

# Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies

Occasionally a student wishes to pursue special interests or career goals that are not met by existing graduate programs. For this student, the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies offers the opportunity to create a unique master's degree program or one that is not otherwise substantially available in a current graduate program offered at this university.

This individualized master's degree is designed to be a highly challenging academic program for the self-motivated student who has a clear perception of objectives and a background which will allow advanced study in the disciplines combined in the program. The Interdisciplinary Studies M.A. is designed to accommodate unique student interests or to prepare students for fields which require programs not presently offered at the university. It is not a replacement of existing degree programs but an enrichment of the university's offerings. This program is designed by the student in consultation with three faculty members who comprise the student's faculty committee. These three faculty members are selected from more than one academic discipline. Once the program is approved by the committee, it is then submitted to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and then the University Curriculum Committee for approval.

**Application Process:** The procedures listed below are for the individualized M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies.

1. Determine the feasibility of pursuing an Interdisciplinary Studies M.A. by reviewing the requirements and examining available CSUSB master's programs to see if the proposed degree could be met through any of these. Explore the resources of the campus needed for an Interdisciplinary Studies M.A. in terms of course offerings, library resources, facilities, and faculty expertise;
2. Prepare a written proposal eight pages in length to include the following:
  - a. Identify by title the proposed interdisciplinary program of study (i.e., Interdisciplinary Studies Master's Degree in [50-space limit]);
  - b. Describe the purpose or focus of this specially designed degree program;
  - c. Explain why this course of study cannot be pursued within one department with electives from other departments;
  - d. Explain how this program relates to the student's educational and career goals;
  - e. Indicate student's background, both academic and experiential, for undertaking this study;
  - f. List the CSUSB courses appropriate to meeting goals; the program of courses must not significantly duplicate any existing degree program on this campus or on any other state college or university campus within a commutable distance.
3. To complete the formal application for acceptance to an Interdisciplinary Studies Master's program the student must:
  - a. Secure the agreement of faculty in the disciplines related to the proposed special program to serve as members of the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Committee. This committee must consist of no less than three tenured/tenure-track, full-time faculty members at CSUSB;
  - b. On the form provided, list the five upper-division prerequisite courses, each with a grade of "B" (3.0) or better, in the major discipline of the proposed program. The determination of the major discipline is subject to the approval of the University Curriculum Committee;
  - c. On the Approved Study Plan form list the minimum of 30 units of course work, 100% of which must consist of 5000- or 6000-level courses, to be included in the Interdisciplinary Studies M.A. As an interdisciplinary program, these courses should include work from two or more departments. To avoid later difficulties with key courses that are not offered prior to graduation, reasonable substitutions should be listed where possible;
  - d. Secure signatures on the application from the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Committee. The Interdisciplinary Studies M.A. proposal must be signed by three faculty members who have worked with the student in developing the proposed course of study. The faculty member who will chair the advisory committee must write a statement of support which includes a brief evaluation of the proposal;
  - e. Submit the approved M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies proposal to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies for approval;
4. These materials constitute the Application for a Master's Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies and will be forwarded to the University Curriculum Committee for consideration. The committee meets regularly throughout the academic year and applications can be submitted at any time, though every effort should be made to turn in the proposal early enough in the term to receive approval prior to registration for the next term. The application materials should be filled out with great care and accuracy. Hastily done or carelessly prepared proposals are unlikely to convince the Curriculum Committee of the seriousness of the proposal. The signature of the Chair of the University Curriculum Committee on the application for the Master's Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies signals acceptance of an applicant to the program;
5. The Associate Dean of Graduate Studies will notify the applicant in writing of the decision of the University Curriculum Committee. This may be approval or request for resubmission;
6. Once the proposal has been approved by the University Curriculum Committee, the applicant will request an invitation code from the Office of Graduate Studies to apply to the Master's Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies through Cal State Apply. Admission to the Master's Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies through Cal State Apply is the final step to admission and matriculation;
7. Subsequent modification of an Approved Study Plan requires approval of the student's Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Committee and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies on an official Change of Study form.
8. Any change or substitution of courses in the approved program must be approved by the student's faculty committee and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies;
9. At graduation, the diploma will show only an M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies, unless the student requests in writing the inclusion of the focus of the interdisciplinary study in this fashion: Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies in (subject area). The transcript will reflect both the degree title and the focus of study.

## Admission to the Program

In addition to the general requirements of the university, specific requirements for admission to classified graduate status are:

1. Meet minimum requirements for admission as a graduate student at CSUSB: at least a 2.5 cumulative undergraduate grade point average or at least a 2.5 g.p.a. in the last 60 semester units or 90 quarter units

of the undergraduate record, or 12 or more semester units or 16 or more quarter units of master's coursework completed with at least a 3.0 cumulative g.p.a

2. Prerequisite of at least five upper-division courses, each with a grade of "B" (3.0) or better, in the major discipline of the proposed program. The determination of the major discipline is subject to the approval of the University Curriculum Committee;
3. A three-member faculty committee, the chair of which serves as primary advisor, to supervise the course of study;
4. Approval of Interdisciplinary Studies program proposal by the Faculty Director of Graduate Studies.

## Advancement to Candidacy

To be advanced to candidacy, a student must have:

1. Completed at least 15 units of course work on an approved study plan with a minimum of a 3.0 grade point average in the program.

## Requirements for Graduation

1. The program of study should be interdisciplinary, including course work from two or more departments represented at the university;
2. The program of study must include a minimum of 30 semester units of course work, 100% of all course work taken must be in 5000- or 6000-level courses;
3. The program of study must not include more than six units of independent study course work, excluding the units allowed for thesis or project.
4. The program must include a culminating experience (comprehensive examination, project or thesis). The project or thesis may include an oral defense. Students may register for no more than six units of thesis or project credit. The project or thesis may include an oral defense;
5. The program of study must include a course in research methods in the major discipline;
6. A grade point average of 3.0 ("B") must be earned in course work taken to satisfy the Master of Arts degree requirements and grades of "C" (2.0) or better in all courses in the program. Grades of "C-" (1.7) or less cannot be used toward the degree;
7. Completion of the Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR);
8. Any additional general requirements not cited above and listed in Graduate Degree and Program Requirements (<http://bulletin.csusb.edu/graduate-degree-programs/graduate-degree-program-requirements/>).

## Requirements for the M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies (30 units)

Program Code (INTD)

Due to the unique nature of the program, courses required for the degree are determined by each student's individualized program plan. The program plan is designed by the student in consultation with three faculty members who also comprise the student's faculty committee. These three faculty members are selected from more than one academic discipline.

The program plan must consist of at least 30 units, all of which are graduate-level courses (numbered 5000 – 6000). The program must include a culminating experience (comprehensive examination, project or thesis).

See Requirements for Graduation listed above for additional Interdisciplinary Studies program requirements.

## Culminating Experience

The program must include a culminating experience (comprehensive examination, project or thesis). The project or thesis may include an oral defense. Students may register for no more than six units of thesis or project credit. The project or thesis may include an oral defense