

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES, MS

The goal of the Interdisciplinary Studies MS program is to train bachelor's degree recipients in new and emerging areas that lie at the intersection of two or more disciplines. A student can tailor the program to their professional goals and interests. The Interdisciplinary Studies MS program is intended for those whose degree goals are focused in the STEM fields. Upon completion of the program, graduates will be able to critically examine multiple sources of information, formulating responses to particular problems or questions. They will be able to demonstrate communication skills relevant to their disciplinary focuses and show competence in the processes of inquiry, at a level appropriate to a master's degree.

Participants in the program can choose to follow a thesis (Plan I) or non-thesis (Plan II) track. Those following the thesis track must demonstrate their ability to articulate and address a research question utilizing appropriate methodologies. Non-thesis students must complete a Capstone Project. Through this project, they must demonstrate leadership and problem-solving skills relevant to their professional field. The Capstone Project can involve a graded internship.

The Interdisciplinary Studies MS as a Vessel Degree

Students who have earned one or more graduate certificates as non-degree-seeking students may be able to apply their certificates toward the Interdisciplinary Studies master's degree. In this situation, related graduate certificates are connected to a coherent master's degree through a Capstone Project.

Admissions

In addition to the minimum Graduate School admission requirements, to be considered for regular admission an application must include:

1. 3 letters of recommendation
2. A CV/resume.
3. The answers to four directed questions (used in place of a Statement of Purpose):
 - What are the academic disciplines at The University of Alabama from which you propose to draw classes? If you are applying to complete this program online, these classes must be available at the graduate (masters/doctoral) level in online format.
 - Describe your academic and/or professional preparation and how this relates to the Interdisciplinary Master's program that you envision.
 - Describe the personal and/or professional goals that you wish to achieve by completing the Interdisciplinary Master's program.
 - The final stage of the Interdisciplinary Master's program involves a thesis or project that pulls together the different types of expertise you will have acquired. If you have an idea now about the potential focus of that thesis or project – a question you might explore or a problem you might solve - please briefly describe that idea. (We recognize that this idea may evolve during the course of your studies.)

Upon submission, the Graduate School will form an application review committee comprising graduate program directors from the two to three departments identified in your statement of purpose. If there are questions regarding the statement of purpose or program/career goals, the applicant will be contacted for clarification. The initial review

committee will make the admission recommendation to the Graduate School.

Post-Admission

On admission, students will be assigned to a home department. Students will form an advisory committee representative of the two to three disciplines involved in the Plan of Study. This committee, led by the primary advisor, who is from the home department, will work with the student to formulate the Plan of Study. The Plan of Study will include the decision of whether to follow Plan I (thesis option) or Plan II (Capstone Project option). The Plan of Study will also include the advisory committee's decision regarding the format of the comprehensive exam, Capstone Project, and/or the thesis defense. Students pursuing the thesis option will be encouraged to take a research methods or theory course in one of the participating departments during their first semesters. Advisors may wish to have students enroll in an independent study course during the first semester, during which they create an in-depth proposal to be approved by the advisory committee.

Curricular Requirement

The Interdisciplinary MA requires the completion of 30 semester hours

Thesis Option

Elective Courses		Hours
Elective Courses		24
IDGR 599	Thesis Research	6
Total Hours		30

Non-Thesis Option

Code and Title		Hours
Elective Courses		24-27
IDGR 598	Capstone Project Practicum	3 to 6
Total Hours		27-33

Transfer Credit

Graduate School information on Transfer Credit.

Comprehensive Exam/Capstone

The content and administration of the comprehensive exam are the responsibility of the Advisor and the Advisory Committee and are determined post admission (preferably before the start of classes).

Typically the format of the comprehensive examination will follow that described in the Graduate Catalog for the home department. The comprehensive examination can be retaken once. The Advisory Committee Chair must inform the Graduate School of the results of the comprehensive exam.

The Capstone Project is the culminating experience of the non-thesis path. The Capstone Program will consist of a written report and a presentation, public performance, exhibition, or other product that can be assessed by the three-member faculty committee. This assessment will constitute the final examination.

Fieldwork/Practicum/Internship Requirements:

Students who choose to pursue the Capstone Project option may opt to enroll in credit-bearing or non-credit-bearing internships or practicums (IDGR 598 Capstone Project Practicum. These work-based learning activities may be but are not required to be, related to their current field of employment. The internship or practicum would provide the real-world data and experience for the research and defense of the Capstone Project.

Plan I – Thesis Process Requirements

Students electing the Thesis option (Plan I) will follow Graduate School guidelines for all such programs, naming an advisory committee consisting of two co-directors and a third member drawn from one of the participating disciplines. All members must be approved as graduate faculty by the Dean of the Graduate School. The thesis must involve a written manuscript and a final oral defense. The results of the defense must be reported promptly to the Dean of the Graduate School on appropriate forms. The form should be submitted when all examinations are completed. A student may take the final oral examination only twice. Failing the examination twice results in dismissal from the degree program and the Graduate School.

Human Subjects: If human subjects are involved, the student and his/her Advisor/Chair are responsible for complying with the Institutional Review Board requirements before beginning research.

Plan II – Non-Thesis Process Requirements

Non-thesis students will enroll in 3-6 hours of IDGR 598 Capstone Project Practicum (or the 598 course of one of the participating departments) while carrying out the requirements of the Capstone Project. These courses will constitute part of the 30-hour coursework requirement of Plan II. The final assessment for the Capstone Project must take place at least two weeks before the date of graduation, and the results reported promptly to the Dean of the Graduate School on appropriate forms. A student may take the final examination only twice. Failing the examination twice results in dismissal from the degree program and the Graduate School.

Time Limits for Degree Completion

Graduate School information on Time Limits.

Student Progress Requirement

In order to continue in the program students must have an approved Plan of Study by the end of their first semester in the program.

Academic Misconduct Information

Graduate School information on Academic Misconduct.

Withdrawals and Leave of Absence Information

Graduate School information on Withdrawals and Leave of Absence.

Academic Grievances Information

Graduate School information on Academic Grievances.

Grades and Academic Standing

Graduate School information on Grades and Academic Standing.

Graduate School Deadlines

Information on Graduate School Deadlines.

Application for Graduation

Information on the Application for Graduation.