

# California State University, Chico

## Graduate School

### CHECK LIST FOR THE INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM

The mission of the Interdisciplinary Studies MA/MS is to offer opportunities for graduate students to develop rigorous individualized programs of study that combine the coursework and perspectives of at least two distinct academic disciplines. The Interdisciplinary Studies MA/MS allows graduate students to undertake unique paths of intellectual endeavor not available from the array of disciplinary-based graduate programs on campus.

The program has as its goals:

- the creation of unique and significant interconnections between existing disciplinary perspectives.
- the development of the student's ability to undertake independent research.
- the preparation of students for meaningful professional careers.
- the development of effective oral and written communication skills.

The general guidelines for designing an Interdisciplinary Studies master's degree are listed below.

**These first nine steps must be completed as a part of the application process for admission to the Interdisciplinary Studies program.**

1. Consult the current *University Catalog*. Read the Graduate Education and Interdisciplinary Studies master's degree requirements carefully. Review the 400/500- and 600-level courses in the disciplines that you plan to incorporate into your program.
2. Make an appointment with the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Coordinator to discuss the interdisciplinary program that you are designing. The Coordinator will review with you the application process for this program.
3. Complete and submit the online application for admission to graduate study, specifying IDST as your chosen program.
4. Draft a proposal describing your interdisciplinary program and its component disciplines. This will be called your Justification Statement. The statement should be approximately two pages in length, typewritten and double spaced.

In this statement you will describe the interdisciplinary program you are designing and your goal in pursuing this degree. In the first part, you should address your academic and professional background and preparation. Next, you will describe the component disciplines and the way that they fit together to comprise a unique, integrated program of study that enables innovation and disciplinary mastery based on necessary foundational knowledge and meaningful independent research or a creative project. The third part of the statement should connect the proposed program plan to professional plans, career or other goals.

5. Establish your graduate advisory committee by inviting two or three qualified (tenured or tenure-track) faculty members, one from each of the disciplines in your program, to serve on your committee. (Please discuss the criteria for committee membership with the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Coordinator, or refer to the publication, *A Guide to Graduate Studies: Policies, Procedures, & Format*.)
6. Review the relevant (400/500- and 600-level) courses in the disciplines that you wish to incorporate into the program you are designing. Make a comprehensive list of those courses that interest you. Review this course list once again in consultation with your graduate advisory committee, and reduce the number of these courses to the required 30 units. Make sure that you:
  - Include at least 18 units of 600-level coursework, and no more than 12 units of 400/500 level coursework.
  - Include one 600-level course with sufficient amounts of writing in one discipline, designated as fulfilling the graduate literacy requirement. You must pass this course with a B- or better.
  - Do not exceed ten units total of Independent Study and Master's Thesis or Project coursework (IDST 697 and IDST 699T or P) or six units of Master's Thesis or Project (IDST 699T or P). If you include an Independent Study course (IDST 697) on your course list, you and the course instructor will determine the topics to be covered and assignments to be completed. This will be described on the Interdisciplinary Studies Independent Supervision Course Petition, available online or from the IDST Graduate Coordinator.

List the courses to be included in your program on the Master's Degree Program Plan

7. Determine the title of your degree. It will be an M.A. or M.S. in Interdisciplinary Studies with your descriptive title added (as in "M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies: Graphic Design" or "M.S. In Interdisciplinary Studies: Environmental Geomorphology"). Establish a thesis (IDST 699T), project (IDST 699P), or other culminating activity for your program. Provide a tentative and very brief description of your thesis or project.
8. Obtain departmental approvals for the program you have designed (Sign-Off Sheet) from each department's Graduate Coordinator or Chair. You will also need the signature of your Committee Chair and members on your Master's Degree Program Plan (course list).
9. Submit the packet including the Justification Statement, the Sign-Off Sheet and the program plan to the Office of Graduate Programs. An evaluator will check it over before it is reviewed by the IDST Master's Degree Selection Committee.
10. Three letters of reference should be submitted directly to the graduate coordinator.

**Once you have completed these steps, your application to the Interdisciplinary Studies program is complete. The following guidelines will aid you in your progress through the program.**

1. Read *A Guide to Graduate Studies: Policies, Procedures, & Format* (available online).
2. Meet with the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Coordinator frequently. Contact the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Coordinator whenever you have questions about your program, or when you and your committee wish to make a change in your program. Notify the Coordinator when you have fulfilled the requirements for advancement to candidacy.
3. Submit a progress report to the Chair of your Graduate Advisory Committee **each semester**, within three weeks of the beginning of the semester.
4. Contact the members of your Graduate Advisory Committee at least once during each semester to apprise them of your continued progress.
5. When you plan to enroll in units of Independent Study (IDST 697) or Master's Thesis or Project (IDST 699T or P) contact the Graduate Coordinator prior to the start, or within the first two weeks of the semester in which you intend to register for the units. Obtain and complete the Interdisciplinary Studies Independent Supervision Course Petition, and submit it to the Office of Graduate School with the required signatures.
6. Complete adjunct enrollment in GS 899 with the Center for Regional and Continuing Education for each semester that you are not regularly enrolled until you graduate.
7. Apply for graduation at the Graduate School prior to the deadline for the semester in which you plan to complete all requirements. These deadlines are available online at: [www.csuchico.edu/giis/gs/](http://www.csuchico.edu/giis/gs/)
8. Create a calendar of deadlines with your Graduate Advisory Committee and the Graduate Coordinator. When will you provide a draft of your thesis/project to the committee members and Graduate Coordinator? What will be the date of your defense of the thesis/project? Please make sure that these events are scheduled to meet the deadlines of the Graduate School.
9. Provide a draft copy of your thesis or terminal project for the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Coordinator for approval **before** the final copy is typed.

**SIGN-OFF SHEET  
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES MASTER'S DEGREE**

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Chico State ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

M.A.       M.S.

Title of the Degree: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Terminal Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Departmental Approval included in the Student's Program**

I have reviewed the attached Interdisciplinary Studies Master's Degree Program Plan and the Justification of the program. For this student, I approve of the courses taken in my department, the rigor of the program and the degree title as stated above. I verify that the courses will be available to the student.

Department Chair or Graduate Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date