

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES, MA

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This program is currently in moratorium, effective Fall 2021.

Program Description

The Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies provides an opportunity for students who wish to pursue special interests or educational goals that are not met by existing graduate programs. The Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies offers the opportunity to create a unique master's degree program that is not otherwise available among the current graduate programs at CSUB.

The individualized master's degree program requires a minimum of 30 semester units, although some individual programs of study may require additional units. At least 24 semester units must be earned by taking graduate courses (courses numbered 5000 or 6000). The individualized graduate Plan of Study is expected to be academically challenging and involving two or more disciplines that relate to an identified coherent theme. At least one of these disciplines must be from a program within the university that currently offer a graduate degree. The Plan of Study should lead the student beyond cursory knowledge of disciplines to a substantive inquiry that connects and synthesizes various perspectives, theories, and/or skills. This interdisciplinary degree program is suitable only for students who are self-motivated and independent, who are able to clearly delineate the objective(s) of their studies, and who have a professional and/or academic background which will allow advanced study in the disciplines combined in the proposed program.

The interdisciplinary studies degree program can be structured to suit specific professional/career needs and be tailored to meet idiosyncratic academic objectives. While it is not possible to predict the employment opportunities for graduates of such a program, the MA in Interdisciplinary Studies provides a vehicle for meeting the needs of students with unusual, creative, and interdisciplinary academic and/or professional goals. Use of the MA in Interdisciplinary Studies for purposes of professional accreditation/licensure should be validated with the appropriate agency to ensure that the program meets the needed professional requirements.

Selection of the Program Committee Chair

Selection of a Program Committee Chair is an important first step in the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies program and MUST be from a department within the University that offers a graduate program. The Chair is critical to the development of the student's Plan of Study. He/she should ordinarily represent the primary field of study in which the majority of the coursework will be taken. The Chair advises and guides the student during the period of graduate study. Students have a responsibility to schedule regular meetings with their Chair. Since this relationship is crucial in assisting students in the completion of the graduate program, they need to choose a faculty member with whom they can have a close rapport and whose specialty is nearest to their own scholarly interests.

Committee Selection

Each graduate student must have a Committee to read and guide the development of the graduate project or thesis. The student's Program Committee Chair and/or the Program Director can provide assistance in forming the graduate committee.

Academic Advising

It is essential that the graduate student stay in contact with the Program Director, the Graduate Student Center, and especially their Program Committee Chair, to help the student move expeditiously through the program and to ensure satisfactory completion of the Plan of Study.

Admission Requirements Application and Admission Application Procedure

Students seeking the Master of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Studies must apply to the University and must contact the Graduate Student Center for additional information and application materials.

Admission Requirements

To be considered for admission to the graduate program in Interdisciplinary Studies, the student must:

1. Have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited four-year college or university. Previous course work or self-study must be deemed satisfactory and acceptable by the Program Committee.
2. Have a minimum GPA of 3.00 (A=4.00) in the last 60 semester units.
3. Establish a three-member Program Committee comprised of faculty representing programs included in the proposed interdisciplinary program. The Program Committee Chair, who serves as the primary advisor, must be from a department within the University that offers a graduate program.
4. Develop a Plan of Study and have it approved by the graduate director(s) of each participating graduate program, the Chair(s) of each participating undergraduate department, the Dean(s) of the school(s) in which the programs are located, and the Program Director.
5. Satisfy the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) as soon as possible in their graduate study, unless they have already done so. Graduate students who have not met this requirement may do so by passing the regularly scheduled GWAR examination (offered once a semester), or by earning a "C" or better in one of the approved GWAR courses.

Notes on the GWAR requirement:

Students are exempt from the GWAR if they meet any of the four criteria below.

1. Graduated from a CSU or UC since 1980.
2. Earned a high enough score on one of these tests:
 - GMAT** 4.5 or higher on the writing portion of the GMAT.
 - CBEST** 41 or higher on the writing portion of the CBEST.
 - GRE** 4.5 or higher on the analytic writing portion of the GRE General Test.
3. Published an article as first author in a refereed professional journal which is judged by the Chair of the GWAR committee to satisfy the requirement.

4. Completed a thesis or project to earn an MA or MS in any discipline, which is judged by the Chair of the GVAR committee to satisfy the requirement.

Students from campuses other than a CSU or UC may be considered to have met this requirement by taking a similar course at that university. Such students must submit a transcript with the course, the course description and a syllabus for the course to the Composition Coordinator for evaluation.

International Students

In addition to meeting the requirements for admission given above, international students must have earned a minimum score of 550 on the paper-based TOEFL exam, an 80 on the internet-based TOEFL exam, or a 6.5 on the IELTS.

Classification of Graduate Students

1. Classified Graduate Status

Students who fully meet the admission requirements listed above will be considered as Classified Graduate Students.

2. Conditionally Classified Graduate Status

Students meeting most, but not all of the admission requirements may be admitted as Conditionally Classified Graduate Students. Students who are conditionally classified are limited to 9 semester units that will count toward their Plan of Study. Upon completion of the admission requirements, the student will be administratively advanced to Classified Graduate Status.

3. Advancement to Candidacy

Students will be advanced to candidacy when they have met the following criteria:

- a. Have achieved a Classified Graduate Student Status;
- b. Completed at least 20 semester units of graduate work applied toward the Plan of Study with a GPA of 3.0 or better;
- c. Completed the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GVAR);
- d. Are ready to begin work on the thesis or project.

Program Requirements

The selection of courses as outlined in the approved Plan of Study will be guided by the nature of the interdisciplinary program in consultation with the three-member Program Committee. Students will be expected to meet all prerequisites for courses in their approved Plan of Study, prior to registering for the courses. No more than 9 semester units of post-baccalaureate course work, taken prior to the approval of the Plan of Study, can be applied towards the requirements for the MA in Interdisciplinary Studies.

1. Completion of the Plan of Study, which must include a minimum of 30 semester units of course work, of which at least 24 semester units must be graduate courses (courses numbered 5000 or 6000). Courses numbered 4000 may apply to the Plan of Study (6 semester units maximum) with approval of the Program Committee. The granting of graduate credit for such 4000-level coursework requires the submission of a "Petition for Graduate Credit" for each course.
2. Maintenance of a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better in coursework applied to the Plan of Study. Courses with a grade less than a B (3.0) will not be accepted.
3. Completion of an Interdisciplinary thesis or a project that appropriately reflects the nature of the Plan of Study. Students will elect either the thesis or the project track on the basis of

appropriateness to the objectives for the interdisciplinary program and upon approval of the Program Committee.

Graduate students conducting research involving information from human subjects either through direct measurement of behavior or from secondary sources (existing databases) must have their research protocol reviewed and approved by the CSUB Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research (<https://www.csub.edu/grasp/Research%20Compliance/IRB/index.html> (<https://www.csub.edu/grasp/Research%20Compliance/IRB/>)). Prior approval by the CSUB Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) is also required for animal research.

Students must complete all degree requirements including thesis or special project within seven years of starting the program. Students who fail to complete their degree program within the seven-year limit may petition the Program Committee, with approval from the Program Chair and Program Director, to permit the revalidation of outdated courses.