CHECK LIST FOR THE INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES
MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM
Office of Graduate Studies CSU, Chico

Mission and Goals

The Interdisciplinary Studies (IDST) program provides graduate students a unique opportunity to create their own MA/MS degree by drawing from at least two distinct disciplines rather than one single discipline to fit their academic, professional, and personal goals that otherwise were not offered by the University.

The Interdisciplinary Studies graduate degree offers graduate students a unique opportunity and professional advantage by allowing them to deepen their chosen academic or professional disciplines to align with their career goals. More than ever, employers are seeking graduate students who come from a discipline such as Interdisciplinary Studies that creates a powerful learning experience for students that emphasizes collaboration, integrative learning, critical thinking, and creative problem solving skills.

The program has four goals:

- IDST graduates will have created unique and significant interconnections between existing disciplinary perspectives.
- IDST graduates will show interdependent ability to undertake meaningful research.
- IDST graduates will develop programs of study that prepare them for their professional careers.
- IDST graduates will develop effective oral and written communication skills.

Steps for Designing IDST Program Plan and Application Process

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 you will 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. Please email Carson Medley at cmedley@csuchico.edu or via phone for appointment: 530-898-5392.

3. Complete and submit the online application for admission to graduate study, specifying IDST as your chosen program. Applicants must apply on-line at Cal State Apply by the application deadline. Application and admission questions should be directed to the Office of Graduate Studies at 530-898-6880 or via email at graduatestudies@csuchico.edu. International graduate applicants may contact International Student Services at 530-898-5415 or email iss@csuchico.edu.

4. Draft a proposal describing your interdisciplinary program and its component disciplines. This will be called your Justification Statement. The statement should be approximately three 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 courses and disciplines describing how 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 connects the proposed program plan to your 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.)

Review the relevant (400/500- and 600-level) courses in the disciplines that you wish to incorporate into the Master’s Degree Program Plan 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.

6. Determine the title of your degree. It will be an MA or MS in Interdisciplinary Studies with your descriptive title added (as in "MA in Interdisciplinary Studies: Graphic Design" or "MS 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.

7. 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).

8. Submit the packet including the Justification Statement, the Sign-Off Sheet and the Master’s Degree Program Plan to the Office of Graduate Programs. An evaluator will check it over before it’s reviewed by the IDST Master’s Degree Selection Committee.

9. Three letters of recommendation should be submitted directly to the graduate coordinator. Please be sure to include the Letter of Recommendation Access Waiver form with each letter.

Progressing through the Program

1. Read A Guide to Graduate Studies: Policies, Procedures, & Formatting

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 and 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 in courses 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.

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? 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 formatted. Please take a look at the Chico Digital Repository for examples of formatted theses and projects.
Interdisciplinary Studies Master’s Degree Sign Off
Office of Graduate Studies
California State University, Chico

Student's Name: ____________________________________________________________

Chico State ID Number ____________________________________________________________

☐ MA    ☐ MS

Title of the Degree: __________________________________________________________

□ Project Title: __________________________________________________________

□ Thesis Title: __________________________________________________________

Departmental Approval

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 ____________________________

Name ____________________________________________________________ Department ____________________________

Signature ____________________________________________________________ Date ____________________________

9/13/2017