

# INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES (MS)

## Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies

Unit: Graduate School (<https://louisville.edu/graduate/>) (GI)

Academic Program Code(s): IS\_MS

## Program Information

The Master of Science degree in Interdisciplinary Studies provides a mechanism for accommodating the interests of students and faculty in areas in which the faculty expertise is not confined to a department or individual academic unit. It permits students to establish individualized programs and groups of faculty to establish interdisciplinary tracks.

### Individually-Designed Programs of Study

An individual interested in exploring advanced studies in a field that transcends established academic/institutional boundaries may design a program of study in consultation with faculty and the Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary Studies. A program for this degree must involve at least two academic departments/units and it must cross traditional disciplinary organizational structures and programmatic lines of study. An individual interested in this program will need to develop a general proposal that can be reviewed by faculty who, in turn, must agree that they will participate in the program if approved. Before agreeing to participate in the supervision of an interdisciplinary master's student, faculty must obtain the consent of their departmental chair or dean.

The specific curricular requirements of the program must be worked out with a supervisory committee consisting of a chair and at least two additional faculty members representing at least two different departments or programs. Students will be admitted to the Graduate School after the interdisciplinary program proposal is approved.

### Interdisciplinary Tracks of Study: Interdisciplinary MS Concentrations

Faculty may propose interdisciplinary tracks of study that will form the basis for suitable areas of concentration to train students. The track must meet the criteria outlined above in terms of minimum credit hours and the distribution of coursework across disciplinary lines. Proposed areas of concentration and interdisciplinary tracks of study will be subject to approval by the following academic bodies:

1. Unit Curriculum and Budget Committees
2. Graduate Council
3. Faculty Senate
4. Provost

The development of an interdisciplinary track is the responsibility of the faculty, but the Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary Studies will provide assistance and guidance. Participating faculty must have the consent of their departmental chair or dean to participate in an Interdisciplinary Track.

Requests for further information or assistance should be addressed to:

**Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary Studies**  
**Graduate School**  
Houchens Building, Suite 105  
University of Louisville  
Louisville, Kentucky 40292

Phone: (502) 852-6495

Email: [graduate@louisville.edu](mailto:graduate@louisville.edu)

## Admission Requirements

Applicants for individualized interdisciplinary master's programs must present complete admission credentials in order to be formally admitted by one of their constituent departments. Such formal admission must be recommended by at least one department or program offering degrees through the Graduate School before the student may register for course work.

The required credentials are:

1. The application for admission, specifying which departments the student expects to comprise the program
2. Transcripts showing all undergraduate and graduate course work and all degrees earned
3. Scores on the Graduate Record Examination General Test; if required for admission by one of the programs.
4. Three letters of recommendation
5. TOEFL score if the applicant's native language is not English and he/she has not earned a degree from a university or college in the United States
6. A written statement of career objectives and rationale for the interdisciplinary research objective

All these credentials must be sent to the Graduate School, Graduate Admissions, University of Louisville, for distribution to the appropriate offices.

Only upon receipt of a letter of admission from the Graduate School, Graduate Admissions, may the applicant enroll for course work. There is no guarantee, however, that the desired degree program will be approved. Admission will be conditional until the program proposal has been submitted and approved by the Graduate School. During the initial semester, the curricular requirements of the program must be worked out with a supervisory committee of at least three faculty members. The chair, as well as the majority of the committee, must be members of the Graduate Faculty.

All departments or programs in which the student proposes to take more than three (3) credit hours of graduate coursework must offer degrees through the Graduate School, and, before submitting a program proposal, the student must have the permission of the department or program to take those courses.

## Program Proposal

In addition to the above stipulations regarding constituent departments or programs, each interdisciplinary degree program must meet specific criteria as follows:

1. An overall minimum of 30 credit hours at the 500 or 600 level.
2. A thesis (maximum of six (6) credit hours for a thesis in a 30 credit hour program) or six (6) additional credit hours of 600-level courses for non-thesis. Interdisciplinary students must enroll in GS 699 for thesis credit.
3. At least one-half of the non-thesis, non-practicum, non-internship credit hours must be at the 600 level.
4. A minimum of six (6) credit hours of 600-level course work must be taken in each of at least two departments or programs offering degrees through the Graduate School.

5. No single department or program may offer more than half the total number of credit hours required by the program.
6. Exclusive of thesis credit, no more than six (6) credit hours may be taken in courses of the independent-study or practicum type# such course work may not be counted toward criteria specified in 3 or 4.
7. Courses designated as fulfilling degree requirements must be offered with sufficient frequency to permit the student to complete degree requirements within a reasonable time (two years for a 30 credit hour program).
8. The proposed curriculum must be submitted on the appropriate form, with approval signatures of at least three graduate faculty members.
9. Requests for approval of substitutions or alternate courses must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary Studies in the Graduate School.

## Program Requirements

A curriculum will be determined during the development of each individual student's program proposal for the individually-designed programs. For an Interdisciplinary Track program, a core of faculty may propose a curriculum that will form the basis for an area of concentration.

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