Policy regarding Interdisciplinary Studies Master’s Programs  
College of Arts and Letters  

It is the practice of the University Office of Graduate Studies [Administration 710] that Interdisciplinary Studies Master’s Programs are initiated, filed, and broadly administrated through the University Office of Graduate Studies. Such a procedural mandate does not override or dictate the particular disciplinary interests and necessary involvement of departments and faculty who agree to facilitate an Interdisciplinary Studies Master’s Program that includes their respective department.

After expressing their interest and intent to establish an Interdisciplinary Studies Major in the Office of Graduate Studies [ADM 710] the following policy applies:

1. All students seeking entrance into an Interdisciplinary Studies Program (ISP) in one or more programs or departments in the College of Arts and Letters must complete the formal application procedures for each of those programs or departments in the College.

2. Departments shall establish the specific eligibility requirements for these applicants in relation to the particular interests of the student for including the department in an Interdisciplinary Studies Master’s Program.

3. No individual faculty member can establish an Interdisciplinary Studies Program for a student outside of the formal departmental procedures of acceptance. The signatures of Department Chairs and contributing Graduate Studies Advisors are required on the official degree Interdisciplinary Studies Major Form. (available on the college web page under “policies” or the website for the Office of Graduate Studies).

4. Upon admission to an Interdisciplinary Studies Program, the student in conjunction with the contributing departments must establish a specific program of study. Graduate Studies Advisors from contributing departments will finalize the course requirements on the program.

   It is the responsibility of the student to establish a committee that is comprised of at least 1 faculty member from the contributing departments/disciplines. The student shall choose a faculty member from the established committee to serve as the chair of the committee.

   The program of study is an established set of courses (no less than 45 units) deemed appropriate for the program of study. The courses that comprise the program need not be of equal division between contributing departments, but significant enough to justify an Interdisciplinary Studies Program. In other words: An Interdisciplinary Studies Master’s Program should not duplicate an existing Master’s program. Many Master’s programs allow students a series of free electives to tailor their educational experience.

5. Course Substitutions: The chair of the committee will serve as the primary point person and advisor for the student, facilitate all appropriate stages of the student’s graduate development and advancement. Substitutions to the program made subsequent to the original program must be approved by signature by the Graduate Advisors of the contributing programs.

   Unless otherwise determined or negotiated, the chair of the committee will also serve as the chair of the student’s thesis committee.

6. The culminating activity in an Interdisciplinary Studies (Master’s) Program in the College of Arts and Letters shall be a Thesis (or Project). Please note: The Department of Modern Languages and Literatures only offers Comprehensive Examinations as the culminating activity in the graduate program; a thesis option is not available.

This established policy will apply to all Interdisciplinary Studies Masters Programs in the College of Arts and Letters and shall apply to all inter-College ISPs as practical.