

# M.S. in Interdisciplinary Studies

## Description

The Master of Science in interdisciplinary studies provides graduate students the opportunity to complete a tailored program of study that integrates knowledge and scholarship from two or more disciplines traditionally associated with a Master of Science. Students seeking graduate study in emerging interdisciplinary fields or cross-disciplinary specialties for which the University of Mississippi does not yet offer a defined degree select two or more concentrations to integrate as they develop mastery.

Students may select a thesis or nonthesis track. The thesis track requires completion of a thesis that reflects original research conducted during their enrollment in the Master of Science in interdisciplinary studies. The non-thesis track requires a capstone project that applies the cross-disciplinary knowledge.

The thesis option prepares students to conduct research/scholarship needed for research careers and doctoral study. Thesis students conduct original research, completed in entirety during enrollment in the Master of Science in interdisciplinary studies degree, which integrates their two or more selected disciplines. Graduate faculty representing each of the selected disciplines comprises the examination committee for the thesis.

The non-thesis option equips students to apply cross-disciplinary knowledge. Students complete a capstone experience in which they gain applied experience integrating two or more disciplines. Students design a capstone experience, with guidance from a committee of faculty representing each of the selected disciplines, to integrate their unique cross-disciplinary expertise in a non-research setting to address a particular theme or goal directly related to real-world problems/needs.

## Minimum Total Credit Hours: 36

## General Education Requirements

- A minimum of 36 graduate hours, to include at least 6 hours of formal classroom lecture courses from at least two different disciplines (the latter distribution requirement must be completed in residence at UM);
- A thesis or non-thesis option may be pursued;
- A final oral examination;
- Other Graduate School requirements for a master's degree.

## Course Requirements

Students must complete a minimum of 36 graduate hours, to include at least 6 hours of formal classroom lecture courses from at least two different disciplines (the latter distribution requirement must be completed in residence at UM).

## Other Academic Requirements

## Admissions:

Applicants must meet one of the following requirements:

- First be admitted into an existing degree program
- Be admitted via application to a designated emphasis within the Master of Science in interdisciplinary studies
- Submit with their application:
  - three letters of reference,
  - a CV,
  - a statement clearly outlining the plan of study they intend to pursue (identifying the two or more disciplines of study they will pursue with potential coursework), and
  - either (students should select the option that they believe most closely aligns with the disciplines they will integrate during their studies)
  - a score from the GRE/GMAT or
  - a portfolio

Applicants must have a bachelor's degree by the start of the program and have a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Conditional admission is not available for the Master of Interdisciplinary Studies.

## Adviser and advisory committee and admission to the MIS program:

To enter the MIS program, a graduate student must gain the approval of a graduate faculty member (associate or full) to serve as his or her adviser as an MIS student.

A student already admitted to the Graduate School for study in another program must then submit to the Graduate School a request to enter the MIS program. This request must include a) the names of the adviser and two other qualified faculty members who will serve as the advisory committee, and b) a brief explanation (e.g., preliminary plan of study) of the interdisciplinary nature of the intended program of study. The advisory committee must comprise at least one faculty member with graduate faculty status from each discipline to be emphasized in the plan of study.

A student admitted via application to a designated emphasis within the Master of Science in interdisciplinary studies will follow the application process for that emphasis.

A student applying for direct admission to the Master of Science in interdisciplinary studies shall complete the application for direct admission. The dean of the Graduate School will consult with the graduate program coordinators (GPC) for the selected disciplines the student wishes to integrate into their interdisciplinary studies degree to determine if those disciplines agree to the admission of the student. The GPC or another member of the graduate faculty from each discipline must be placed on the student's committee, and one of the three members must agree to be the chair of the student committee. Prospective students may want to contact the Graduate School prior to application for assistance with identifying disciplines with faculty able to serve on the committee for interdisciplinary studies students.

For direct admission applicants and those already admitted to another degree program, the application is reviewed for approval by the MIS Program



Steering Committee. An important criterion for admission to the MIS program is whether the intended program of study can only be pursued as an interdisciplinary program, rather than being possible within an existing master's program of study, and whether the chairs and program coordinators from the involved departments support the request.

**Plan of Study:**

Within the first semester of entering the MIS program, a student must submit a formal plan of study. This plan must include a list of courses to be taken (or already taken) that will fulfill the interdisciplinary distribution requirement. The plan should also indicate whether the student will pursue the thesis or nonthesis option and the general nature of the final oral examination. The plan of study will be reviewed by the MIS Program Steering Committee. For either the thesis or nonthesis option, the plan of study should meet the expectations of an interdisciplinary program of study. That is, the plan should explain how the proposed coursework and research are interdisciplinary in nature and why the degree cannot be pursued within an existing master's program.

When submitting the plan of study, the primary adviser is responsible for ascertaining whether the proposed coursework will be offered during a reasonable period of time. Also, the adviser is responsible for assuring that the student has a reasonable opportunity to access materials needed to conduct thesis research.

The plan of study will also include a recommendation of whether the degree should be an M.A. or M.S. in interdisciplinary studies and the college/school to which the degree should be aligned.

**Specializations**

- [Emphasis - Community Based Research](#)
- [Emphasis - Gender Studies](#)

