



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

# Interdisciplinary Studies MA Graduate Program Handbook

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# Interdisciplinary Studies MA

Together, the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) and your graduate program handbook should serve as your main guide throughout your graduate career. The Graduate Student Handbook includes university information, policies, requirements and guidance for all graduate students. Your program handbook describes the details about graduate study and requirements in your specific program. While both of these handbooks are wonderful resources, know that you are always welcome to talk with faculty and staff in your program and in the Graduate College.

The central activities and missions of a university rest upon the fundamental assumption that all members of the university community conduct themselves in accordance with a strict adherence to academic and scholarly integrity. As a graduate student and member of the university community, you are expected to display the highest standards of academic and personal integrity.

Here are some resources to help you better understand your responsibilities:

- [Academic Honesty](#)
- [Academic Integrity Training](#) - Open to all graduate students at no cost
- [Plagiarism](#)

## Introduction

### Degree Plan of Study

You will submit your intended plan of study with the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Advisor with your application. This plan of study must be approved by the Graduate Program Admission Committee prior to taking courses. This plan outlines the specific courses that you wish to take toward degree completion and will also provide justification for use of those courses. Given the complex nature of the Interdisciplinary Studies program, in which students take courses from around the university, there is no one model that fits every student. Each plan is personal and customized. It is therefore highly advised, although not required, that you discuss your planned program with the advisor before applying to the program.

It should be noted that the plan of study must be approved by the program director and cannot be altered solely due to poor academic performance. If courses are taken without prior approval, the Interdisciplinary Studies Department reserves the right to exclude those courses from your degree program. The plan of study becomes part of your academic file and can be changed through consultation with the Graduate Advisor, but all changes must be approved by the program director prior to taking the classes.

## Curriculum

Please visit the [Graduate Catalog](#) to see the current curriculum for our program.

## Timeline for Completion

UCF requires that students complete their master's degree within 7 years of the date of admission. It is possible to complete the master's degree in less than 2 years if attending full time. However, since each student's program is individualized, there is no timeline that fits everyone.

# Thesis Requirements

You may enroll in thesis hours and begin work on your thesis usually after you have completed a majority of credit hours towards the degree. The faculty thesis advisor will chair the thesis committee and assume primary responsibility in directing your research. When a topic has been selected, you, in conjunction with your thesis chair, will develop a thesis proposal. Copies of the proposal will be routed to members of the thesis committee and to the Graduate Advisor. Once the proposal has been approved, and when appropriate, the research instrument has been referred to the Institutional Review Board for approval, a timetable for the completion of the thesis will be developed and work may begin. Upon completion, you will schedule an oral thesis defense. The thesis defense is open to all interested parties and must be publicly announced at least two weeks in advance. You should begin planning your research early in the plan of study. UCF has strict guidelines for the editorial format of the Master's Thesis. As such, it is of utmost importance that you become familiar with the University's requirements and deadlines for organizing and submitting the thesis.

## University Dissertation Requirements

The College of Graduate Studies [Thesis and Dissertation page](#) contains information on the university's requirements for dissertation formatting, format review, defenses, final submission, and more. A step-by-step completion guide is also available on [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) Site.

All university deadlines are listed in the [Academic Calendar](#). Your program or college may have other earlier deadlines; please check with your program and college staff for additional deadlines.

### **The following requirements must be met by dissertation students in their final term:**

- Submit a properly formatted file for initial format review by the format review deadline
- Submit the Thesis and Dissertation Release Option form well before the defense
- Defend by the defense deadline
- Receive format approval (if not granted upon initial review)
- Submit signed approval form by final submission deadline
- Submit final dissertation document by final submission deadline

Students must format their dissertation according to the standards outlined in [Thesis and Dissertation Webcourse](#). Formatting questions or issues can be submitted to the Format Help page in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. Format reviews and final submission must be completed in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. The Dissertation Approval Form is also available in the Thesis and Dissertation Services site.

The College of Graduate Studies offers several thesis and dissertation [Workshops](#) each term. Students are highly encouraged to attend these workshops early in the dissertation process to fully understand the above policies and procedures.

The College of Graduate Studies thesis and dissertation office is best reached by email at [editor@ucf.edu](mailto:editor@ucf.edu).

## Thesis Committee

A master's student's thesis committee must consist of at least three members and be approved by the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Advisor by using the Thesis Committee Approval Form. The Thesis Chair must be a regular faculty member with a terminal degree in their field. Of the other two members, at least one must be a qualified regular faculty member at the University. All three members must be approved graduate faculty with qualifications to serve on thesis committees ([ucf.catalog.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=240](http://ucf.catalog.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=240)).

Adjuncts, visiting faculty, courtesy appointments or qualified individuals from outside the university may serve as the third member or co-chair of the committee, but may not serve as the chair. If there are co-chairs, one must

satisfy faculty qualifications for serving as a chair of a thesis advisory committee. The other co-chair must satisfy the minimum requirements for serving as a member of a thesis advisory committee. Qualifications of additional members must be equivalent to that expected of UCF faculty members. UCF faculty members must form the majority of any given committee.

For more details about the Thesis Committee, please refer to the UCF Graduate Catalog: [ucf.catalog.acalog.com/index.php?catoid=4](http://ucf.catalog.acalog.com/index.php?catoid=4) > Policies > Master's Program Policies > Thesis Requirements > Thesis Advisory Committee Composition.

## Thesis Enrollment

Prior to enrollment into the Thesis course, your thesis committee must be reviewed and approved by the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Advisor.

While you are engaging in thesis research you must be continuously enrolled in at least three hours of thesis every semester, including summers, until you successfully defend and submit your thesis to the University. This enrollment each semester reflects the expenditure of university resources, and is required even if more than the minimum number of hours is needed for completion of the thesis.

To enroll in directed research, directed readings, or thesis hours, you will be required to complete a registration agreement form, which will be completed by your thesis chair and then submitted to the Interdisciplinary Studies Office. The Graduate Advisor will then register you for these hours.

## Graduate Research

Research is a critical component of graduate education. Students are expected to begin research activities early in their graduate training and to pursue a research agenda throughout their graduate careers. Course work is designed to promote the integration of conceptual issues, research design, and interdisciplinary knowledge, and to provide students with the skills and experience required to conduct empirical research. Active involvement in research throughout graduate training, such as presentation of research at conferences and meetings and manuscript submission to scientific journals, is strongly encouraged of all students.

Research requires competence and sensitivity in dealing with research participants, colleagues, clients, and supervisees. Students are required to make ethical decisions and have a responsibility to monitor and evaluate behaviors that may compromise the ability to function as graduate students, and to take steps to address any problems that arise. Researchers in every discipline have a responsibility for ethical awareness as the status of the profession rests with each individual researcher. The ethical collection and use of information includes, but is by no means limited to, issues of confidentiality, accuracy, relevance, self-responsibility, honesty, and awareness of conflicts of interest.

All theses and research involving original data collection from human subjects, including surveys, must obtain approval from an independent board, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), prior to starting the research. Graduate students and the faculty that supervise them are required to complete training on IRB policies, so this needs to start well in advance of the research start date. It is imperative that proper procedures are followed when conducting research on human subjects. In addition, should the nature of the research or the faculty supervision change since the IRB approval was obtained, then new IRB approval must be sought. Failure to obtain this prior approval will jeopardize receipt of the student's degree. Information on IRB approval can be found at UCF's Office of Research and Commercialization: [research.ucf.edu/](http://research.ucf.edu/) > Compliance > IRB.

## Graduate Presentation Fellowship

The College of Graduate Studies offers a Graduate Presentation Fellowship that provides funding for master's, specialist, and doctoral students to deliver a research paper or comparable creative activity at a professional meeting. Students must be the primary author and presenter. More information can be found on the College of Graduate Studies website: [graduate.ucf.edu/presentation-fellowship/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/presentation-fellowship/).

Graduate Student Presentation Funding is also available through Student Government to pay transportation expenses for graduate students who are delivering a research paper or comparable creative activity at a professional meeting. Contact the Student Government Association for information at 407-823-5648 or visit their website at [ucfsga.com/](http://ucfsga.com/).

## Human Subjects

If the student chooses to conduct research that involves human subjects (i.e. surveys, interviews, etc.), he or she must gain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval prior to beginning the study. For access to the IRB submission form and sample consent forms, please visit the Office of Research website: [research.ucf.edu/](http://research.ucf.edu/) > Compliance > UCF IRB Webpage > UCF-IRB Principal Investigator's Manual.

## Animal Subjects

If the student chooses to conduct research that involves animal subjects, he or she must gain Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval prior to beginning the study. For access to the IACUC submission forms, please visit the Office of Research website: [research.ucf.edu/](http://research.ucf.edu/) > Compliance > UCF IACUC Webpage > Animal Use Approval Form.

If you have questions regarding human or animal subjects, please contact Ms. Barbara Ward, IRB Coordinator, at 407-823-2901.

## Ethics in Research

Researchers in every discipline have a responsibility for ethical awareness as the status of the profession rests with each individual researcher. It is important to be honest and ethical in conducting research as well as in taking classes. The ethical collection and use of information includes, but is by no means limited to, the following: confidentiality, accuracy, relevance, self-responsibility, honesty, and awareness of conflict of interest. The University of Arizona's Code of Research Ethics provides our students with guidelines for responsible practice in research.

## Patent and Invention Policy

UCF has three fundamental responsibilities with regard to graduate student research. They are (1) to support an academic environment that stimulates the spirit of inquiry, (2) to develop the intellectual property stemming from research, and (3) to disseminate the intellectual property to the general public. UCF owns the intellectual property developed using university resources. The graduate student as inventor will, according to this policy, share in the proceeds of the invention.

The full policy is available online from the Graduate Catalog: [ucf.catalog.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=201](http://ucf.catalog.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=201).

# Financial Support

Graduate students may receive financial assistance through fellowships, assistantships, tuition support, or loans. For more information, students should consult the graduate catalog ([ucf.catalog.acalog.com/index.php?catoid=4](http://ucf.catalog.acalog.com/index.php?catoid=4)) or the financial aid office ([finaid.ucf.edu/](http://finaid.ucf.edu/)) for descriptions and requirements of graduate financial support. This will describe the types of financial assistance available at UCF and provides general guidance in planning your graduate finances. The Graduate Advisor also distributes this information to students via email throughout the year as it becomes available. Many fellowship deadlines fall very early in the application process. Students interested in fellowship opportunities are encouraged to submit their application materials well in advance of the application deadline.

## International Students

Several types of employment are available to international students, including on-campus employment. For more information about the types of employment available to international students, and the requirements and restrictions based in visa-type, please see the International Services Center's website: [global.ucf.edu/](http://global.ucf.edu/) > Current Students > Employment.

## Assistantships and Tuition Waivers

For complete information about university assistantship and tuition waivers, please see the UCF Graduate Catalogue: [ucf.catalog.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=238](http://ucf.catalog.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=238).

To be employed and to maintain employment in a graduate position, the student must be enrolled full time and meet all of the training requirements and/or conditions of employment.

To be awarded and continue receipt of a tuition waiver, the student must be enrolled full time and either employed in a graduate position (GTA, GRA, GA), receiving a University fellowship, or (if employed off-campus) employed in a position where payment is processed through Graduate Studies.

Master's students can be offered tuition support for a maximum of four semesters.

## GTA Training Requirements

If the student is hired in the position of Graduate Teaching Associate, Assistant, or Graders, there are training requirements that must be met in order for the contract to be processed. Associates and Assistants must complete a minimum two-day training and an online legal module. Associates must also have completed at least 18 hours of graduate courses in the discipline they will be teaching. Students who are employed as Graders are required to complete the online legal module. These services are offered by the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) and more information can be found at the following website: [fctl.ucf.edu/](http://fctl.ucf.edu/) > Events > GTA Programs.

International students who will be hired in GTA positions must be proficient at speaking English. This is determined by successfully passing the SPEAK test with a score of 55 or better. This test (also known as the Oral Proficiency Exam) is administered during the GTA orientation by the Center for Multicultural and Multilingual Services (CMMS). For international student to register for or inquire about the SPEAK examination, please contact Myrna Creasman at CMMS: 407-823 5515

## **GTA Performance Appraisal**

At the completion of each semester the student is employed as a GTA, the student's performance will be evaluated by the faculty advisor. These assessments will be used to review strengths and weaknesses in the student's performance in preparation for future employment.

## **Graduate Student Associations**

### **Graduate Student Association**

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is UCF's graduate organization committed to enrich graduate students' personal, educational and professional experience. To learn more or get involved, please visit [facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/](https://facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/).

## **Professional Development**

Research is a critical component of training in any graduate program. Students are expected to begin research activities early in their graduate training and to continue a research agenda throughout their graduate career. As a part of this agenda, students should present their research at professional conferences whenever possible. Depending on your area of concentration, various conferences, meetings, and professional events may be held for that profession or area of study. Students are encouraged to contact faculty who present at these meetings for more specific information. UCF also hosts a graduate research forum each year. This local event is a wonderful opportunity to gain experience by presenting research.

UCF hosts a series of workshops including presentations on professional development activities. Students are encouraged to attend these workshops whenever possible. You may learn more about these opportunities through the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning ([fctl.ucf.edu/](http://fctl.ucf.edu/)), and the College of Graduate Studies ([graduate.ucf.edu/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/)).

### **Presentation Fellowships**

The College of Graduate Studies offers a Graduate Presentation Fellowship that provides funding for master's, specialist, and doctoral students to deliver a research paper or comparable creative activity at a profession meeting. Students must be the primary author and presenter.

[graduate.ucf.edu/presentation-fellowship/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/presentation-fellowship/)

Funding is also available through Student Government to pay transportation expenses for graduate students who are delivering a research paper or comparable creative activity at a professional meeting. Contact the Student Government Association at (407) 823-5648 for more information.

## **Instructor Training and Development**

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) promotes excellence in all levels of teaching at the University of Central Florida. To that end, they offer several programs for the professional development of Graduate Teaching Assistants at UCF.

### **GTA Training (mandatory for employment as a GTA)**

This training provides information and resources for students who will be instructors in a two-day workshop. The seminars cover a variety of topics, including course development, learning theories, lecturing, and academic



freedom. Those interested in additional training can also attend an optional training session that normally follows the mandatory training.

### **Preparing Tomorrow's Faculty Program**

This certificate program (12-weeks) consists of group and individualized instruction by Faculty Center staff and experienced UCF professors. Textbooks and materials are provided.

For more information about GTA Training: [ctl.ucf.edu/](http://ctl.ucf.edu/) > Events > GTA Programs or call 407-823-3544.

### **Pathways to Success Workshops**

Coordinated by the College of Graduate Studies, the Pathways to Success program offers free development opportunities for graduate students including workshops in Academic Integrity, Graduate Grantsmanship, Graduate Teaching, Personal Development, Professional Development, and Research. For more information and how to register, please visit [graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/).

### **Graduate Excellence Awards**

Each year, students can submit a portfolio for nomination of College and University level awards of excellence. These are intended to showcase student excellence in academic achievement, teaching, research, leadership, and community service.

These awards include the following:

**Award for Excellence by a Graduate Teaching Assistant** - For students who provide teaching support and assistance under the direction of a lead teacher. This award focuses on the extent and quality of the assistance provided by the student to the lead instructor and the students in the class. (Not intended for students who are instructor of record).

**Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching** - For students who serve as instructors of record and have independent classroom responsibilities. The focus of this award is on the quality of the student's teaching and the academic contributions of those activities.

**Award for the Outstanding Master's Thesis** - To recognize graduate students for excellence in the master's thesis. The focus of this award is on the quality and contribution of the student's thesis research. Excellence of the master's thesis may be demonstrated by evidences such as (but not limited to): publications in refereed or peer-reviewed journals, awards and recognitions from professional organizations, and praise from faculty members and other colleagues in the field.

For more information about these awards, please see the College of Graduate Studies website: [graduate.ucf.edu/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/) > Graduate Awards.

For more information about the Council of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) thesis and dissertation awards, please see their website: [csgs.org/](http://csgs.org/) > Awards.

### **Graduate Research Forum**

Sponsored by the College of Graduate Studies, the Research Forum is an opportunity for students to showcase their research and creative projects and to receive valuable feedback from faculty judges. Awards for best poster and best oral presentation in each category will be given, and all participants will receive recognition. For more information, please visit [graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-research-forum/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-research-forum/).

Students are encouraged to join student associations relevant to their disciplinary study.

## Job Search

### Career Services and Experiential Learning

[career.ucf.edu/](http://career.ucf.edu/)

Graduate career development issues are unique and include evaluating academic and nonacademic career choices, discussing graduate school effect on career choices, as well as learning, evaluating, and refining networking and interviewing skills. Whatever your needs, the offices of Career Services and Experiential Learning offer services and resources to aid in the career exploration and job search of Master and Doctoral students in every academic discipline.

## Forms

- [College of Graduate Studies Forms and References](#)  
A complete listing of general forms and references for graduate students, with direct links, may be found here.
- [Graduate Petition Form](#)  
When unusual situations arise, petitions for exceptions to policy may be requested by the student. Depending on the type of appeal, the student should contact his/her program adviser to begin the petition process.
- [Traveling Scholar Form](#)  
If a student would like to take advantage of special resources available on another campus but not available on the home campus; for example, special course offerings, research opportunities, unique laboratories and library collections, this form must be completed and approved.

## Useful Links

- [Interdisciplinary Studies](#)
- [College of Graduate Studies](#)
- [College of Graduate Studies](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Bookstore](#)
- [Campus Map](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Financial Assistance](#)
- [Golden Rule Student Handbook](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [Graduate Student Association](#)
- [Graduate Student Center](#)
- [Housing and Residence Life](#)
- [Housing, off campus](#)
- [Knights Email](#)
- [Library](#)
- [NID Help](#)
- [Pathways to Success](#)
- [Recreation and Wellness Center](#)
- [Shuttles Parking Services](#)
- [Student Health Services](#)
- [Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\)](#)
- [UCF Global](#)

- [University Writing Center](#)

## Grad Faculty

**Asterisk** = has previous committee experience, which qualifies the person to serve as vice chair

### **Cash, Mason \***

College: College of Arts and Humanities  
Disciplinary affiliations: Interdisciplinary Studies  
Contact Info: [Mason.Cash@ucf.edu](mailto:Mason.Cash@ucf.edu)

### **Jones, Donald**

College: College of Graduate Studies  
Disciplinary affiliations: Interdisciplinary Studies  
Contact Info: [Donald.Jones@ucf.edu](mailto:Donald.Jones@ucf.edu)

### **Stanlick, Nancy \***

College: College of Arts and Humanities  
Disciplinary affiliations: Interdisciplinary Studies  
Research interests: Ethics and history of Philosophy  
Contact Info: [nancy.stanlick@ucf.edu](mailto:nancy.stanlick@ucf.edu)  
Websites: <http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~stanlick>

### **Strawser, Michael**

College: College of Arts and Humanities  
Disciplinary affiliations: Interdisciplinary Studies  
Contact Info: [Michael.Strawser@ucf.edu](mailto:Michael.Strawser@ucf.edu)

### **Woodill, Sharon**

College: College of Graduate Studies  
Disciplinary affiliations: Interdisciplinary Studies  
Contact Info: [Sharon.Woodill@ucf.edu](mailto:Sharon.Woodill@ucf.edu)

## Contact Info

- **John Weishampel, PhD**  
Associate Dean  
MH 230  
Email: [GradIDS@ucf.edu](mailto:GradIDS@ucf.edu)
- **Elizabeth Smock, EdD**  
Coordinator, Interdisciplinary Programs  
MH 230  
Phone: 407-823-2853