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 the Graduate Advisor (http://grad.sfsu.edu/content/
current-students/graduate-studies-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 SF State. 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, issues 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
(bulletin.sfsu.edu/graduate-education/admissions) section of this
Bulletin. The applicant should present evidence of a minimum 3.25 grade
point average in the baccalaureate degree or in the last 60 semester units
taken, and a pattern of undergraduate coursework which 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 masters
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 after all outstanding problems have been
resolved.

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 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 University 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 (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:

1. Meet with a Graduate Studies advisor to review program requirements and processes for developing a proposal.

2. Meet with the Dean of Graduate Studies to discuss degree program.

3. 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.

4. 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).