



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Interdisciplinary Studies MS Non-thesis Graduate Program Handbook

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Interdisciplinary Studies MS, Non-thesis

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

The Interdisciplinary Studies MS program offers students the opportunity to design their own degree by selecting either one of the pre-approved interdisciplinary concentrations such as Environmental Sustainability or Project Management, or two concentration areas from nearly any department at UCF. While the College of Graduate Studies offers over 200 graduate degree programs, some students may have unique interests or require tailored training for a desired career. The Interdisciplinary Master's program allows students the flexibility to define their educational experience by choosing the content and way in which they complete the degree. The program can be completed either full-time or part-time and participating departments offer a variety of course schedules including day and night courses as well as online courses. The benefit of the Interdisciplinary degree is that applicants can take advantage of the diversity of courses offered on campus and combine them in ways that meet changing workforce and societal demands. The Interdisciplinary nature of the degree allows for it to be responsive to personal and societal needs.

Curriculum

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

Timeline for Completion

The Interdisciplinary Studies MS is a total of 33 credit hours beyond the bachelor's. All students in the program must choose either from the list of pre-approved interdisciplinary concentrations, such as Environmental Sustainability or Project Management, or two disciplines/concentrations on which to base their degree. Each concentration will require 9 hours for a total of 18 credit hours. For the non-thesis option students will complete 9 hours of required courses and 6 hours of elective courses. The program can be completed in two years if pursued full-time. For the completion of the non-thesis MA students choose a capstone experience: a comprehensive exam, a capstone project, or an internship must be completed before graduation. Please see the details for each in the sections below, but note completion of only one is required.

Each student will submit a Proposed Plan of Study at the time of application. This plan outlines the specific courses desired for the degree and alternates should schedule or enrollment issues arise. 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 should be noted that a formal Program of Study must be submitted before the completion of 12 credit hours; it must be approved by the program director and cannot be altered solely due to poor academic performance. If courses not listed on the Program of Study are taken without prior approval, the program reserves the right to exclude those courses from your degree program. The Program of Study becomes part of your academic file and can be changed through consultation with the Interdisciplinary Studies Coordinator. All changes must be approved by the Program Director prior to taking the classes.

Additionally, program milestones have been developed to guide students towards the successful completion of their degree. Students should be aware of these milestones and stay in contact with the Interdisciplinary Studies Coordinator on a regular basis.

Non-Thesis Milestones (Meet with Interdisciplinary Studies Coordinator):

- 0-9 Hours: Meet to review Planned Program of Study (in application) and create personal timeline.
- 9-12 Hours: Meet to submit a finalized Program of Study before completion of 12 hours.
- 18-27 Hours: Meet to create/finalize Capstone Project or Exam Committee.
- 30 Hours: Schedule final submission of project or written exam.

Internship Experience

If the student chooses an internship to fulfill the capstone experience requirement, a satisfactory host site should be found and approved well before the internship semester. It is suggested that students begin their search at least mid-term of the semester prior to the internship semester. The Interdisciplinary Studies Coordinator will provide forms and guidelines and may have suggested internship sites for students. Students receive credit for approved internships by enrolling in IDS 5949 (0 credits) and IDS 6949 (3 credits) during their internship and completing all necessary work, including a final project.

Examination Requirements

If students choose the written comprehensive exam for their capstone experience, the exam will entail the selection of an exam committee of three faculty who will formulate questions to address both concentration areas. The student will have 48 hours to complete the take-home exam and it should be completed in their final semester of enrollment. The exam will be graded on a pass/fail basis.

Capstone Project

Students may choose a Capstone Project for the Interdisciplinary Studies MS degree to fulfill the capstone experience requirement of the non-thesis option. The goal of the project is to demonstrate the benefit of the interdisciplinary approach. Each student's project should reflect a combination of the two concentrations in their degree by finding a policy area, special topic, or issue that crosses the areas. The capstone project should be a culminating experience and thus should be completed towards the end of the degree after completion of the required core courses.

Project Scope

The scope of the project should be decided upon by the student and the faculty advisor, with approval from the Interdisciplinary Studies director, but it should require at least one semester to complete. Some examples of appropriate projects include:

- Writing a grant proposal for agency
- Program evaluation and recommendations

- Needs assessment for an organization, community, or field
- Design and implement surveys to evaluate a phenomenon
- Undertake “best practices” literature reviews in particular policy areas
- Conduct focus groups in a grounded theory approach to solving an issue
- Complete a critique of specific works of art, literature, films, etc. in a given context

Note: The main difference between the capstone project and the thesis is that a defense or specific final product is not required and it provides an option to create a more applied experience.

Faculty Advisor and Project Review Committee

To undertake this project, students must choose two advisors- one from each concentration- to guide them through the project. The project advisors should provide guidance in developing an appropriate project idea and assist in the implementation and final evaluation of the project.

Evaluation

The Capstone project will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis by the advisors. If a student fails to pass the evaluation it will prevent them from graduating. The outcome of the evaluation should be communicated to the Interdisciplinary Studies MA/MS coordinator at least two weeks before graduation.

Financial Support

Graduate students may receive financial assistance through fellowships, assistantships, tuition support, or loans. For more information, students should consult the [funding section](#) of the College of Graduate Studies website or the [financial aid office](#) 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.

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/ > Current Students > Employment.

Graduate Student Associations

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/. For individual department or graduate program organizations, please see program advisor.

Professional Development

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 the program visit fctl.ucf.edu/ 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/.

Job Search

Career Services

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

Jones, Donald

College: College of Graduate Studies
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