

**Interdisciplinary
Master of Science in
Interdisciplinary
Studies (MSIS) and
Interdisciplinary
Studies Doctoral
Program (ISDP)
Handbook**

at

Washington State University

2026-2027

Faculty/Student

Revised April 2026

For information on the Interdisciplinary Studies Doctoral Program
At Washington State University, contact:

[The Graduate School](#)

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Letter from the Chair

We are delighted that you have chosen to pursue a graduate degree in Interdisciplinary Studies at Washington State University (WSU). You can expect a rigorous yet rewarding academic experience during your time at WSU. Our high-quality graduate programs foster interdisciplinary training across two or more disciplines, equipping you to address complex research and professional questions through innovative, cross-disciplinary approaches.

The programs are housed within the WSU Graduate School and benefit from strong support from faculty across multiple graduate programs throughout the WSU system. This handbook outlines key information to guide your progress toward your degree. It serves as a comprehensive overview of major requirements and functions as the official policies and procedures for students in the programs. Additionally, it offers guidance for faculty serving on interdisciplinary committees.

As its name suggests, the Interdisciplinary Studies graduate programs are uniquely designed and personalized to align with each student's professional interests and research goals. Although the programs offer considerable flexibility, they are academically rigorous and require active collaboration with the Graduate School and at least two degree-granting academic units. Alongside this handbook, students and faculty must adhere to the most current [Graduate School Policies and Procedures](#). Individual programs may also have specific requirements that complement or exceed Graduate School standards.

If you are considering pursuing a master's or doctoral degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, we encourage you to contact our [academic coordinator](#). We would be happy to discuss how these programs can support your academic and professional aspirations.

Once again, welcome to Interdisciplinary Studies at WSU. We look forward to supporting your success!

Sincerely,



Tammy D. Barry, Ph.D.

Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Education
Chair, Interdisciplinary Studies Programs

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	9
1.1 Overview of Interdisciplinary Graduate Education at WSU.....	9
Shared Features (<i>Both Programs</i>).....	9
1.2 About This Handbook	9
1.3 Relationship to Graduate School Policies & Procedures.....	10
1.4 How to Use This Handbook	10
2. PROGRAM MISSIONS, GOALS & LEARNING OUTCOMES.....	10
2.1 Shared Mission Statement (<i>Both Programs</i>)	10
2.2 MSIS Mission, Goals & Student Learning Outcomes.....	11
Mission (<i>MSIS</i>)	11
Program Goals (<i>MSIS</i>).....	11
Student Learning Outcomes (<i>MSIS</i>)	11
2.3 ISDP Mission, Goals & Student Learning Outcomes.....	12
Mission (<i>ISDP</i>)	12
Program Goals (<i>ISDP</i>)	12
Student Learning Outcomes (<i>ISDP</i>)	13
Program Outcomes (<i>ISDP</i>).....	13
3. PROGRAM STRUCTURE & ADMINISTRATION	14
3.1 Organizational Home (<i>Both Programs</i>).....	14
3.2 Leadership & Administrative Roles (<i>Both Programs</i>)	14
3.3 Governance Committees (<i>Both Programs</i>)	14
Graduate Committee	15
Admissions Committee	15
Examination Committee.....	15
Curriculum Committee	15
Quality Assurance Committee	15
3.4 Residency Requirements (<i>Both Programs</i>)	15
MSIS Residency (<i>MSIS</i>)	15
ISDP Residency (<i>ISDP</i>).....	15
4. ADMISSIONS.....	16
4.1 Shared Admission Principles (<i>Both Programs</i>).....	16
4.2 MSIS Admission Requirements & Process.....	16

Minimum Requirements (<i>MSIS</i>)	16
Application Materials (<i>MSIS</i>)	17
4.3 ISDP Admission Requirements & Process	17
Minimum Requirements (<i>ISDP</i>)	17
Application Materials (<i>ISDP</i>)	17
4.4 Application Deadlines	19
MSIS (<i>MSIS</i>)	19
ISDP (<i>ISDP</i>).....	19
4.5 Application Materials Checklists	19
5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT	19
5.1 Funding Philosophy (<i>Both Programs</i>)	19
5.2 Resources for Finding Support (<i>Both Programs</i>)	19
5.3 Working with Your Committee to Identify Opportunities (<i>Both Programs</i>)	20
6. ADVISORY COMMITTEES.....	20
6.1 Purpose & Importance (<i>Both Programs</i>).....	20
6.2 MSIS Advisory Committee Composition.....	20
Committee Size & Structure (<i>MSIS</i>)	20
Faculty Requirements (<i>MSIS</i>)	20
6.3 ISDP Doctoral Advisory Committee Composition	21
Committee Size & Structure (<i>ISDP</i>).....	21
Faculty Requirements (<i>ISDP</i>)	21
6.4 Roles & Responsibilities	22
6.4.1 Committee Chair Responsibilities (<i>Both Programs</i>)	22
6.4.2 Committee Member Responsibilities (<i>Both Programs</i>).....	22
6.4.3 Student Responsibilities (<i>Both Programs</i>).....	23
6.5 Committee Formation & Changes (<i>Both Programs</i>)	23
7. INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSEWORK	23
7.1 Core Interdisciplinary Courses (<i>Both Programs</i>)	23
INTERDIS 591: Interdisciplinary Studies	24
INTERDIS 598: Interdisciplinary Seminar.....	24
7.2 Disciplinary Course Requirements (<i>Both Programs</i>)	24
7.3 MSIS Program of Study Requirements.....	24
Total Credit Requirement (<i>MSIS</i>)	24

Thesis Option (<i>MSIS</i>)	24
Non-Thesis Option (<i>MSIS</i>)	25
7.4 ISDP Program of Study Requirements	25
Total Credit Requirement (<i>ISDP</i>).....	25
Credit Distribution (<i>ISDP</i>)	25
Typical Course Pattern (<i>ISDP</i>)	25
Program of Study Submission (<i>ISDP</i>)	26
7.5 Transfer Credits (<i>ISDP</i>)	26
Transfer Credit Process (<i>ISDP</i>)	26
Transfer Credit Limits (<i>ISDP</i>)	26
7.6 Grading Requirements (<i>Both Programs</i>).....	26
8. PROGRAM MILESTONES & EXAMINATIONS	26
8.1 MSIS Milestones	26
8.1.1 Committee Formation (<i>MSIS</i>).....	27
8.1.2 Program of Study Approval (<i>MSIS</i>)	27
8.1.3 Thesis or Project Completion & Defense (<i>MSIS</i>)	27
8.2 ISDP Milestones.....	27
8.2.1 Qualifying Examination.....	28
8.2.2 Final Program of Study Submission (<i>ISDP</i>)	30
8.2.3 Preliminary Examination (<i>ISDP</i>).....	30
8.2.4 Dissertation Research (<i>ISDP</i>)	32
8.2.5 Final Doctoral Examination (Defense) (<i>ISDP</i>)	32
9. ACADEMIC STANDARDS & STUDENT CONDUCT	33
9.1 GPA Requirements (<i>Both Programs</i>)	33
9.2 Satisfactory Academic Progress (<i>Both Programs</i>)	33
9.3 Annual Progress Reviews (<i>Both Programs</i>)	33
9.4 Standards of Conduct (<i>Both Programs</i>).....	34
9.5 Dismissal Policies & Procedures (<i>Both Programs</i>)	34
9.6 Academic Grievances & Appeals (<i>Both Programs</i>)	34
10. DEGREE COMPLETION	35
10.1 MSIS Degree Requirements Summary.....	35
10.2 ISDP Degree Requirements Summary	35
10.3 Final Submission Requirements (<i>Both Programs</i>)	36

Thesis/Dissertation Formatting	36
Submission Process.....	36
Registration Requirements	36
10.4 Graduation Process (<i>Both Programs</i>).....	36
11. PATHWAYS BETWEEN PROGRAMS	37
11.1 Movement from ISDP to MSIS.....	37
Eligibility Requirements	37
Application Process	37
Requirements After Transition.....	37
Credit Transfer.....	38
Timeline Considerations.....	38
11.2 Movement from MSIS to ISDP	38
Application Requirements	38
Evaluation Criteria	39
Advantages for MSIS Students	39
Credit Transfer.....	39
Timeline and Process	39
11.3 Application Procedures for Degree Changes	40
General Guidelines	40
Required Documentation	40
Contact Information.....	40
12. RESOURCES & SUPPORT	41
12.1 Graduate School Resources (<i>Both Programs</i>).....	41
Academic Resources	41
Support Services.....	41
Funding Resources	41
12.2 Key Forms & Documents (<i>Both Programs</i>).....	41
Commonly Used Forms.....	41
Form Submission	42
12.3 Important Links (<i>Both Programs</i>)	42
Program Contacts.....	42
University Resources.....	42
Research Compliance	42

Student Support.....	42
12.4 Academic Support Services (<i>Both Programs</i>)	42
Writing Support.....	42
Professional Development.....	43
Research Support	43
12.5 Professional Development Opportunities (<i>Both Programs</i>).....	43
Teaching Experience	43
Conference Presentations	43
Publication Opportunities.....	43
Networking.....	43
Leadership Development.....	43
APPENDICES	44
Appendix A: MSIS Sample Programs of Study.....	44
Sample Program of Study for Thesis Master’s Degree (<i>MSIS</i>)	44
Sample Program of Study for Non-Thesis Master’s Degree (<i>MSIS</i>).....	44
Appendix B: ISDP Application Checklist	45
Application for Admission to ISDP (Fall Semester)	45
Required Application Materials:	45
Appendix C: ISDP Coursework & Requirements Checklist	47
Coursework and Program Requirements	47
Credit Summary.....	48
Appendix D: Key Graduate School Policy References	48
Important Chapters and Sections.....	48
Full Graduate School Policies & Procedures	49
In Case of Conflict.....	49
Appendix E: Timeline Templates	49
MSIS Timeline Template (Thesis Option)	49
ISDP Timeline Template.....	50

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of Interdisciplinary Graduate Education at WSU

Washington State University (WSU) offers two unique interdisciplinary programs housed within the Graduate School:

Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies (MSIS) - Designed for high-achieving students who wish to integrate knowledge from two or more disciplines to address complex professional challenges faced by industries and institutions. The MSIS enables students to become critical and creative thinkers about topics of their interest, developing skills outside traditional disciplinary boundaries that can sometimes feel restrictive.

Interdisciplinary Studies Doctoral Program (ISDP) - Designed for doctoral students pursuing research questions that span multiple traditional disciplines. Established in 1983, the ISDP allows students to address complex research questions requiring a uniquely tailored program that merges insights from various fields. Alumni have embarked on diverse career paths in academia, government, and the private sector.

Many organizations now realize that their best employees are ones with skills from interdisciplinary studies programs as they are equipped with multidimensional problem-solving aptitude, analytical reasoning, and critical thinking. Providing educational breadth, interdisciplinary studies foster an ability to continuously learn and connect knowledge patterns that are especially attractive in today's workplace.

Shared Features (*Both Programs*)

Both programs share several key characteristics:

- **Governed by WSU Graduate School Policies & Procedures (GSP&P):** The Graduate School manual takes precedence over this handbook in case of differences.
- **Require participation from at least two academic disciplines:** Programs must draw from distinct degree-granting units.
- **Require an advisory committee:** Faculty committees mentor students, ensure compliance, and evaluate culminating work.
- **Require physical presence:** Neither program is online-only; *students must be physically present on a WSU campus where most coursework is offered.*
- **Not intended as fallbacks:** These programs are not substitutes for existing single-discipline programs or departments without graduate offerings.

1.2 About This Handbook

This handbook provides information about the MSIS and ISDP programs, *complementing* the latest WSU Graduate School Policies & Procedures Manual, which governs in case of

differences. This guide is tailored for students pursuing these degrees and faculty members who mentor them.

Students and faculty must remain current with all Graduate School policies, which can be found at:

- 1) **Graduate School Policies & Procedures:** <https://confluence.esg.wsu.edu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=266603505>
- 2) **Course Catalog:** <https://catalog.wsu.edu>
- 3) **Graduate School Forms:** <https://gradschool.wsu.edu/forms/>

1.3 Relationship to Graduate School Policies & Procedures

In all cases, the Graduate School Policies & Procedures (GSP&P) manual takes precedence over any policies outlined in this handbook. This handbook provides program-specific guidance that aligns with and may exceed Graduate School standards, but does not supersede Graduate School policies.

1.4 How to Use This Handbook

This handbook is structured for easy navigation depending on your degree pathway:

- **Sections marked MSIS** apply only to Master's students.
- **Sections marked ISDP** apply only to Doctoral students.
- **Sections marked Both** apply to both programs.

Read sections applicable to your program, and consult your advisory committee chair and the *Interdisciplinary Studies Academic Coordinator* with questions.

2. PROGRAM MISSIONS, GOALS & LEARNING OUTCOMES

2.1 Shared Mission Statement (*Both Programs*)

The interdisciplinary programs at WSU provide advanced educational platforms that align with Washington State University's mission to foster innovative and integrated academic programs. These programs synthesize knowledge across multiple disciplines, cultivating multidimensional problem-solving skills, analytical reasoning, critical thinking, and professional adaptability to address complex, real-world challenges. By leveraging WSU's diverse academic resources, these programs produce graduates equipped with interdisciplinary expertise and unique skill sets tailored to contemporary and future societal needs.

2.2 MSIS Mission, Goals & Student Learning Outcomes

Mission (*MSIS*)

The mission of the Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies (MSIS) is to cater to meritorious students seeking to synthesize knowledge from multiple disciplines to address complex, real-world challenges. Such synthesis from two or more disciplines shall develop multidimensional problem-solving skills, analytical reasoning, and critical thinking, enabling unique professional opportunities.

Program Goals (*MSIS*)

1. Foster high-quality interdisciplinary scholarship and professional practice through a multidisciplinary approach, often suitable for exploring complex issues.
2. With the support of WSU's graduate program faculty and the Graduate School, design a master's program that synthesizes expertise across two or more disciplines.
3. Cultivate problem-solving across disciplines, analytical reasoning, and critical and creative thinking related to issues in chosen fields and industries.
4. Support timely degree completion and impactful culminating work that transforms students into skillful professionals, engaged executives, and influential leaders in their chosen fields.
5. By addressing multifaceted challenges through its students and graduate program faculty, the MSIS seeks to make a lasting impact on the local, national, and global stage.

Student Learning Outcomes (*MSIS*)

The MSIS Program is committed to fostering a rich academic environment that nurtures innovative professionals. The program's learning outcomes ensure that students acquire knowledge and develop the skills necessary to apply this knowledge in real-world contexts and fulfill targeted industry demand. Specifically, the program aims to enable students to:

1. Demonstrate a thorough understanding of interdisciplinary concepts and methodologies.
2. Apply interdisciplinary approaches to solve complex problems.
3. Conduct independent and original research that integrates multiple disciplines.
4. Communicate effectively in written and verbal formats across various disciplines.
5. Demonstrate practical skills in their chosen interdisciplinary fields.

2.3 ISDP Mission, Goals & Student Learning Outcomes

The Interdisciplinary Studies Doctoral Program (ISDP) at Washington State University (WSU) is designed for graduate students who want to address research questions spanning multiple traditional disciplines. By collaborating with WSU's graduate program faculty and the Graduate School, these students craft a personalized doctoral program that merges insights from various fields to shed light on multifaceted issues.

WSU has conferred Ph.D. degrees from the Interdisciplinary Studies Doctoral Program since its inception in 1983 (<https://gradschool.wsu.edu/>). Alumni have embarked on diverse career paths, from academia to government and private sector roles. The ISDP offers a unique academic journey, allowing students to delve into a broad spectrum of knowledge.

ISDP's policies and procedures are aligned with WSU's [Graduate School Policies & Procedures \(GSP&P\)](#) - in case of any misalignment, GSP&P must take precedence over.

Due to the unique nature of the ISDP, specific admission and program procedures for ISDP are different from most other programs offered by WSU. In particular, this program is not intended to be a fallback for students who do not qualify for other Ph.D. programs; neither is the ISDP a substitute for departments without Ph.D. offerings.

Mission (*ISDP*)

The mission of the Interdisciplinary Studies Doctoral Program is to support visionary thinkers and transformative leaders who seek to combine the knowledge and processes of two or more disciplines, forging innovative pathways to address contemporary research challenges with depth, insight, and creative solutions.

Program Goals (*ISDP*)

1. The ISDP at WSU is tailored for graduate students pursuing research questions beyond the scope of individual disciplines. This program fosters a multidisciplinary approach, often suitable for exploring complex issues.
2. With the support of WSU's graduate program faculty and the Graduate School, the ISDP supports students in designing a doctoral program that synthesizes expertise across two or more disciplines.
3. The ISDP aims to develop students into adept researchers, engaged educators, and influential leaders in their chosen fields. Under the guidance of experienced faculty mentors, students are equipped to make significant scholarly contributions and lead transformative initiatives.
4. By addressing multifaceted challenges through its students and graduate program faculty, the ISDP seeks to make a lasting impact on the local, national, and global stage.

Student Learning Outcomes (*ISDP*)

The Interdisciplinary Studies Doctoral Program (ISDP) is committed to fostering a rich academic environment that nurtures innovative thinkers. The program's learning outcomes ensure that students acquire knowledge and develop the skills necessary to apply this knowledge in academic and real-world contexts.

1. Equip students with a tailored interdisciplinary framework. Through the ISDP, students will:

- a. Articulate the importance of using an interdisciplinary framework for answering specific complex questions.
- b. Acquire a deep understanding of relevant concepts, methodologies, and materials from at least two disciplines that form the foundation of their studies.
- c. Gain hands-on experience applying knowledge from these disciplines, promoting creative and integrative thought processes.
- d. Engage with the broader academic community by participating in professional organizations.

2. Enable students to become influential researchers, teachers, and thinkers. The program ensures that students:

- a. Benefit from the guidance of mentors from at least two disciplines, fostering interdisciplinary research and integrative thinking.
- b. Develop into independent researchers in their interdisciplinary field, amassing expertise that enables them to contribute original insights.
- c. Formulate research questions based on a thorough understanding of past and present studies in the field and demonstrate this knowledge proficiently.
- d. Employ robust research methodologies to address their research questions and articulate these methods clearly.
- e. Analyze and interpret research data cogently, drawing meaningful conclusions.
- f. Produce and share their research findings in peer-reviewed journals and present their work at local, regional, and national professional conferences.

Program Outcomes (*ISDP*)

The ISDP is dedicated to upholding and elevating the stature of interdisciplinary studies at WSU. To this end, the program seeks to:

1. **Attract and Cultivate Excellence:** Recruit excellent students and innovative thinkers, empowering them to merge insights from multiple disciplines. The goal is

to further knowledge and drive real-world change through this integrated understanding.

2. **Prioritize Effective Mentorship:** Offer robust advising and mentorship to support students' progress and timely graduation.
 3. **Facilitate Successful Career Placements:** Support graduates in successfully competing for positions in academia and industry, reflecting the program's quality and relevance.
 4. **Foster Continuous Communication:** Maintain open communication with disciplinary programs and faculty. This goal emphasizes attracting nationally acclaimed faculty, offering cutting-edge courses, and championing integrative, interdisciplinary studies. Such efforts ensure regular engagement with ISDP students and their research endeavors.
-

3. PROGRAM STRUCTURE & ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Organizational Home (*Both Programs*)

Both the MSIS and ISDP are housed in the Graduate School. The Graduate School oversees policy compliance, degree clearance, and quality assurance for both programs.

3.2 Leadership & Administrative Roles (*Both Programs*)

Chair: The Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Education serves as Chair of both interdisciplinary programs, acting as both Department/Program Chair and Dean. The Chair has final oversight of all structural and governance matters.

Program Director: The Associate Dean and Associate Vice Provost (AD and AVP) for Interdisciplinary Initiatives serves as Program Director. In consultation with the Chair, the Program Director oversees the strategic and academic direction, formulates policies, and represents the programs' interests to the broader university community.

Academic Coordinator: The Academic Coordinator assists the Director in supporting students and faculty, managing operations and support systems. The Academic Coordinator is the first point of contact for prospective and current students and can be reached at iidp.graduate.school@wsu.edu.

All leadership appointments are made by the Chair.

3.3 Governance Committees (*Both Programs*)

Both programs share the same governance structure, with committees consisting of the three Associate Deans and Associate Vice Provosts of the Graduate School (AD and AVP

for Interdisciplinary Initiatives, AD and AVP for Graduate Academic Programs, and AD and AVP for Graduate Enrollment Management). This shared governance ensures consistency across both programs while allowing for program-specific decisions when needed.

Graduate Committee

Makes recommendations to the Chair on emergent and future-oriented strategic issues.

Admissions Committee

Meets in person or online for admissions-related decision-making during spring and summer when needed. Makes recommendations to the Chair, who is the final arbiter.

Examination Committee

Meets in person or online for student examination and/or grade-related decisions when needed. Makes recommendations to the Chair, who is the final arbiter.

Curriculum Committee

Oversees curriculum matters for both programs.

Quality Assurance Committee

Monitors and ensures program quality.

3.4 Residency Requirements (*Both Programs*)

Neither program is an online-only or global campus program. Both programs require students to be physically present on one of the WSU campuses during the program; that is, on the campus where most of the coursework listed in the program of study is offered. This ensures students can fully engage with faculty, peers, and campus resources across disciplines.

MSIS Residency (*MSIS*)

Students must be physically present on a WSU campus. Any exceptions to this residency requirement shall be mutually agreed upon by the student, their program of study chair, and the Director of MSIS.

ISDP Residency (*ISDP*)

Students must be physically present on one of the WSU campuses during the program. While it is preferred that students choose a campus that supports at least one of their disciplines and where their major professor is located, these are not strict requirements. Any exceptions to this residency requirement shall be mutually agreed upon by the student, their committee chair, and the ISDP Director.

4. ADMISSIONS

4.1 Shared Admission Principles (*Both Programs*)

Both programs welcome applications from students preferably from accredited or equivalent high-quality institutions. Admission is selective, prioritizing dedicated, innovative, and high-achieving students. The selection process holistically evaluates the applicant's potential for thriving in an interdisciplinary setting.

Key Admission Criteria:

- Successful candidates must exhibit motivation and aptitude for multidisciplinary coursework and research (MSIS) or multidisciplinary research (ISDP).
- The proposed research or study topic must primarily span at least two disciplines that may only be addressed outside any existing Master's program (MSIS) or Ph.D. program (ISDP) at WSU.
- If an admitted student later shifts their focus, reapplication to a specific program may be necessary.

The admission process follows the Graduate School Policies and Procedures (Chapter 4 - Applications and Admissions), which governs in case of differences.

4.2 MSIS Admission Requirements & Process

The MSIS requires a bachelor's degree and focuses on professional development through interdisciplinary coursework and a culminating project or thesis.

Minimum Requirements (MSIS)

1. Hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a minimum GPA of 3.0.
2. Submit an initial program proposal of no more than three pages covering:
 - The interdisciplinary statement of purpose
 - Discussion of the applications and contributions of specific learning to the world
 - Identification and justification for the two (or more) essential academic disciplines
3. Provide a curriculum vitae or resume providing evidence of capability for completing coursework, project or thesis in due course, and independent research.
4. Submit three recommendation letters highlighting academic ability, experience, and potential for interdisciplinary research.

Application Materials (MSIS)

Applications are submitted through the Graduate School website. Required materials include:

1. Online application and supporting materials.
2. Official transcripts showing minimum 3.0 GPA.
3. Program proposal, three pages or less (as described above)
4. Curriculum vitae or resume
5. Three letters of recommendation

4.3 ISDP Admission Requirements & Process

In contrast to the MSIS, the ISDP is research-intensive and typically requires a master's degree plus demonstrated research capability. The admission process is more extensive, requiring advance committee formation.

Minimum Requirements (ISDP)

1. Hold a degree from accredited or equivalent high-quality institutions with a minimum GPA of 3.0:
 - **Master's degree is preferred.**
 - Exceptional candidates with a bachelor's degree and substantial research experience may be considered, contingent upon the endorsement of a faculty of the Graduate School and the discretion of the ISDP Program Director
2. Provide evidence of capability for independent research within the application.
3. Identify and secure written commitments from potential committee members (prerequisite for admission).
4. Engage in a preliminary discussion about research interests with the ISDP Program Director.

Application Materials (ISDP)

Applications are submitted through the Graduate School website. Applications will not be reviewed until they are complete. Required materials include:

1. **Online application and supporting materials.**
2. **Three recommendation letters** highlighting the applicant's academic ability, experience, and potential for independent Ph.D. research.
3. **Transcripts** that reflect:
 - Minimum 3.0 GPA in graduate coursework.

- Minimum 3.0 GPA in undergraduate coursework.
 - WSU students are exempted from submitting WSU transcripts.
4. **Statement of purpose** (no more than three pages) delineating:
- a. Identification of the proposed research topic/area preferably with research questions
 - b. A brief description of the relevance of the proposed research with relevant academic citations from diverse disciplines, and its potential contributions to the fields of research. Example: “Prior research shows that instructors benefit from having a critical awareness of the identities and context in which their students exist (Major and Palmer, 2006; Slay and Smith, 2011; Walton and Yeager, 2020).”
 - c. A detailed explanation of why the research topic cannot be pursued in a single academic discipline at WSU.
 - d. Identification of two or more distinct academic disciplines (from different degree-granting colleges/units) that could enable exploring the research questions effectively.
 - e. Identification that one of the disciplines identified above must offer doctoral degrees on its own.
5. **Proposed program of study** listing proposed coursework from the disciplines identified above.
6. **Written commitment from a minimum of four faculty members** (including potential Chair of the program/dissertation committee) representing each of the two or more distinct disciplines (academic degree-granting units) to serve on student’s doctoral committee:
- Committee members should be listed as faculty of the Graduate School (<https://gradschool.wsu.edu/faculty-of-the-graduate-school/>).
 - If two disciplines are chosen, two faculty members should preferably be from each discipline.
 - Three of the four faculty (including the committee chair) must be Graduate Faculty (e.g., tenure track appointment).
 - Others could be Associate Graduate Faculty (e.g., career track appointment) or Auxiliary Graduate Faculty.
 - Non-WSU faculty could be approved as a fourth committee member as an exception, if considered an expert in the research topic, documented by a memo from the chair with supporting CV.
7. **Emails from faculty members** sent directly to the ISDP Academic Coordinator indicating their commitment to serve on the student’s ISDP doctoral committee. In

the email, the faculty should include a brief statement of how their expertise will contribute to the interdisciplinary nature of the student's proposed research.

8. **Summary statement** (no more than 2 pages) by the student discussing how the identified faculty members' research expertise will contribute to the student's ISDP research and program of study.

4.4 Application Deadlines

MSIS

Applications should be submitted by January 10 for priority consideration for fall admission. Typically, no spring admission is offered. Applications will not be reviewed until they are complete. Contact the Academic Coordinator for current deadlines.

ISDP

Applications should be submitted by January 10 for priority consideration for fall admission. Typically no spring admission is offered. Applications will not be reviewed until they are complete.

4.5 Application Materials Checklists

See **Appendix B** (ISDP Application Checklist) and contact the Academic Coordinator for MSIS-specific guidance.

5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

5.1 Funding Philosophy (*Both Programs*)

Neither the MSIS nor the ISDP directly offers assistantships or scholarships. Students are responsible for personally securing their funding through university departments or other means. While this requires proactive effort, it also provides flexibility—students can seek funding from any department whose faculty serve on their committee, potentially opening more opportunities than single-discipline programs.

5.2 Resources for Finding Support (*Both Programs*)

The Graduate School website provides links to potential funding opportunities at WSU, including:

- Departmental teaching or research assistantships
- Graduate School fellowships and awards
- External fellowships and grants

- Other university funding opportunities

Visit <https://gradschool.wsu.edu> for current funding resources.

5.3 Working with Your Committee to Identify Opportunities (*Both Programs*)

Students are encouraged to collaborate with their advisory committee to:

- Explore departmental funding within committee members' units.
- Identify external funding sources relevant to their research.
- Develop competitive applications for fellowships and grants.
- Seek guidance on grant writing and funding strategies.

Your interdisciplinary committee gives you access to funding opportunities across multiple departments—use this advantage strategically.

6. ADVISORY COMMITTEES

6.1 Purpose & Importance (*Both Programs*)

The advisory committee is pivotal in guiding students throughout their interdisciplinary program. The committee assists students with their formal proposal and guides them through degree completion. The committee provides critical oversight of a comprehensive graduate program for the students. Because interdisciplinary work crosses traditional boundaries, your committee's diverse expertise is essential to your success.

6.2 MSIS Advisory Committee Composition

Committee Size & Structure (*MSIS*)

The MSIS advisory committee includes **at least three faculty members** from two different academic disciplines.

Faculty Requirements (*MSIS*)

Of the three advisory committee members:

1. **A minimum of two members must be Graduate Faculty** within the Faculty of the Graduate School
2. **Other members may be Associate Graduate Faculty or Auxiliary Graduate Faculty** within the Faculty of the Graduate School

3. **Within a three-member committee, up to one non-WSU faculty may be approved** for the committee. To be approved, they must be an expert in the research topic, as documented by a memo from the chair of the student's advisory committee, with a supporting CV.
4. **The committee chair must be a Graduate Faculty member** and should have previous experience on Master's committees.
5. **Faculty must be from at least two academic degree-granting departments or programs.**
6. **At least one of the two academic disciplines must be a Master's-granting unit.**

6.3 ISDP Doctoral Advisory Committee Composition

The ISDP requires a larger committee to reflect the greater scope and rigor of doctoral research.

Committee Size & Structure (ISDP)

The doctoral advisory committee comprises **a minimum of four faculty members** from at least two academic disciplines.

Faculty Requirements (ISDP)

Of the four advisory committee members:

1. **A minimum of two members must be Graduate Faculty** within the Faculty of the Graduate School
2. **Other members may be Associate Graduate Faculty or Auxiliary Graduate Faculty** within the Faculty of the Graduate School
3. **Within a four-member committee, up to one non-WSU faculty may be approved** for the committee. To be approved, they must be an expert in the research topic, as documented by a memo from the chair of the student's advisory committee, with a supporting CV.
4. **The committee chair must be a Graduate Faculty member** and should have previous experience on doctoral committees. An Associate Graduate Faculty member can serve as a co-chair.
5. **Faculty must be from at least two academic degree-granting departments or programs.**
6. **At least one of the two academic disciplines must be a Ph.D.-granting unit.**

6.4 Roles & Responsibilities

Clear understanding of roles helps committees' function smoothly and students' progress successfully.

6.4.1 Committee Chair Responsibilities (*Both Programs*)

The chair is the primary mentor, ensuring regular interactions given the student's unique positioning within the interdisciplinary program. Responsibilities encompass:

1. Assisting in the student's program proposal development
2. Facilitating paperwork and being aware of deadlines
3. Holding regular student meetings
4. Resolving issues and liaising with the Program Director or Academic Coordinator when necessary
5. Recommending courses, faculty, and resources
6. Conducting annual student progress reviews
7. Assisting in scheduling exams and ensuring proper proctoring
8. Overseeing research and writing
9. Chairing committee meetings
10. Directing students to relevant resources

6.4.2 Committee Member Responsibilities (*Both Programs*)

The committee provides critical oversight of a comprehensive graduate program for the student. Responsibilities include:

1. Attending key committee meetings
2. Approving the Program of Study
3. Approving the thesis/project proposal (MSIS) or research proposal/qualifying exam (ISDP)
4. Recommending coursework and faculty resources
5. Evaluating the project or thesis (MSIS) or written preliminary examination and conducting oral preliminary examination (ISDP)
6. Reviewing dissertation drafts and conducting the final oral defense (ISDP only)

6.4.3 Student Responsibilities (*Both Programs*)

Students must adhere to all Graduate School Policies and Procedures and uphold WSU's standards of conduct. They are responsible for:

1. Forming their degree advisory committee
2. Submitting all necessary paperwork promptly
3. Ensuring a complete approved advisory committee
4. Replacing committee members if needed (with approval)
5. Maintaining a 3.0 GPA or above
6. Maintaining satisfactory research course grades
7. Reviewing the Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual as it takes precedence over this handbook:
<https://confluence.esg.wsu.edu/spaces/MPS/pages/266603505/Graduate+School+Policies+and+Procedures>
8. Reviewing appropriate forms at: <https://gradschool.wsu.edu/forms/>

6.5 Committee Formation & Changes (*Both Programs*)

Formation Timeline: - MSIS students should form their committee early in their program - ISDP students must identify committee members as part of the admission process.

Committee Changes: Students may need to change committee members due to faculty departures, conflicts, or changes in research direction. Any changes must be:

1. Discussed with the current committee chair
2. Approved by the new committee member
3. Documented using appropriate Graduate School forms
4. Reviewed by the Program Director (especially for chair changes)

Major changes in the committee, especially for the committee chair, necessitate a review of the student's program by the Program Director.

7. INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSEWORK

7.1 Core Interdisciplinary Courses (*Both Programs*)

The Graduate School offers two interdisciplinary graduate-level courses required for both programs:

INTERDIS 591: Interdisciplinary Studies

- **Credits:** 1 credit hour
- **Grading:** Graded (A-F)
- **Description:** A course for interdisciplinary research students
- **When Taken:** Typically in the first or second semester

INTERDIS 598: Interdisciplinary Seminar

- **Credits:** 1 credit hour
- **Grading:** Satisfactory/Fail
- **Description:** A course that prepares students to complete the MSIS project/thesis or ISDP qualifying examination requirement
- **When Taken:**
 - MSIS: As determined by student and committee
 - ISDP: Typically third semester (only offered in fall)

7.2 Disciplinary Course Requirements (*Both Programs*)

Both programs require coursework from at least two distinct academic disciplines:

- **At least six graded credit hours** must be taken from each of the two independent degree-granting academic disciplines
- Students will typically take **a minimum of nine credits** from at least one of the two or more degree-granting disciplines
- Courses must be at the graduate level (500-level or above, with specific requirements below)

7.3 MSIS Program of Study Requirements

The MSIS totals 30 credits with different distributions depending on whether you choose the thesis or non-thesis option.

Total Credit Requirement (*MSIS*)

30 credits minimum total

Thesis Option (*MSIS*)

Credit Distribution: - **21 hours minimum** of graded (A-F) coursework, which may include up to 6 hours of undergraduate 300-400 level graded coursework - **4 hours minimum** of 700-level research credit, 2 of which must be taken in the semester of the final exam or thesis completion - Courses taken for audit or courses graded Pass/Fail may not be used on the Program of Study

Interdisciplinary Requirements: - At least six graded credit hours from each of the two independent degree-granting academic disciplines - INTERDIS 591: Interdisciplinary Studies (1 hour; graded) - INTERDIS 598: Interdisciplinary Seminar (1 hour; satisfactory/fail)

See Appendix A for sample Thesis Program of Study

Non-Thesis Option (MSIS)

Credit Distribution: - **26 hours minimum** of graded (A-F) coursework, which may include up to 9 hours of undergraduate 300-400 level graded coursework - **2 hours minimum** of 702-level research credit, 2 of which must be taken in the semester of the final exam/project completion - Courses taken for audit or courses graded Pass/Fail may not be used on the Program of Study

Interdisciplinary Requirements: - At least six graded credit hours from each of the two independent degree-granting academic disciplines - INTERDIS 591: Interdisciplinary Studies (1 hour; graded) - INTERDIS 598: Interdisciplinary Seminar (1 hour; satisfactory/fail)

See Appendix A for sample Non-Thesis Program of Study

7.4 ISDP Program of Study Requirements

The ISDP requires substantially more credits than the MSIS, reflecting its doctoral-level research focus.

Total Credit Requirement (ISDP)

72 credits minimum total

Credit Distribution (ISDP)

1. Core Courses for the Ph.D. in ISDP: - **Minimum 15 semester hours** of graded graduate-level courses, which include: - At least six graded credit hours from each of the two academic disciplines - INTERDIS 591: Interdisciplinary Studies (1 hour; graded)

2. Research: - INTERDIS 598: Interdisciplinary Seminar (1 hour; satisfactory/fail) - **Minimum of 20 semester hours** of doctoral research credits (INTERDIS 800)

3. Additional Credits: Any additional credits required to reach the 72 required semester hours for a doctoral degree can be fulfilled with non-graded graduate credits.

Typical Course Pattern (ISDP)

ISDP students typically take **a minimum of three courses in each of the two disciplines**, totaling at least 18 credit hours. This exceeds the minimum requirement but provides strong disciplinary foundation.

Program of Study Submission (*ISDP*)

After the program proposal's approval (qualifying exam), the Graduate School will officially review the Program of Study. The Program of Study can be updated over time based on the advice by the student's doctoral advisory committee and ISDP graduate committee as needed. Any subsequent changes in coursework must be filed using the appropriate form from the Graduate School.

See Appendix C for ISDP Coursework & Requirements Checklist

7.5 Transfer Credits (*ISDP*)

The ISDP will consider transferable credits that are applicable to the discipline areas chosen for the degree. Any credits transferred will count toward the 72 required credits for the degree.

Transfer Credit Process (*ISDP*)

1. The doctoral advisory committee member(s) with the respective expertise will be asked to review the syllabus from any course to be transferred
2. Committee members approve or do not approve the transfer
3. If approved, the course can be added to the student's doctoral program of study
4. Official review of transfer credits occurs after the program proposal's approval

Transfer Credit Limits (*ISDP*)

In all transfer cases, the number of such credit hours is limited to no more than half of the total graded course credits required by the ISDP (9 credit hours maximum).

7.6 Grading Requirements (*Both Programs*)

- Students must maintain a **minimum 3.0 GPA** in all graduate coursework
 - Research courses (700-level for MSIS, 800-level for ISDP) must receive **Satisfactory** grades
 - Courses graded Pass/Fail or taken for audit may not be used on the Program of Study (except INTERDIS 598)
-

8. PROGRAM MILESTONES & EXAMINATIONS

8.1 MSIS Milestones

The MSIS has a streamlined milestone structure focused on committee formation, coursework, and culminating work.

8.1.1 Committee Formation (MSIS)

Students should form their advisory committee early in their program. The committee must be in place before the Program of Study is approved.

8.1.2 Program of Study Approval (MSIS)

The Program of Study must be: 1. Developed in consultation with the advisory committee 2. Approved and signed by all committee members 3. Submitted to the Graduate School for final approval 4. Filed using appropriate Graduate School forms

The approved Program of Study details the student's committee composition and course requirements.

8.1.3 Thesis or Project Completion & Defense (MSIS)

Thesis Option: 1. Complete thesis research and writing under committee guidance 2. Submit draft to committee for review 3. Schedule and complete thesis defense 4. Make revisions as required by committee 5. Submit final thesis to Graduate School following formatting requirements

Non-Thesis Project Option: 1. Complete project under committee guidance 2. Submit project materials to committee for review 3. Complete project evaluation as determined by committee 4. Submit final materials as required

Students must be registered for the appropriate research credits (700-level or 702-level) during the semester of completion.

8.2 ISDP Milestones

1) Approval of the Doctoral Program of Study:

A student's program of study consists of an official list of courses for the doctoral program approved and signed by the doctoral advisory committee. Preliminary Program of Study is submitted at the time of admission. It lists proposed course work from the required disciplines. It is:

1. Approved by the Program Director
2. Submitted by the Academic Coordinator to the Graduate School for approval
3. Updated over time as needed based on advice by the student's doctoral advisory committee and ISDP graduate committee

2) Examination-related milestones that must be completed in sequence:

1. Qualifying Examination
2. Preliminary Examination
3. Dissertation and Final Defense

8.2.1 Qualifying Examination

Development Process:

1. The research paper is developed in INTERDIS 598 (typically taken in third semester, fall only).
2. The research paper first gets approved by the INTERDIS 598 instructor, earning “Satisfactory” grade.
3. The approved paper is presented to the student’s doctoral program advisory committee for approval.
 - Committee members may suggest improvements in the research paper.
 - Improvements shall be considered for the updated version based on the student’s and their chair’s discretion.
4. Each doctoral program advisory committee member sends an email to the INTERDIS 598 instructor with a copy to the student regarding their decision to approve or not, with their rationale in brief.
5. The student compiles the feedback as a single document and sends this comprehensive feedback document to the INTERDIS 598 instructor and ISDP Academic Coordinator
6. The instructor presents the comprehensive document and committee members’ decisions for review by the ISDP graduate committee.
7. ISDP graduate committee’s approval certifies successful completion of the ISDP qualifying examination.

Key Features (ISDP)

- The program proposal is a comprehensive document showcasing a cohesive interdisciplinary doctoral study plan.
- Upon approval of the program proposal, the student must submit their Program of Study form detailing the student’s committee composition and course requirements.
- Major changes in the committee, especially for the committee chair, necessitate a review of the student’s program by the Program Director

Elements Required in the Program Proposal (ISDP)

The program proposal should include:

1. **Summary Statement:** A concise description of the proposal objective, the disciplines chosen, and the rationale for an interdisciplinary approach.
2. **Description of the Student’s Interdisciplinary Studies Doctoral Program:** An overview of the proposed areas of study and the knowledge that each contributes.

3. **Interest Areas:** Identify and describe two interest areas to be covered throughout the doctoral process.
4. **Degree-Granting Units:** Identify the two main disciplines that support the interest areas; at least one must be a doctoral degree-granting unit.
5. **Doctoral Advisory Committee:** List of committee members and their contributions
6. **Program of Study:** An official list of courses for the doctoral program approved and signed by the doctoral advisory committee. Following approval of the qualifying exam, the Program of Study will be approved by the Program Director and submitted by the Academic Coordinator to the Graduate School for approval. This program of study can be updated over time based on the advice by the student's doctoral advisory committee and ISDP graduate committee as needed.
7. **Justification for Interdisciplinary Approach:** Explain why the proposed program is unique and does not fit within any one graduate program at WSU.
8. **Proposed Dissertation Research:** Briefly describe the proposed dissertation topic. This description will serve as the basis for the preliminary examination.
9. **Timeline:** Expected milestones for coursework completion, examinations, research, and graduation
10. **References:** A list of sources referenced in the program proposal

The Approval Process (ISDP)

Approval of the program proposal by the doctoral program advisory committee and ISDP graduate committee signifies successful completion of the ISDP qualifying examination. Once the program proposal is approved, the student will receive an official letter or email acknowledging the committee's decision.

Qualifying Exam Appeals (ISDP)

In the Interdisciplinary Studies Doctoral Program (ISDP), students are granted the opportunity to retake the qualifying exam if they fail their first attempt. ISDP will follow WSU's Graduate School Policies & Procedures (GSP&P) to address appeals. Please review Chapter 12 of the Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual.

Post-First Attempt Action Plan:

After an unsuccessful first attempt, the student's advisory committee chair and the Program Director will collaborate to devise a comprehensive improvement plan. This plan will outline specific, measurable milestones tailored to address the areas where the student needs enhancement.

Communication:

The improvement plan will be transparently shared with the student's full committee to ensure all members are aligned in their expectations and support for the student's progress.

Timing for the Second Attempt:

A minimum waiting period after the first attempt may be recommended by the student's committee and/or ISDP graduate committee. This will be solely to allow the student ample time to work on the areas of improvement identified in the action plan.

Should a student not succeed on their second attempt:

1. **Recommendation for Dismissal:** The student's advisory committee chair will formally recommend the student's dismissal from the ISDP program. This recommendation is based on the premise that the student has been given ample guidance and time to address areas of weakness but has not demonstrated the necessary proficiency or understanding to continue in the program.
2. **Appeal Process:** To initiate the appeal process:
 - The student must submit a written and signed appeal.
 - The appeal must be directed to the "Dean and Vice Provost" at the Graduate School.
 - This appeal must be lodged within 15 days from the date the student receives the official notification of the recommended dismissal, or it will not be accepted, resulting in student's dismissal from the program.

The appeal process is designed to ensure that all perspectives are considered, and decisions are made in the best interest of both the student and the academic standards of the ISDP.

8.2.2 Final Program of Study Submission (ISDP)

Final Program of Study is typically due to the Academic Coordinator in the third week of September or February following qualifying exam approval.

8.2.3 Preliminary Examination (ISDP)

Overview (ISDP)

Successful oral presentation built on the student's approved program proposal toward their qualifying examination to the student's doctoral advisory committee signifies successful completion of the preliminary examination.

The written proposal for this exam could be a further developed document based on the feedback from relevant committees. An oral presentation to the doctoral advisory committee and their approval is pivotal in signifying the successful completion of the

preliminary examination. **Overall, the preliminary examination includes both written and oral components.**

Key Points (ISDP)

- The preliminary examination can be taken any time after passing the qualifying exam, provided the student has an approved program of study with **no more than six graded credits remaining.**
- Students must register for **at least two credits of INTERDIS 800** in the semester they plan to take their preliminary examination.
- The examination must be scheduled through the Graduate School via the ISDP Academic Coordinator **at least ten working days before the oral exam.**
- The examination process follows the Graduate School Policies and Procedures

Roles and Responsibilities in the Preliminary Exam (ISDP)

Doctoral Advisory Committee: The committee collaborates with the student to design the preliminary examination. They are responsible for drafting and reviewing the written portion of the exam, providing feedback, and evaluating the student's performance.

Chair: The chair organizes committee meetings, provides feedback to the student, and may assist in logistical arrangements for the exam.

Student: The student must be familiar with all relevant policies and procedures, register for the required credits, schedule the examination, and ensure all documentation is in order.

Components of a Typical Preliminary Examination (ISDP)

1. Written Research Proposal:

This proposal should clearly define the research question, its context, and how it relates to the various fields of study in the ISDP. The research proposal should comply with a format agreed upon by the student and their committee.

If the student's research involves human or animal subjects, they must receive university approval before beginning their research, using the forms available from the Office of Research Assurances at WSU.

A copy of the final research proposal must be provided to the Program Director.

2. Oral Examination:

The entire doctoral advisory committee conducts the oral examination. The Program Director may also be present.

- The student formally presents their research proposal during the oral examination in an open meeting.
- In defense of that research proposal, the student may be asked to address:
 - Specific methods or assumptions of the proposed research
 - Any questions remaining after committee members have read the written examination.
 - Any questions related to the scholarship.
- At the close of the oral examination, the doctoral advisory committee members will vote on whether the student has passed or failed the preliminary examination.

3. Approval Process:

The committee members will share their decision to pass or not and its rationale with the ISDP Director—they may do so through the chair or independently. The Director will share the committee’s decision and rationale with the ISDP graduate committee. ISDP graduate committee’s approval certifies successful completion of the ISDP preliminary examination.

Second Preliminary Exam Attempt (ISDP)

In the event of a failed first attempt of a preliminary examination, a second and final attempt may be scheduled as per Chapter One and Chapter Eight of the WSU’s Graduate School Policies & Procedures (GSP&P).

A student who has failed two preliminary examinations will be dismissed from the Graduate School.

The student may appeal their dismissal by following the procedures outlined in Chapter 12 of the Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual.

8.2.4 Dissertation Research (ISDP)

The dissertation is the culmination of the student’s research. The doctoral advisory committee has final approval of the dissertation scope and format.

Please review Chapter 8, Section F (Doctoral Final Exam Policies) and Chapter 6, Section H (Submitting the Final Thesis or Dissertation to the Graduate School) for details.

Students continue to register for INTERDIS 800 research credits while conducting dissertation research, with a minimum of 20 total research credits required.

8.2.5 Final Doctoral Examination (Defense) (ISDP)

This is the final defense of the student’s research and dissertation. The examination process follows the Graduate School Policies and Procedures.

Please review these policies in Chapter 8, Section F (Doctoral Degree Requirements – Doctoral Final Exam Policies).

Key Requirements: - Complete dissertation must be submitted to committee in advance (timing determined by committee) - Defense must be scheduled through Graduate School - Defense is open to the university community - Committee votes on acceptance of dissertation - Revisions may be required before final approval - Final dissertation must be submitted to Graduate School following formatting requirements.

9. ACADEMIC STANDARDS & STUDENT CONDUCT

Both programs maintain high academic and professional standards. Understanding these expectations helps you succeed and avoid problems.

9.1 GPA Requirements (*Both Programs*)

All students must maintain a **minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0** in all graduate coursework taken at WSU.

Failure to maintain this minimum may result in academic probation or dismissal from the program.

9.2 Satisfactory Academic Progress (*Both Programs*)

In addition to GPA requirements, satisfactory progress includes:

- Timely completion of coursework
- Satisfactory grades in research courses (INTERDIS 598, 700-level credits for MSIS, 800-level credits for ISDP)
- Meeting milestone deadlines as established by the program and committee
- Regular communication with advisory committee
- Adherence to Graduate School policies and procedures

9.3 Annual Progress Reviews (*Both Programs*)

Committee chairs are responsible for conducting annual student progress reviews. These reviews assess:

- Academic performance and GPA
- Progress toward degree milestones
- Research productivity
- Professional development
- Any issues or concerns

Students should work with their chair to address any concerns identified in annual reviews.

9.4 Standards of Conduct (*Both Programs*)

Students must uphold WSU's standards of conduct, including:

- Academic integrity (no plagiarism, fabrication, or cheating)
- Ethical research conduct
- Professional behavior with faculty, staff, and peers
- Compliance with university policies

Violations may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program.

9.5 Dismissal Policies & Procedures (*Both Programs*)

The conditions for a student's dismissal are the same as detailed in the Graduate Program Policies & Procedures Manual. Please review [Chapter 6.3](#)

Common grounds for dismissal include:

- Failure to maintain 3.0 GPA.
- Unsatisfactory progress toward degree
- Violation of academic integrity or conduct standards.
- Failure of qualifying or preliminary examinations (after allowed attempts)
- Failure to complete degree within time limits.

Dismissal Process:

1. Advisory committee chair typically initiates dismissal recommendation.
2. Program Director reviews recommendation.
3. Dean of Graduate School makes final decision.
4. Student is notified in writing.
5. Student has right to appeal (see Chapter 12 of GSP&P).

9.6 Academic Grievances & Appeals (*Both Programs*)

Students who believe they have been treated unfairly or wish to appeal a decision should:

1. First attempt to resolve the issue with the involved faculty member or committee chair.
2. If unresolved, contact the Program Director.
3. Follow formal grievance procedures outlined in Chapter 12 of the Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual.

Time limits apply to grievances and appeals. Students should act promptly and review Graduate School policies carefully.

10. DEGREE COMPLETION

10.1 MSIS Degree Requirements Summary

To complete the MSIS degree, students must:

1. **Complete all required coursework** (30 credits minimum):
 - Thesis: 21 graded + 4 research credits minimum
 - Non-thesis: 26 graded + 4 research credits minimum
2. **Maintain 3.0 GPA** in all graduate coursework
3. **Complete INTERDIS 591** (Interdisciplinary Studies) with passing grade
4. **Complete INTERDIS 598** (Interdisciplinary Seminar) with Satisfactory grade
5. **Include at least 6 graded credits from each of two disciplines** (one must be Master's-granting)
6. **Complete thesis or project** as approved by advisory committee
7. **Successfully defend thesis** (thesis option) or complete project evaluation
8. **Submit all required paperwork** to Graduate School
9. **Follow Graduate School formatting requirements** for final submission

10.2 ISDP Degree Requirements Summary

To complete the ISDP degree, students must:

1. **Complete all required coursework** (72 credits minimum):
 - 15 graded credits minimum (6 from each of two disciplines)
 - 20 INTERDIS 800 research credits minimum
 - Additional credits as needed to reach 72 total
2. **Maintain 3.0 GPA** in all graduate coursework
3. **Complete INTERDIS 591** (Interdisciplinary Studies) with passing grade
4. **Complete INTERDIS 598** (Interdisciplinary Seminar) with Satisfactory grade
5. **Pass qualifying examination** (program proposal approval) by end of fourth semester
6. **Submit approved Program of Study** to Graduate School
7. **Pass preliminary examination** (written proposal and oral defense)

8. **Complete dissertation research** under committee guidance
9. **Successfully defend dissertation** in final oral examination
10. **Submit all required paperwork** to Graduate School
11. **Follow Graduate School formatting requirements** for final dissertation submission

10.3 Final Submission Requirements (*Both Programs*)

Thesis/Dissertation Formatting

- Must follow current Graduate School formatting guidelines
- Available at: <https://gradschool.wsu.edu>

Submission Process

1. Obtain committee approval of final document
2. Submit to Graduate School for format review
3. Make any required corrections
4. Submit final approved version electronically
5. Complete all required Graduate School forms

Registration Requirements

- Must be registered in the semester of degree completion
- Thesis/Project: Must be registered for appropriate 700-level research credits
- Dissertation: Must be registered for INTERDIS 800 credits

10.4 Graduation Process (*Both Programs*)

1. **Apply for graduation** through myWSU by the published deadline
2. **Complete all degree requirements** by the end of the semester
3. **Obtain final committee approval** of thesis, project, or dissertation
4. **Submit final document** to Graduate School
5. **Complete degree clearance** through Graduate School
6. **Participate in commencement** (optional but encouraged)

Consult the Graduate School website for specific deadlines and procedures for your intended graduation semester.

11. PATHWAYS BETWEEN PROGRAMS

Some students may need or wish to change degree programs during their graduate studies. This section explains how movement between MSIS and ISDP works.

11.1 Movement from ISDP to MSIS

Students enrolled in the ISDP who wish to exit with a Master's degree may be eligible to transfer to the MSIS program under the following conditions:

Eligibility Requirements

1. **Good academic standing:** Minimum 3.0 GPA in all graduate coursework
2. **Completed coursework:** Must have completed sufficient coursework to meet MSIS requirements (minimum 30 credits with appropriate distribution)
3. **Committee support:** Advisory committee must support the transition
4. **Acceptable progress:** Must have demonstrated satisfactory progress in the ISDP before requesting transition

Application Process

1. **Consult with committee chair** and Program Director about reasons for transition
2. **Submit formal request** to Program Director including:
 - Written rationale for degree change
 - Proposed MSIS program of study
 - Letters of support from advisory committee members
 - Documentation of completed coursework
3. **Committee review:** MSIS Admissions Committee reviews application
4. **Program Director approval:** Program Director makes recommendation to Chair
5. **Final approval:** Chair of Interdisciplinary Studies Programs makes final decision

Requirements After Transition

1. **Form MSIS advisory committee** (minimum 3 members from 2 disciplines)
 - May retain some or all ISDP committee members if appropriate
2. **Develop MSIS program of study** that meets all MSIS requirements:
 - 30 credits total
 - At least 6 credits from each of two disciplines
 - INTERDIS 591 and 598 if not already completed

- Appropriate research credits (thesis or non-thesis option)
- 3. **Complete thesis or project** as determined by committee
- 4. **Meet all MSIS degree requirements** including defense/evaluation

Credit Transfer

- Credits earned in ISDP may be applied toward MSIS if approved by MSIS advisory committee
- Must meet MSIS program of study requirements
- INTERDIS 800 credits cannot substitute for 700-level thesis credits; additional registration may be required

Timeline Considerations

- Students should transition as early as possible to allow adequate time for completion
- Consult with Program Director about financial aid implications
- Be aware of Graduate School time limits for Master's degrees

11.2 Movement from MSIS to ISDP

Unlike the ISDP-to-MSIS transition, moving from the MSIS to ISDP is not a simple transfer but requires full application through the standard admission process.

Students who have completed or are currently enrolled in the MSIS program and wish to continue to doctoral study in the ISDP must apply through the standard ISDP admission process. **There is no automatic progression from MSIS to ISDP.**

Application Requirements

MSIS graduates or current students must submit a complete ISDP application including all standard requirements:

1. **Standard ISDP application materials** (see Section 4.3):
 - Statement of purpose (3 pages)
 - Proposed program of study
 - Three letters of recommendation
 - Official transcripts
 - All other required materials
2. **Doctoral-level research proposal** demonstrating:
 - Clear doctoral-level research questions
 - Justification for interdisciplinary approach at doctoral level
 - Why research cannot be pursued in existing Ph.D. program

3. **Written commitments from four faculty members** to serve on ISDP doctoral committee
4. **Research experience documentation** beyond MSIS requirements

Evaluation Criteria

Applications from MSIS students/graduates are evaluated on the same criteria as all other applicants:

- Academic excellence (minimum 3.0 GPA, competitive candidates typically higher)
- Potential for independent doctoral research
- Strength of research proposal
- Quality of faculty support and committee composition
- Demonstration that research requires interdisciplinary approach
- Capability for doctoral-level scholarly work

Advantages for MSIS Students

While MSIS completion does not guarantee ISDP admission, MSIS students may have advantages:

- Familiarity with interdisciplinary approaches and frameworks
- Established relationships with potential committee members
- Demonstrated ability in interdisciplinary research
- Completion of INTERDIS 591 (though may need to retake INTERDIS 598 at doctoral level)

Credit Transfer

- Credits from MSIS may be considered for transfer toward ISDP requirements
- Maximum transfer limited to half of total graded course credits (9 credits maximum)
- Committee members with relevant expertise review syllabi for approval
- Official transfer credit review occurs after ISDP admission and qualifying exam approval

Timeline and Process

1. **Consult with MSIS committee chair** and ISDP Program Director about doctoral study plans
2. **Identify potential ISDP committee members** and secure commitments
3. **Develop doctoral research proposal** that extends beyond Master's work
4. **Submit complete ISDP application** by January 10 deadline for fall admission

5. **If admitted**, complete all ISDP milestones beginning with qualifying exam

11.3 Application Procedures for Degree Changes

General Guidelines

1. **Early consultation is essential:** Contact the Program Director as soon as you are considering a degree change
2. **Formal application required:** All degree changes require formal review and approval
3. **No guarantee of approval:** Meeting minimum requirements does not guarantee approval for degree change
4. **Committee involvement:** Your advisory committee must be involved in any degree change discussion
5. **Financial aid implications:** Consult with financial aid office about implications of degree changes
6. **Timeline impacts:** Degree changes may affect time to completion and eligibility for continued funding

Required Documentation

All requests for degree changes must include:

1. Written rationale for change
2. Current transcript and GPA
3. Proposed program of study for new degree
4. Committee chair letter of support
5. Letters from committee members
6. For ISDP to MSIS: documentation of circumstances leading to change
7. For MSIS to ISDP: complete new application with all standard ISDP materials

Contact Information

For questions about degree pathways: - **Program Director:** Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary Initiatives - **Academic Coordinator:** iidp.graduate.school@wsu.edu - **Graduate School:** gradschool.wsu.edu

12. RESOURCES & SUPPORT

WSU offers extensive resources to support your success. Familiarize yourself with these early in your program.

12.1 Graduate School Resources (*Both Programs*)

The Graduate School provides numerous resources to support interdisciplinary graduate students:

Academic Resources

- **Graduate School Policies & Procedures Manual:** <https://confluence.esg.wsu.edu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=266603505>
- **Graduate School Website:** <https://gradschool.wsu.edu>
- **Course Catalog:** <https://catalog.wsu.edu>
- **Faculty of the Graduate School Directory:** <https://gradschool.wsu.edu/faculty-of-the-graduate-school/>

Support Services

- **Graduate Writing Support:** Assistance with thesis, dissertation, and academic writing
- **Research Compliance Offices:** IRB (human subjects), IACUC (animal subjects), biosafety
- **Library Services:** Research support, interlibrary loan, subject librarians
- **Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA):** Student representation and advocacy
- **Center for Advising and Career Development:** Professional development and career planning

Funding Resources

- **Graduate School Funding Opportunities:** <https://gradschool.wsu.edu>
- **External Fellowship Databases:** Information on national fellowships and grants
- **Travel Grants:** Support for conference presentations and research travel

12.2 Key Forms & Documents (*Both Programs*)

All official Graduate School forms are available at: <https://gradschool.wsu.edu/forms/>

Commonly Used Forms

Both Programs: - Program of Study Form - Committee Appointment/Change Forms - Annual Progress Review Forms - Degree Completion Forms

ISDP Specific: - Qualifying Examination Scheduling Form - Preliminary Examination Scheduling Form - Dissertation Defense Scheduling Form

MSIS Specific: - Thesis Defense Scheduling Form - Project Completion Documentation

Form Submission

- Submit forms to the Academic Coordinator for initial review
- Forms are then forwarded to Graduate School for official processing
- Maintain copies of all submitted forms
- Be aware of deadlines for form submission

12.3 Important Links (*Both Programs*)

Program Contacts

- **Academic Coordinator:** iidp.graduate.school@wsu.edu
- **Program Director:** Contact through Graduate School

University Resources

- **Graduate School Main:** <https://gradschool.wsu.edu>
- **MyWSU Portal:** <https://my.wsu.edu>
- **Academic Calendar:** <https://registrar.wsu.edu/academic-calendar/>
- **Commencement Information:** <https://commencement.wsu.edu>

Research Compliance

- **Office of Research Assurances:** <https://ora.wsu.edu>
- **Institutional Review Board (IRB):** For human subjects research
- **Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC):** For animal research

Student Support

- **Counseling and Psychological Services:** <https://cougarhealth.wsu.edu>
- **Access Center:** Support for students with disabilities
- **International Programs:** Support for international students
- **Veterans Affairs:** Support for veteran students

12.4 Academic Support Services (*Both Programs*)

Writing Support

- **Graduate Writing Groups:** Peer support for thesis/dissertation writing
- **Writing Center:** Individual consultations and workshops
- **Dissertation Boot Camps:** Intensive writing periods with support

Professional Development

- **Graduate School Professional Development:** Workshops on teaching, communication, leadership
- **Discipline-Specific Training:** Through individual departments and colleges
- **Career Development Workshops:** CV writing, job search strategies, interview preparation

Research Support

- **Statistical Consulting:** Assistance with research design and data analysis
- **Research Methods Workshops:** Training in various research methodologies
- **Grant Writing Support:** Assistance with fellowship and grant applications

12.5 Professional Development Opportunities (*Both Programs*)

Teaching Experience

- Seek teaching assistantships through departments represented on your committee
- Participate in teaching workshops and certification programs
- Develop a teaching portfolio

Conference Presentations

- Present research at discipline-specific conferences
- Participate in interdisciplinary conferences
- Apply for travel grants to support conference attendance

Publication Opportunities

- Work with advisors to publish research findings
- Co-author publications with committee members
- Explore interdisciplinary journals relevant to your research

Networking

- Join professional organizations in your discipline areas
- Participate in campus research symposia
- Attend department seminars and colloquia across disciplines
- Connect with interdisciplinary research centers and institutes at WSU

Leadership Development

- Participate in GPSA or department student organizations
- Serve on committees (with advisor approval)
- Organize workshops or symposia
- Mentor undergraduate or incoming graduate students

APPENDICES

Appendix A: MSIS Sample Programs of Study

Sample Program of Study for Thesis Master's Degree (*MSIS Thesis Master's*)

Total Credits Required: 30 minimum - Total Graded Credits: 21 minimum - Total Research Credits: 4 minimum (700-level)

Year 1

Fall Semester - INTERDIS 591: Interdisciplinary Studies (1 credit; graded) - Elective Course in Discipline 1 (3 credits; graded) - Elective Course in Discipline 2 (3 credits; graded) - **Total Graded Credits: 7**

Spring Semester - INTERDIS 598: Interdisciplinary Seminar (1 credit; satisfactory/fail) - Elective Course in Discipline 1 (3 credits; graded) - Elective Course in Discipline 2 (3 credits; graded) - Research Credit(s) (1 credit; 700-level) - **Total Graded Credits: 6 - Total Research Credits: 1**

Year 2

Fall Semester - Elective Course in Discipline 1 or 2 (3 credits; graded) - Elective Course in Discipline 1 or 2 (3 credits; graded) - Research Credit(s) (1 credit; 700-level) - **Total Graded Credits: 6 - Total Research Credits: 1**

Spring Semester - Research Credits (2 credits; 700-level; thesis completion) - Elective Course (3 credits; graded) - **Total Graded Credits: 3 - Total Research Credits: 2**

Total Credits (Graded + Research): 30 minimum - Total Graded Credits: 21 minimum (includes INTERDIS 591) - Total Research Credits: 4 minimum (700-level)

Note: Students will typically take a minimum of nine credits from at least one of the two or more degree-granting disciplines.

Sample Program of Study for Non-Thesis Master's Degree (*MSIS Non-Thesis Master's*)

Total Credits Required: 30 minimum - Total Graded Credits: 26 minimum - Total Research Credits: 4 minimum (702-level)

Year 1

Fall Semester - INTERDIS 591: Interdisciplinary Studies (1 credit; graded) - Elective Course in Discipline 1 (3 credits; graded) - Elective Course in Discipline 2 (3 credits; graded) - **Total Graded Credits: 7**

Spring Semester - INTERDIS 598: Interdisciplinary Seminar (1 credit; satisfactory/fail) - Elective Course in Discipline 1 (3 credits; graded) - Elective Course in Discipline 2 (3 credits; graded) - Research Credit(s) (1 credit; 702-level) - **Total Graded Credits: 6 - Total Research Credits: 1**

Year 2

Fall Semester - Elective Course in Discipline 1 or 2 (3 credits; graded) - Elective Course in Discipline 1 or 2 (3 credits; graded) - Elective Course (3 credits; graded) - Research Credit(s) (1 credit; 702-level) - **Total Graded Credits: 9 - Total Research Credits: 1**

Spring Semester - Elective Course (3 credits; graded) - *May take another Elective Course (1 credit minimum, preferably 3 credits; graded)* – this is one additional course for students not pursuing Thesis Master’s Degree as this brings the number of total graded credits to 26 - Research Credits (2 credits; 702-level; project completion) - **Total Graded Credits: 6** if two 3-credit courses taken, 4 if one 3-credit and one 1-credit course is taken - **Total Research Credits: 2**

Total Credits (Graded + Research): 30 minimum - Total Graded Credits: 26 minimum (includes INTERDIS 591) - **Total Research Credits: 4 minimum** (702-level)

Note: Students will typically take a minimum of nine credits from at least one of the two or more degree-granting disciplines.

Appendix B: ISDP Application Checklist

Application for Admission to ISDP (Fall Semester)

Deadline: January 10 for priority consideration (typically no spring admission)

Applications are submitted through the Graduate School website. **Applications will not be reviewed until they are complete.**

Required Application Materials:

- 1. Online application and supporting materials**
- 2. Three recommendation letters** - Highlight applicant’s academic ability, experience, and potential for independent Ph.D. research

3. Transcripts - Minimum 3.0 GPA in graduate coursework - Minimum 3.0 GPA in undergraduate coursework - WSU students exempted from submitting WSU transcripts

4. Statement of Purpose (no more than three pages) including:

a. Identification of proposed research topic/area (preferably with research questions)

b. Brief description of research relevance with academic citations from diverse disciplines and potential contributions to the fields

c. Detailed explanation of why the research topic cannot be pursued in a single academic discipline at WSU

d. Identification of two or more distinct academic disciplines (from different degree-granting colleges/units)

e. Confirmation that one of the disciplines identified offers doctoral degrees

f. List of distinct academic disciplines: - Discipline 1: _____ -
Discipline 2: _____ - Additional disciplines (if applicable):

5. Proposed Program of Study - List proposed coursework from the disciplines identified above

6. Written Commitments from Four Faculty Members

Faculty members should be listed as Faculty of the Graduate School:
<https://gradschool.wsu.edu/faculty-of-the-graduate-school/>

Committee composition: - If two disciplines chosen: preferably two faculty from each discipline - Three of four faculty (including chair) must be Graduate Faculty (e.g., tenure track) - Others may be Associate Graduate Faculty (e.g., career track) or Auxiliary Graduate Faculty - Non-WSU faculty may be approved as fourth member (with memo from chair and CV)

List Committee Members:

Faculty Member 1 (Chair): - Name: _____ - Discipline:
_____ - Faculty Status: _____

Faculty Member 2: - Name: _____ - Discipline:
_____ - Faculty Status: _____

Faculty Member 3: - Name: _____ - Discipline:
_____ - Faculty Status: _____

Faculty Member 4: - Name: _____ - Discipline:
_____ - Faculty Status: _____

7. Faculty Commitment Emails - Each faculty member must email ISDP Academic Coordinator (iidp.graduate.school@wsu.edu) - Email should indicate commitment to serve on student's doctoral committee - Email should include brief statement of how their expertise will contribute to interdisciplinary nature of proposed research

8. Summary Statement (no more than 2 pages) - Discuss how identified faculty members' research expertise will contribute to student's ISDP research and program of study

Appendix C: ISDP Coursework & Requirements Checklist

Coursework and Program Requirements

1. INTERDIS 591 "Interdisciplinarity" - Enroll in second semester - Only offered in spring - 1 credit, graded

2. Qualifying Examination - Enroll in third semester (excluding summer) - Must maintain 3.0 GPA in all WSU graduate coursework - Enroll in INTERDIS 598 (only offered in fall) - Complete formal program proposal as outlined in course syllabus - Must be reviewed and approved by: - INTERDIS 598 instructor - Doctoral advisory committee - ISDP Graduate Committee - Timeline: Approve by end of fourth semester

3. Program of Study Submitted to Graduate School - Submit in third semester - Due to Academic Coordinator in third week of September or February

Program of Study Preparation:

a. Start with required courses: - INTERDIS 591 (1 credit, graded) ✓ - INTERDIS 598 (1 credit, satisfactory/fail) ✓

b. Core Courses for Ph.D. in ISDP: - Identify minimum of three courses in each of two disciplines - Total at least 18 credit hours (assuming 3 credits each) - Minimum requirement: 15 semester hours of graded graduate-level courses - List courses:

****Discipline 1 Courses:****

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

****Discipline 2 Courses:****

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

c. Research Credits: - Minimum 20 semester hours of INTERDIS 800

d. **Additional Credits:** - Any additional credits to reach 72 total - Can be fulfilled with non-graded graduate credits

e. **Transfer Credits (if applicable):** - Limited to no more than half of total graded course credits (9 credit hours maximum) - Requires committee review and approval of syllabi

4. Preliminary Examination - Can be taken after passing qualifying exam - Must have no more than 6 graded credits remaining - Must register for at least 2 credits of INTERDIS 800 in semester of exam - Schedule through Graduate School via Academic Coordinator (at least 10 working days before oral exam) - Includes written research proposal and oral examination

5. Dissertation Research - Continue registering for INTERDIS 800 credits - Maintain at least 20 total INTERDIS 800 credits - Follow Graduate School policies for dissertation format and submission

6. Final Defense - Schedule through Graduate School - Complete all required forms - Submit final dissertation following Graduate School formatting requirements

Credit Summary

Total Credits Required: 72 minimum

- Graded Coursework: 15 credits minimum (including INTERDIS 591)
 - 6 credits from Discipline 1
 - 6 credits from Discipline 2
 - 1 credit INTERDIS 591
 - 2 additional graded credits
 - INTERDIS 598: 1 credit (satisfactory/fail)
 - INTERDIS 800: 20 credits minimum
 - Additional credits: As needed to reach 72 total
-

Appendix D: Key Graduate School Policy References

Important Chapters and Sections

For Both Programs:

- **Chapter 4:** Applications and Admissions
- **Chapter 6:** Academic Standards and Progress
 - Section C: Academic Standing and Dismissal
 - Section H: Submitting Final Thesis or Dissertation
- **Chapter 12:** Grievances and Appeals

For MSIS:

- **Chapter 7:** Master's Degree Requirements

For ISDP:

- **Chapter 1:** General Policies and Degree Requirements
- **Chapter 8:** Doctoral Degree Requirements
 - Section F: Doctoral Final Exam Policies

Full Graduate School Policies & Procedures

Access the complete manual at:

<https://confluence.esg.wsu.edu/spaces/MPS/pages/266603505/Graduate+School+Policies+and+Procedures>

In Case of Conflict

REMEMBER: The Graduate School Policies & Procedures Manual takes precedence over this handbook in all cases. When in doubt, consult the official manual or contact the Graduate School.

Appendix E: Timeline Templates

MSIS Timeline Template (Thesis Option)

Semester 1 (Fall) - Week 1-2: Orientation, meet with potential committee members - Week 3-4: Form advisory committee - Ongoing: Take INTERDIS 591, begin disciplinary coursework - By end of semester: Have committee in place

Semester 2 (Spring) - Early in semester: Submit Program of Study form - Ongoing: Take INTERDIS 598, continue coursework, begin research planning - By end of semester: Complete INTERDIS 591 and 598

Semester 3 (Fall) - Ongoing: Complete remaining coursework, begin thesis research - Mid-semester: Register for 700-level thesis credits - By end of semester: Have committee approve thesis proposal

Semester 4 (Spring) - Ongoing: Thesis writing and research - Register for at least 2 credits of 700-level (for thesis completion) - At least 2 weeks before defense: Distribute thesis draft to committee - Week 12-15: Thesis defense - By deadline: Submit final thesis to Graduate School - Apply for graduation by deadline

ISDP Timeline Template

Semester 1 (Fall) - First Year - Week 1-2: Orientation, meet with committee and Program Director - Ongoing: Begin coursework - Regular meetings with committee chair

Semester 2 (Spring) - First Year - Ongoing: Continue coursework - Enroll in INTERDIS 591 (Interdisciplinarity) - Register for INTERDIS 800 research credits - Regular committee meetings

Semester 3 (Fall) - Second Year - CRITICAL SEMESTER - Enroll in INTERDIS 598 (Interdisciplinary Seminar) - Develop program proposal during INTERDIS 598 - Ongoing: Continue coursework - By end of semester: Submit draft program proposal to committee

Semester 4 (Spring) - Second Year - Early semester: Obtain committee approval of program proposal - Mid-semester: Obtain ISDP Graduate Committee approval (Qualifying Exam passed) - Submit Program of Study to Academic Coordinator (third week of semester) - Begin comprehensive reading and preliminary exam preparation - Complete most remaining coursework

Semester 5 (Fall) - Third Year - Complete final coursework (if any) - Focus on preliminary exam preparation - Register for at least 2 credits INTERDIS 800

Semester 6 (Spring) - Third Year - Complete any remaining coursework - Schedule preliminary exam (at least 10 working days advance notice) - Take preliminary exam (written proposal and oral defense) - Upon passing: Advance to candidacy - Begin intensive dissertation research

Semesters 7-10 (Years 4-5) - Continue dissertation research - Register for INTERDIS 800 credits each semester - Regular committee meetings - Present research at conferences - Prepare publications - Write dissertation

Final Semester - Complete dissertation writing - Distribute draft to committee (at least 2-4 weeks before defense) - Schedule final defense - Complete final defense - Make any required revisions - Submit final dissertation to Graduate School - Apply for graduation by deadline - Complete degree clearance

Notes: - This is a typical timeline; actual time to completion varies - Some students may complete more quickly or require additional time - Maintain regular communication with committee chair and Academic Coordinator - Be aware of all Graduate School deadlines - Apply for graduation well in advance of intended completion date

END OF HANDBOOK

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iidp.graduate.school@wsu.edu - Graduate School: <https://gradschool.wsu.edu>