

# 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 provides students a powerful learning experience for 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 current [University Catalog](#). Read the Graduate Education and Interdisciplinary Studies master's degree requirements carefully. Review the 400/500- and 600-level courses in potential disciplines to incorporate into your program plan.
2. Make an appointment with the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Coordinator (Sharon Barrios) to discuss the IDST program that you are designing: email [graduatestudies@csuchico.edu](mailto:graduatestudies@csuchico.edu) or call 530-898-6880.
3. Determine the (400/500- and 600-level) courses. List the required 30 units of coursework on the Program Plan page of the [IDST Program Approval](#) form. Follow these rules:
  - Include at least 18 units of 600-level coursework, and no more than 12 units of 400/500level coursework.
  - Include one 600-level course with sufficient amounts of writing in one discipline to fulfill the graduate literacy requirement. Course must be passed with at least a B.
  - Do not exceed ten units 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 must determine the topics and assignments to be completed. This will be described on the [Interdisciplinary Studies Independent Supervision Course Petition](#).
4. Determine degree title and write on your [IDST Program Approval Form](#). 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").

5. Establish a thesis (IDST 699T) or project (IDST 699P) as the culminating activity. Provide a tentative and brief description of your thesis or project, and record on your [IDST Program Approval Form](#).
6. Establish 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 IDST Graduate Coordinator, or refer to the publication [A Guide to Graduate Studies: Policies, Procedures, & Format](#).)
7. Draft a Justification Statement according to the guidelines below.

**For general Interdisciplinary Studies programs with an emphasis in Regenerative Agriculture** - Submit a Justification Statement (approximately two pages in length) describing your interdisciplinary program and its component disciplines. The statement should address the following: (1) Describe how your component courses and disciplines fit together to comprise a unique, integrated program of study. (2) Connect your proposed program plan to your professional plans, career, or other goals. (3) Your academic and professional background and preparation for proposed program.

**For Interdisciplinary Studies programs with an emphasis on Wildland Management** - Submit a Justification Statement (approximately two pages in length) that explains: (1) Why you are interested in this program (2) What your career goals are and how they relate to the program. (3) Any academic, work, or volunteer experiences you have had that relate to this program.

8. Obtain appropriate signatures [IDST Program Approval Form](#):
  - Committee members on the Program Plan sheet
  - Chairs (or graduate coordinators) from all departments participating in your program on the Department Approval sheet.

Return signed forms to the IDST Graduate Coordinator.

9. Complete and submit 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](mailto:graduatestudies@csuchico.edu). International graduate applicants may contact International Student and Scholar Services at 530-898-5415 or email [iss@csuchico.edu](mailto:iss@csuchico.edu).

As a part of the online application provide:

- Justification Statement – upload a copy to Cal State Apply
- At least one letter of recommendation (up to two additional letters are optional) – provide the contact information of your recommender(s); Cal State Apply will email your recommender(s) with instructions on submitting the letter electronically.

### 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 [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.