

# INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES (GRADUATE)

## Division of Graduate Studies

Dean: Dr. Sophie Clavier  
ADM 254  
(415) 338-2234

**Note: Admission only by permission. Meeting with a graduate advisor required.** Please see a Graduate Advisor (<http://grad.sfsu.edu/content/advising/>) for information on graduate program options.

### Program Scope

A degree in Interdisciplinary Studies is offered as a Master of Arts and a Master of Science to meet the unique needs and interests of students that cannot be met in a reasonable manner by one of the regularly offered graduate degree programs at San Francisco State University. Students pursuing an Interdisciplinary Studies program must develop a 30-36 unit plan of study that draws on courses from multiple disciplines with the intent to integrate the concepts, perspectives, and methodologies of those disciplines into a focused, central theme which may lead to new ways of looking at a subject, issue, or problem. Usually, courses must be selected from three departments bridging at least two colleges within the University.

The courses to be applied toward the major must be carefully selected for their interrelatedness and general applicability to the objectives of the unique major being proposed. Only major themes that can be supported with integrity by existing coursework and faculty expertise will be approved. Determination of degree designation as an M.S. or M.A. is the decision of the major advisor and the dean of Graduate Studies. This degree cannot be used to meet credential or licensing requirements. Students may not use courses from fields of study, such as nursing, physical therapy, or counseling which lead to licensure or certification unless a single course is specifically authorized by the department chair.

### Eligibility for the Program

All applicants to this program must be eligible for admission to post-baccalaureate study as specified in the graduate admissions (<http://bulletin.sfsu.edu/graduate-education/admissions/>) section of this *Bulletin*. The applicant should present evidence of a 3.25 or better grade point average in the baccalaureate degree or in the last 60 semester units taken, and a pattern of undergraduate coursework that will provide the foundation for the advanced degree work in the approved Interdisciplinary Studies major. Students must demonstrate English competency and proficiency before beginning the program which can be met by earning a score of 4.5 or better on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) or Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) analytical writing section. Students can also demonstrate English proficiency by completing an approved English writing-intensive course. This course can be used to meet this requirement upon approval from the Primary Major Advisor and the Division of Graduate Studies. Students who have earned a master's or doctoral degree will be exempted from the pre-admission writing requirement; however, writing will be assessed based on the applicant's required essays.

Final approval to pursue an interdisciplinary study degree is made by the dean of Graduate Studies.

### Written English Proficiency Requirement

The University has a requirement for written English proficiency that is to be assessed at two different points in a student's program. **Level One** must be met prior to admission. See above in *Eligibility for the Program*. A student who fails to meet the writing criteria will not be admitted.

**Level Two** is determined toward the end of the student's program. The dean of Graduate Studies and faculty overseeing the program will assess Level Two writing through the review of a final paper from a selected graduate course that requires intensive writing. In addition, the major advisor, in consultation with other committee members as necessary, will determine that the student writes in a scholarly manner in the subject area (theme) of the program. Most often the satisfactory completion of a master's thesis or a written field research project will satisfy this second-level requirement. How this second-level requirement is being met must be indicated on the Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) form.

### Advising for the Program

The applicant is responsible for developing the program proposal and obtaining the endorsements of **three** tenured/tenure-track faculty members of the University eligible to work in graduate programs as defined in the *Bulletin*. The primary responsibility for academic program advising will rest with the members of this committee, especially the major advisor. The major advisor must come from a department/program in which a significant amount of the program coursework is to be taken. At least one of the committee members must come from a different department/program from the primary focus of the student's proposal. The dean of Graduate Studies is responsible for the general administration of the program in lieu of the traditional college and department. Students interested in the Interdisciplinary Studies program should meet with a graduate advisor in Administration Building room 254. See the Graduate Studies website (<http://grad.sfsu.edu/content/current-students/graduate-studies-advising/>) for advising information.

### Program Requirements

Students in the Interdisciplinary Studies major must complete all requirements for a master's degree (<http://bulletin.sfsu.edu/graduate-education/academic-policies-procedures/>) offered by the university. In addition, students in the Interdisciplinary Studies program are expected to meet the following standards:

- Maintain close contact with the major advisor and other committee members to assure that the program is carefully planned, and that satisfactory progress is made toward its completion.
- Maintain a 3.0 GPA every semester in all coursework specified for the degree. CR/NC courses are not allowed except for the culminating experience course.
- Make continuous progress toward the degree in every semester until graduation, taking no fewer than nine units toward the degree each year. Courses not related to the degree are not permitted.
- Complete the 30-36 unit degree in no more than five years from the date of enrollment.

### Advancement to Candidacy (ATC)

The Advancement to Candidacy form must:

- Include a minimum of 30-semester units of coursework *exclusive of special (individual) study, experimental, transfer, and credit-by-examination type of credit*.
- Include courses from a minimum of three specified disciplinary areas as directed by the degree advisors;

- Include a minimum of three units of a research methodology and three units of statistics beyond elementary statistics;
- At least 70 percent of the units required for the degree must be in graduate level courses (i.e., numbered 700 and above on this campus);
- Include no more than 12 units of coursework in any one discipline;
- Make provision for a three-unit culminating experience requirement (e.g., 898, thesis; 894, creative work project; 895, field research project; etc.) that utilizes a committee of three faculty advisors sitting on the student's committee; and
- Include the signature of the major and second advisors. The dean of Graduate Studies will review and approve the ATC in lieu of a college coordinator and on behalf of the university.

### **General Procedures for the Program**

Developing an Interdisciplinary Studies degree takes a great deal of initiative, independent thought, and follow-through by the student. To initiate the process:

- a. Meet with a Graduate Studies advisor to review program requirements and processes for developing a proposal.
- b. Meet with the Dean of Graduate Studies to discuss the degree program.
- c. Identify and meet with the primary faculty advisor and two additional tenured or tenure-line faculty members at SF State campus who have the expertise and interest in advising and supporting you in the proposed program of study. The primary faculty advisor must be from a department that offers a graduate degree. Lecturer faculty may not serve on Interdisciplinary Studies committees because lecturer faculty may not be available each semester for advising.
- d. When the proposal form has been approved by all three advisors, submit the proposal with the faculty signatures to the Dean of the Graduate Studies for final approval. Following approval, you must be admitted to the University via the online Cal State Apply (<https://www2.calstate.edu/apply/>).