

The AB-AM Degree Program

for students taking advanced standing

The Department offers the AB-AM degree for students taking Advance Standing, which allows students who are *primary* mathematics concentrators to obtain a Masters degree (AM) in Mathematics, in addition to their Bachelors degree (AB) during their four years at Harvard. Note that the program requires a large number of additional courses in mathematics. In most cases, the Department recommends that students should instead take advantage of the many other academic opportunities that the University offers.

Only students with Advanced Standing are eligible to apply for this Advanced Standing AM-AB program, and the Department will only accept Math concentrators who have demonstrated sufficient mastery of undergraduate material. The requirements for the AM are: eight courses in mathematics at the 100 or 200 level, with at least four at the 200 level; and take a reading exam in one of three languages — French, German, or Russian. None of these eight courses can count towards the Mathematics concentration requirements. Students should note that this course requirement is hefty and is often found difficult to fit in a schedule. Students considering a joint concentration or a secondary field are usually advised against doing the AB-AM degree.

Any undergraduate who wishes to apply for this degree must file an application form for the graduate program in mathematics, just as any other student files for graduate work at Harvard. If you are considering going on to graduate school in mathematics, bear in mind that the Masters degree will offer you no advantage.

Timeline and Deadlines

Students interested in pursuing the AB-AM degree should follow this timeline:

1. As soon as possible, and in any case before December of their junior year, students should apply for Advanced Standing through the Undergraduate Office. Students should also meet with their OUE advisor to have their qualifications checked.
<https://oue.fas.harvard.edu/advanced-standing>
2. Students should then meet with the Director of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Cliff Taubes (chtaubes@math), to have a look at their study plan and decide which courses to “bracket”, that is, which courses will count for the AB (math concentration) degree, and which will count for the AM degree.
3. Only then can students apply for the AB-AM degree, and they have to apply by December 15 of their junior year. Note that this application is just like a graduate school application, and requires reference letters amongst other things. Details on the application can be found here: <https://gsas.harvard.edu/admissions/apply>
4. Acceptance notices are given at the end of January by the GSAS admissions office. If accepted, students can take the language exam in the spring of their junior year, or during their senior year.

For More Information

Further details on the requirements and the application process are available at the GSAS website at <http://gsas.harvard.edu/programs-of-study/all/mathematics> and from the Graduate Studies Coordinator Larissa Kennedy (lkennedy@math). For questions on bracketing courses and whether it makes sense for you to apply, please contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Cliff Taubes (chtaubes@math).