Interdisciplinary Studies

Administered by the Division of Graduate Affairs

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General Information

When the existing advanced degree programs of the university do not adequately meet certain special needs and interests, a student may propose a Master of Arts or Master of Science degree in Interdisciplinary Studies. This degree program provides the unusually well-qualified student an opportunity for individualized graduate study composed of coursework in at least two but not more than three departments or schools at SDSU. The Division of Graduate Affairs administers this program following procedures established by the Graduate Council.

The proposed program must not be substantially available in a current graduate program offered at the university, and it must have adequate focus and coherence in cognate disciplines. Prerequisite courses may be required to support the courses in the student's program of study.

A graduate supervisory committee and a field of study shall be chosen, subject to the approval of the dean of the Division of Graduate Affairs. The supervisory committee shall consist of not less than three full-time faculty representative of the areas in which the student intends to pursue the degree. The graduate dean or designee shall serve as an ex officio member of the committee.

Admission to Graduate Study

In addition to satisfying the requirements for admission to the university with classified graduate standing, as described in Part Two of this bulletin, the student must (1) possess an academic background appropriate to the proposed program and have achieved an undergraduate grade point average of 3.0; and (2) complete the GRE General Test with a satisfactory score on the verbal and quantitative sections. Since an approved course of study is required for classified graduate student status, classified standing and the basic requirements for the master's degree, as described in Part Four of this bulletin, must be completed as the culminating experience in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Students applying for admission should electronically submit the university application available at http://www.csumentor.edu along with the $55 application fee.

All applicants must submit admissions materials separately to SDSU Graduate Admissions and to the Division of Graduate Affairs.

Graduate Admissions

The following materials should be submitted as a complete package directly to:

Graduate Admissions
Enrollment Services
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA 92182-7416

(1) Official transcripts (in sealed envelopes) from all postsecondary institutions attended;

Note:
• Students who attended SDSU need only submit transcripts for work completed since last attendance.
• Students with international coursework must submit both the official transcript and proof of degree. If documents are in a language other than English, they must be accompanied by a certified English translation.

(2) GRE scores (http://www.ets.org, SDSU institution code 4682);

(3) English language score, if medium of instruction was in a language other than English (http://www.ets.org, SDSU institution code 4682).

Division of Graduate Affairs

An essay explaining the rationale for entering the Interdisciplinary Studies program as the vehicle for the master's degree must be submitted by the deadline set by the university to:

Associate Dean
Division of Graduate Affairs
San Diego State University
5500 Campanile Drive
San Diego, CA 92182-8020

In the essay, state concisely why you wish to pursue the interdisciplinary studies major including career objectives. Explain why existing campus programs cannot meet your academic objectives.

Advancement to Candidacy

In addition to satisfying the general requirements of the university for advancement to candidacy, as stated in Part Four of this bulletin, the student must satisfy the special requirements for advancement defined by the supervisory committee in the official program of study. Students are admitted to interdisciplinary studies as conditionally classified students. Students admitted conditionally must submit an approved program of study within two semesters. If the proposed curriculum is not approved, the student will have the option of applying for admission to an alternative advanced degree program.

Specific Requirements for the Master's Degree

(Major Code: 49993) (SIMS Code: M.A. 995010; M.S. 995030)

1. In addition to satisfying the requirements for classified graduate standing and the basic requirements for the master's degree, as described in Part Four of this bulletin, the student must complete a graduate program of at least 30 units of courses acceptable for advanced degree credit.

2. The official program of study must reflect careful and deliberate planning. The selection and level of courses will be based on the best standards and practices of the disciplines involved. Normally no more than nine units taken prior to approval of the official program of study may apply to the degree.

3. In consultation with the supervisory committee, the student will determine the subject of the research for a thesis that will be completed as the culminating experience in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

General Procedures for the Program

Students must take the following steps to obtain classified student status:

1. After meeting with the assistant dean of the Division of Graduate Affairs, a student must complete and follow the instructions on the form, “Request for Permission to Pursue an Interdisciplinary Studies Master's Degree,” which is available in the Division of Graduate Affairs. The applicant must initially seek out a potential faculty adviser and two additional faculty members who have the expertise and interest in advising and supporting the applicant in the proposed program of study.
2. When the student’s portion of the form has been completed, the
major adviser selected, and other potential supervisory committee
members contacted, an appointment with the assistant dean of
the Division of Graduate Affairs should be arranged. In some
instances, both the applicant and the proposed major adviser
should be present at this meeting. Other proposed committee
members are welcome to participate in these discussions.

3. Following this meeting and after making any modifications to
the proposed program eventuating from it, the student must
present for approval the “Request for Permission to Pursue
an Interdisciplinary Studies Master’s Degree” to the chairs of
departments in which courses are being proposed and to the
deans of colleges responsible for these academic units.

4. The student will then present the “Request,” endorsed with
appropriate departmental and college recommendations, to the
Division of Graduate Affairs, where it will be reviewed by the
graduate dean for final endorsement to certify that the “Request”
has been approved as an official program of study, that the
supervisory committee has been formally appointed, and that the
student has been granted classified graduate standing for the
purpose of pursuing the interdisciplinary major.

5. Virtually all other requirements for this major are the same as
those for other master’s degree programs, as specified in this
bulletin. Special questions should be directed to the chair of the
supervisory committee or to the Division of Graduate Affairs.

Courses Acceptable on Master’s Degree
Program in Interdisciplinary Studies (INT S)

Refer to Courses and Curricula and Regulations of the Division of Grad-
uate Affairs sections of this bulletin for explanation of the course numbering
system, unit or credit hour, prerequisites, and related information.

GRADUATE COURSES

INT S 690. Seminar in Research Ethics (1) Cr/NC
Prerequisite: Graduate standing.
Core content areas that influence responsible conduct of research
(RCR) including research misconduct, data management, use of ani-
mal and human subjects, conflict of interest and commitment, author-
ship, publication and peer review, and collaboration and mentoring.
Intended for graduate students involved in research projects. Meets
NIH and NSF training grant requirements for RCR instruction.

INT S 797. Research (1-3) Cr/NC/RP
Prerequisites: Advancement to candidacy and completion of Spe-
cial Study Request Form.
Independent research in a specialized subject. Maximum six units
applicable to a master’s degree.

INT S 798. Special Study (1-3) Cr/NC/RP
Prerequisite: Completion of Special Study Request Form.
Independent study. Maximum credit six units applicable to a mas-
ter’s degree.

INT S 799A. Thesis or Project (3) Cr/NC/RP
Prerequisites: An officially appointed thesis committee and ad-
vancement to candidacy.
Preparation of a project or thesis for the master’s degree.

INT S 799B. Thesis or Project Extension (0) Cr/NC
Prerequisite: Prior registration in Thesis 799A with an assigned
grade symbol of RP.
Registration in any semester or term following assignment of RP
in Course 799A in which the student expects to use the facilities and
resources of the university; also the student must be registered in the
course when the completed thesis or project is granted final approval.