required documentation to secure approval of the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost.]

I. Sample Plan of Study

First Year – Darden School of Business

Fall Term:

GBUS 7271/7272 – Accounting for Managers - Part I & Part II (3 Credits)

GBUS 7311 – Operations Management - Part I (1.5 Credits)

GBUS 7291 – Marketing - Part I (2 Credits)

GBUS 7341 – Leading Organizations (1.5 Credits)

GBUS 8619 – Leading Teams (1.5 Credits)

GBUS 7351 – Decision Analysis - Part I (1.5 Credits)

GBUS 7210 – Leadership Communication (1.5 Credits)

GBUS 7251 – Financial Management and Policies I (1.5 Credits)

GBUS 7231 – Global Economies and Markets (1.5 Credits)

GBUS 7400 – Strategic Thinking and Action (1.5 Credits)

Spring Term:

GBUS 7232 – Global Economies and Markets - Part II (1.5 Credits)

GBUS 7252 – Financial Management and Policies II (1.5 Credits)

GBUS 7380 – Business Ethics (1.5 Credits)

GBUS 7352 – Decision Analysis - Part II (1.5 Credits)

GBUS 7312 – Operations Management - Part II (1.5 Credits)

GBUS 7292 – Marketing - Part II (1 Credit)

GBUS ##### – Electives totaling 4.5 Credits

Summer Term: Internship

Second Year – School of Data Science (M.S. in Data Science, residential)

Fall Term:

DS 6001 – Data Engineering I: Data Pipeline Architecture (3 credits)

DS 5030 – Understanding Uncertainty (3 credits)

DS 5012 – Computation for Data Science (3 credits)

DS 6021 – Machine Learning I: Introduction to Predictive Modeling (3 credits)

Spring Term:

DS 6002 – Ethics of Big Data (3 credits)

DS 6030 – Machine Learning II: Data Mining and Statistical Learning (3 credits)

DS 6050 – Machine Learning III: Deep Learning (3 credits)

DS ##### – Restricted Elective (3 credits)

Capstone Program Project Preparation (non-credit workshop)

Summer Term:

DS 6015 – Data Science Capstone (3 credits)

DS 5110 – Data Engineering II: Big Data Systems (3 credits)

DS ##### – Restricted Elective (3 credits)

Total Credits: 33

Third Year – Darden School of Business

Fall & Spring Terms:

GBUS ##### – Electives totaling 22.5 Credits

II. Term Activation Sequence

Year	Fall	Spring	Summer
Year 1	Darden	Darden	Darden (Internship)
Year 2	SDS	SDS	SDS
Year 3	Darden	Darden	n/a

III. Language for Inclusion in the Graduate Record

The Darden School of Business and the School of Data Science offer a combination (formerly termed “dual”) MBA/MSDS degree program designed to provide MBA candidates with the opportunity to acquire in-depth understanding of data science tools and techniques to apply to the field of business. Throughout the 11-month MSDS program, students will combine their business education with computer programming, data wrangling, analytics and data science skills to creatively address difficult issues that use increasing amounts of data in both traditional and digital-technology focused industries.

ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM: To be eligible for admission to the MBA/MSDS Program, a student is required to secure separate admission to both Darden’s MBA degree program and the School of Data Science’s MS in Data Science degree program. Enrolled MBA students within the Darden School of Business may apply to the MS in Data Science program during their first year of study. Applicants will be held to the same standards as any other applicant, and the fact that they are a candidate for the combination MBA/MSDS program will not be considered in the admission process. Once admitted independently to the MS in Data Science Program, the interested applicant may apply to the combination MBA/MSDS program. Admission to the Program will be judged according to criteria developed by the program committee and will not be guaranteed by virtue of acceptance into both programs. MBA students may not enroll in the MSDS unless accepted into the formal combination degree program.

CURRICULUM: The combination MBA/MSDS program is designed to take three years to complete. All core course requirements in the two degree programs remain the same. Students take the first year of MBA instruction as stipulated by that program. In the second year, the students will start their coursework in the Fall term (late August) with the School of Data Science. They will follow the curriculum of the MS in Data Science and complete their coursework for that program in August of their second year. At the conclusion of the summer, students who have satisfied the relevant MSDS degree program requirements, which include a minimum of 33 credit hours in the School of Data Science, will be awarded the MSDS. Following the completion of the MSDS degree program, students will enroll in the MBA program in the fall and spring of their third year to complete the MBA graduation requirements, with anticipated graduation in May of the third year.

CHANGE OF STATUS: Students may terminate their enrollment in the combination MBA/MSDS degree program at any time during the second year and enroll in either one of the individual degree programs post-termination. Both programs agree to provide credit for the coursework the student took during the combination MBA/MSDS program. Students will need to satisfy the graduation requirements stipulated by the program they elect to complete, which may include credits completed in the other program, as determined by the appropriate officials in the selected program.

TUITION AND FEES: Students enrolled in the combination MBA/MSDS program will pay the approved tuition and fees of the Darden School of Business at the time of enrollment for the first and third years of the Program; and will pay the approved tuition and fees of the School of Data Science during the time of enrollment for the second year.

FINANCIAL AID: Financial aid is not guaranteed and is subject to individual school and University availability and eligibility criteria. Students may apply for federal financial aid for each program based on individual eligibility.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM: A program committee administers the Program and is composed of one faculty member from the Darden School of Business and one faculty member from the School of Data Science, as designated by the respective program leadership. The responsibilities of the Program Committee extend to admission to the combination MBA/MSDS program, coordination of curricula for the students involved, resolution of problems that may arise, and reconciliation of course and examination conflicts. The leadership of the MBA and MSDS programs also appoint a faculty member from each program to serve as faculty advisors for the students in the combination MBA/MSDS program.

For More Information:

Darden School of Business Faculty Advisor: Yael Grushka-Cockayne, MBA Program Director
School of Data Science Faculty Advisor: Prince Afriyie, Ph.D., MSDS Program Director