INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES/INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The Graduate School at Texas Tech University encourages interdisciplinary study and research, believing that our nation's complex society and the world's rich cultural heritage can be understood best from the perspective of many academic disciplines. Few settings offer a better opportunity for such study than the University with its graduate programs, libraries, laboratories, and diversely trained faculty. Although academic specialization is the common pattern in such an environment, the Graduate School is committed to building bridges and facilitating movement across the disciplines for those who are interested.

ADMISSION

Before being admitted to the Interdisciplinary Studies program, you are evaluated in four general areas: (1) GPA (2) transcript (3) your program of choice: Pre-Designed or general, IS Program. For students in a Pre-Designed program such as Forensic Science, International Affairs, Wind Science and Engineering, etc., you will choose your program of study from the approved list of courses and with the approval of your advisor.

Students wanting to follow the general, Interdisciplinary Studies track choose all of the courses for their program. Students must provide answer to the four (4) following components listed below. When you apply to the IS program through the online application, please specify the specialty area of choice or say "not applicable" for the general, IS program.

Please give serious thought to this task. Careful planning will enhance your chances of getting a good education, and it will prepare you for career opportunities following your graduation.

1. Write a brief statement about your goals in life and what type of employment you believe would help you to achieve those goals (one or two pages). You should consider your background, your talents, and your interests. You might also indicate where you would like to live and what career you would like to pursue once you complete your degree at Texas Tech University.

2. Write another brief statement about how Interdisciplinary Studies will help you to prepare for the career or careers that you are asked to envision in the paragraph above. Be as specific as possible. You should do some research about what jobs are currently available. The Texas Tech University Career Center can be of assistance. You may want to contact potential employers or persons who are currently working at such jobs, and ask them about what areas and courses would best prepare you for your future career.

3. After having done the investigation that is mentioned above, you should study the course offerings in Texas Tech’s Graduate Catalog. Then you should prepare an informal degree plan, one in which you list the courses and areas that you believe would be suitable for your interests and needs.

4. Finally, you should give an informal name to your degree. Although your diploma will state that your degree is in Interdisciplinary Studies, you should decide upon a name that is more exact, one that you can use to give a clear focus to your studies. Some examples of names that students have used are "Master of Science in Sports Administration," "Environmental and Geological Chemistry," and "Community Counseling." The name should indicate how the courses that you are taking will give you an education in a specific field.

Once you have written this account, please bring it by the office, send it by mail, or e-mail it to Wendell Aycock or Clifford Fedler at the below address. Remember that this short account is an important element in your application for admission to the program.

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WHAT IS INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES?

Interdisciplinary Studies at Texas Tech University allows graduate students the freedom to design a degree comprised of courses from any of 108 graduate programs. Interdisciplinary studies is divided into two categories: pre-designed masters degrees that have already incorporated several disciplines to develop a commonly sought degree, and a self-designed masters degree comprised of courses that are unique to whatever the student’s particular interest may be.
PRE-DESIGNED PROGRAMS
The pre-designed programs (housed in single departments) are usually quite tightly structured, requiring that many courses be taken in the department of specialization. Some allow an optional minor (6-9 hours) and may permit it to be in another department. Many programs have required "core" or foundation courses and additional requirements called "tool" courses (languages, computer courses, etc.). Students who do not have an undergraduate major in the field in question may also be required to do "leveling work," to place them on a level of preparation comparable to that of other graduate students in the department. The pre-designed programs include:

Applied Linguistics
A Master of Arts degree in Applied Linguistics is offered through the Department of Classical and Modern Languages and Literature. You may select a 36-hour non-thesis or a 30-hour plus thesis option in either general applied linguistics or in teaching English as a second or foreign language.

Heritage Management
Heritage management emphasizes extensive investigation in the field of heritage management. Graduates from the program are prepared to enhance local, regional, and national sociological and scientific values. The program is configured to allow individual students to emphasize areas of special interests such as heritage administration, conservation, interpretation, education, and use (ecotourism). The program offers both theoretical and practical course work designed to prepare graduates to be leaders in the heritage management field.

Museum Science
This Master of Science program emphasizes museum theory and practice. Graduates from the program have a comprehensive background in museum studies, preparing them as generalists. In addition, they may elect to become specialists in a number of sub-disciplines, including collection management and care; exhibitions and interpretation; museology; museum management; and curatorship in anthropology, art, ethnology, history, and the natural sciences.

Public Administration
The program for the Master of Public Administration degree is designed to prepare students to assume administrative positions in government and nonprofit agencies with particular emphasis on municipal government and specialty tracks associated with it. Specialty tracks include city management, fiscal administration, public policy analysis, border municipalities administration, and public health administration.

Sports Health
This interdisciplinary program leads to the Master of Science degree with a major in sports health. The program, which involves sports medicine and exercise science, is designed to provide an academic foundation for the coach, athletic trainer, physical therapist, physician, exercise physiologist, nutritionist, cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation specialist, and others associated with conducting sport, exercise, or rehabilitation programs.

Wind Science Engineering
Texas Tech University offers a unique multidisciplinary Ph.D. in Wind Science and Engineering. The educational objective of the program is to provide students with the broad education necessary to pursue research and solve problems related to detrimental effects of windstorms (e.g., hurricanes, tornadoes, and thunderstorms) and to learn to take advantage of the beneficial effects of wind (e.g., wind energy).

SELF-DESIGNED PROGRAMS
Students admitted to the Interdisciplinary Studies program should define their goals in graduate study, drawing up a brief statement of purpose that will be useful in counseling and enrollment. New students are encouraged to peruse the catalog and create a list of courses that appear suitable for their goals (because not all courses will be available at any given time). The Interdisciplinary Studies program has been developed to allow students to self-design a program of study specifically tailored to their own needs, individual interests or career goals. There are no required courses, no core or tool requirements, and no majors or minors, although the guiding assumption is that there will be some coherent common principle that structures the program. Students can select from the entire graduate catalog as well as the Law School and Health Sciences Center, with very few restrictions (usually excluding the required "core" courses of a small number of existing majors in "traditional" departmental programs). The Master of Arts or Master of Science degree program in Interdisciplinary Studies gives students the freedom to design a degree that will meet their individual needs in conjunction with an advisor in the Graduate
School. Most students pursue the 36-hour, non-thesis plan, but a thesis may be appropriate in occasional circumstances. This individualized program allows tailoring the plan of studies to meet narrowly focused needs, such as the requirements for a specific job or position upgrade. Students have also utilized the flexibility of the Interdisciplinary Studies option to obtain a graduate degree to prepare themselves for examinations and licensing or certification in certain areas where TTU does not currently offer a graduate degree (such as specialized areas of social work). By combining choices from several different departments and colleges, the student can arrive at program uniqueness far beyond the capacity of traditional departments. Students can draw from the offerings in more than one hundred masters programs university-wide, as well as having access to graduate work in the Health Sciences Center and the School of Law.

**MINORS OR AREAS OF EMPHASIS**
A graduate minor at the Master's level is usually 6-9 hours. Texas Tech University offers several structured minors or areas of interest including the following options. These minors can be added to any traditional or pre-designed master's degree or incorporated into a self-designed degree.

**Comparative Literature**
This interdisciplinary specialization gives students the opportunity to study literature from an international perspective, to study two or more national literatures, and to concentrate attention upon the following special fields: periods, genres, theories or relationships between literature and other arts and disciplines.

**Environmental Evaluation**
Students may gain a holistic view of environmental evaluation by focusing upon problems and techniques relating to natural resources and their utilization. Work in geography, geology, land and water management, atmospheric sciences, and other disciplines is tailored to each student's interests.

**Ethnic Studies**
Ethnic studies is offered as an interdisciplinary minor for students who may find a greater knowledge of ethnic groups and majority-minority relations a useful complement to their major area of study. Students may, if they wish, focus on African-American, Mexican-American, or Native-American studies.

**Latin American and Iberian Studies**
This area of interest allows the student to study various aspects of Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries. These areas of study may include anthropology, art, geography, economics, history, political science, Spanish, and Portuguese. This wide variety of course work affords LAIS students an opportunity to diversify their knowledge and interests in other countries.

**Legal Studies**
Through arrangements with the School of Law, graduate students may take certain courses in law to supplement their programs or, in some cases, to meet the requirements for a formal minor. Courses that may be appropriate for a minor in legal studies also are available in such areas as political science, history, business administration, and sociology.

**Neural and Behavioral Sciences**
This specialization is offered as an interdisciplinary minor for graduate students who wish to broaden their knowledge while gaining a sound academic background in basic areas such as the structure and function of the nervous system.

**Occupational Safety and Health**
A minor in Occupational Safety and Health prepares students to identify and evaluate hazardous workplace conditions, to develop programs for accident prevention and control, and to gain ergonomic expertise related to occupational safety and health. Courses in human physiology, safety, air pollution control technology, ergonomics, analytical instrumentation, and other areas highlight the link between people and machines. An engineering background is helpful but not essential; the selection is sufficiently flexible for a diversity of interests.

**Risk-Taking Behavior**
Risk-Taking Behavior is offered as an interdisciplinary minor at the master's or doctoral level. The 15-hour doctoral minor includes an introductory course, Seminar in Risk-Taking, which examines the concept of risk-taking from developmental, social psychological, sociological, and biosocial perspectives. This minor should be
useful for students interested in research on risk-taking behavior or for those planning to work in applied settings with adolescents and young adults or with families.

**Women's Studies**

Women's Studies examines the cultural and social construction of gender, and explores the diverse experiences, contributions and perspectives of women. Students electing an emphasis in Women's Studies can pursue either a focus or a track. Students pursuing a Women's Studies Focus take 12 hours of Women's Studies courses from among graduate courses included in the Women's Studies curriculum. Students seeking a Track in Women's Studies take 18 hours of Women's Study courses, fulfilling the requirements for the Women's Studies focus, and also taking one course with significant gender-related content in each of two of their declared areas of study.

All students who elect this emphasis are required to complete, either prior to or concurrent with their enrollment, WS 2300 Introduction to Women's Studies, or an equivalent course.

**WHO ELECTS TO GO THE "SELF-DESIGNED" ROUTE?**

This program is intended for students who wish to continue their education at the graduate level but do not wish the specialized sort of program offered within the scope of the more traditional degree. Typical students in this program are businesspersons, civil servants, nurses, schoolteachers, and others who want to pursue intellectual and cultural development. Some are seeking entry into careers that require broad backgrounds rather than specialized study. Further examples include professionals who may wish to acquire expertise in management, public relations, and communications, or in multi-cultural areas.

One recent graduate combined courses from the areas of Range and Wildlife Management (in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources), Restaurant and Hotel Management (in the College of Human Sciences), and Health, Physical Education and Recreation (in the College of Arts and Sciences). This combination of courses prepared her for a position as director of recreation at a resort in a national park. By combining courses in Range and Wildlife Management, Photography, Biological Sciences, and Special Education, yet another recent graduate prepared herself to try out new ways of presenting the study of natural science to children with dyslexia and related learning disabilities.

Because of interest in the specifics of doing business in Brazil, a current student chose graduate courses from many areas, including Portuguese language and literature, Marketing, History, Management, Geography, Political Science, and Communication Studies.

Another student, who had a strong background in Biological Sciences, combined coursework in Civil Engineering, Microbiology, Plant and Soil Science, and Environmental Engineering in order to work in the areas of soil pollution and wastewater control, and remediation and environmental hazard management.

Quite a different focus appeared in the program developed by another graduate. She combined work in Music, Marketing, Photography, and Mass Communications in preparation for a career as a concert promoter. A student with an extensive background in applied music decided, after beginning a doctoral program in Music Theory, that her true interest was in finding new ways to present the study of music to elementary school children. She changed to Interdisciplinary Studies and took courses in Philosophy, Communication Studies, Psychology, and Education. She used this combination to develop novel ways of introducing youngsters to music.

The challenge of teaching children with certain disabilities was approached in a very different way by the student who assembled a series of courses from Human Development/Family Studies, Psychology, Exercise and Sport Science, Special Education and Sociology in order to work with children suffering well-defined forms of developmental psychopathologies. Another graduate combined courses in Exercise and Sports Science, Physiology, and Industrial Engineering as part of his preparation to work in a job involving occupational and physical therapy.

As a final illustration of the almost limitless possibilities of interdisciplinary studies, a student wishing to investigate evolving portrayals of AIDS victims assembled a degree program including courses in English and European Literature, Mass Communications, Advertising, Television, and Psychology.

**THE CURRICULUM**
Most students will pursue the 36-hour, non-thesis option, but the thesis may be appropriate when the student's previous work qualifies him or her for research. The curriculum consists of almost all the University's graduate courses, as long as the stated prerequisites and consent of instructors are obtained. A very small number of programs have some courses restricted to their major. Each program will be individually developed according to the student's interests and background, along with a stated theme, focus, or job description. At least three different departments/areas must be represented and no more than 12 hours may be presented in one area. A maximum of 18 hours total coursework is permitted in any college except Arts and Sciences (this means Agriculture, Architecture, Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Human Sciences), with no more than 12 hours allowed in any subject. Any combination involving these colleges requires work in at least 2 or more colleges. The entire program may be done in Arts and Sciences, but with no more than 12 hours in any subject area. Students who elect the thesis option will take a minimum of 6 hours INDS 6000; the thesis must involve an interdisciplinary subject. Students under this option must have a committee comprised of members from at least 2 departments.

### POSSIBLE DEGREE PLAN CONFIGURATIONS

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Other approved combinations are possible, involving multiple subject areas, so long as the two rules on maximum hours per subject and per colleges other than Arts and Sciences are observed.

### EXAMINATIONS

#### Non-Thesis Option
During the final semester of enrollment, each non-thesis student will undergo a written final which will take into account the broad program of study and the need to demonstrate the ability to integrate and relate the materials covered in the coursework. Although termed a "comprehensive examination," this has become a kind of capstone exercise designed to help the student pull a diverse program together. The examination committee is drawn from professors in each of the colleges or subject areas under which the student has studied, and is selected by the student in consultation with the program advisor. The examination will be comprehensive in breadth, rather than depth, requiring the student to draw upon material covered in the broad array of courses taken with a view toward integration and synthesis. Questions may involve hypothetical problems, or they may test theories from various disciplines, concern problems encountered in the student's non-academic career, or address other similar interdisciplinary areas.

The written examination is typically three to four hours in length. After judging the quality of the written exam, the committee may convene with the student for a follow-up oral exam of about one hour's length. In most cases, the oral exam will not be held if all sections of the test have been passed; however, some programs, such as engineering, have requested an oral section so that the Interdisciplinary Studies students will have a comprehensive exam similar to the exam taken by their own majors.

#### Thesis Option
For those students electing the thesis option, the oral defense of the thesis (all members of the committee should be present) will suffice in lieu of the comprehensive examination for the INDS program. Each student will select a committee consisting of three faculty members, one from each of the three major disciplinary areas. One of the members will be asked by the student to be chairperson of the exam or thesis committee.
Portfolio Option

Students may choose to submit a portfolio of materials for review by three members of the graduate faculty. The portfolio may take several forms, depending upon the areas of study that the student is pursuing. For students in the humanities, it should include three 15-20 page research papers written in courses taken for the M.A., and a 15-page reflection paper. For students in the sciences, it may include accounts of three experimental projects that were carried out in courses taken for the M.S. and a 15-page reflection paper. In some cases, students may choose to include four or even five research papers in their portfolios, although the normal portfolio would include three papers.

Students will consult with the Interdisciplinary Studies advisor who must approve the three-person portfolio review committee. One of the committee members will serve as the chair of the committee. Students must consult with the committee members concerning the projects or papers that are to be included in the portfolios.

Portfolios will present the students' original research along with the critiques or commentaries and grades that the projects or papers received at the time that they were submitted. The three examples of original research should involve three of the areas of study that the student has chosen for the IS degree.

The portfolio will also include a 15-20-page reflection essay that presents the student’s views of his or her development as a scholar and evaluates the learning process that the three projects afforded the student. This reflection paper should give a general overview of the student's experiences during his or her study toward the master's degree. Not only should it assess the work that has been done (by commenting about the three projects or papers), but it should also provide a means for self-examination and exploration. In the reflection paper, the student may make observations about methodologies that the three projects involved and about the strengths and weaknesses of these projects. The reflection paper may show how the student’s studies have made inquiries into (or even contributions to) concerns of national or international scholarship. The paper may also show how the projects help to prepare the student to address professional goals. It may illustrate how the master’s degree has prepared the student for future challenges or future careers.

It is important that students think about their portfolio materials as they progress through their studies; certainly, they should begin collecting materials before the final semester. Students should also begin working with their committees as early as possible, and the committee members should serve as advisors and mentors to the students well before the final semester. Committee members should help students to make important decisions concerning the papers or projects comprising the portfolio.

Procedures and Deadlines

- Before the final semester, preferably when the degree plan is submitted, students should meet with the Graduate Advisor for Interdisciplinary Studies in order to make decisions about who will serve on the three-person portfolio committee.
- The projects that are to be included in the portfolio should not be revised. They should be included with whatever comments, markings, and grades that the professors made when the projects were originally returned to the students.
- Students should complete their portfolios and submit them to their committee members at least three weeks before the date on which the students have scheduled their formal meeting with their committees.
- The formal meeting with the committee must take place no later than one week before the last day to defend theses and dissertations for the semester in which the student intends to graduate.
- A student who fails to give satisfactory answers to the committee’s questions about the portfolio at the formal meeting or who submits a portfolio that the committee judges to be unsatisfactory will have his or her graduation postponed until the student is able to submit a satisfactory portfolio and respond appropriately to questions concerning it.
- The chair of the portfolio review committee must submit a report on the outcome of the formal meeting to the Graduate Advisor of Interdisciplinary Studies no later than one week after the meeting, or before the last day to defend theses and dissertations for the semester that the student intends to graduate. The report will indicate whether the student's portfolio was satisfactory or unsatisfactory.
• Students should provide the advisors of Interdisciplinary Studies with a bound copy of the portfolio so that it may be kept on file in the program’s office.

Portfolio Format
Because the Portfolio is a terminal project for the master’s degree, it should have a form and format akin to the master’s thesis. Like the thesis, it should have the following features:

• It should have a title page that includes the title, the author’s name, the formula specifying the degree that is being earned, the signatures of the committee chair and the committee members, and the date (month and year).

• Following the title page, there should be a page of acknowledgements.

• There should be a table of contents indicating the work’s primary divisions.

• The work should be divided into chapters (e.g., the reflection essay might be a chapter, and each paper or project might be a chapter).

• The work may be bound in the same manner as a thesis. If students so choose, they may take the finished work to the library for binding. See Barbara McArthur in Thesis Binding at the Library for help with the binding. The other option for binding is somewhat cheaper and faster. Students may get their works bound at a copy shop; in this case, spiral binding would be available.

Faculty Committee Members’ Role
As with an examination committee or a thesis committee, the committee members’ primary duties are to help the student to achieve his or her goals in the final hurdles before graduation and to uphold the standards of Texas Tech University. However, members of the portfolio committee have a few very specific duties:

• Faculty members should review the papers that the student chooses to put into the portfolio. They are not required to grade the papers (the papers have already been graded), but they should determine whether the papers are appropriate examples of what the portfolio should contain; i.e., do the papers meet the requirements for inclusion? Are the papers adequate representatives of term projects? For example, a five-page paper can be a good paper, but it is usually not representative of the work that a student should present as a term project. Thus, it is the responsibility of the committee members to accept or reject the papers that are included in the portfolio.

• Committee members are also responsible for making certain that the reflection essay is suitable for the portfolio. Committee members should carefully read the essay, make suggestions for any improvements that seem appropriate, and generally serve as judges of the worth of the reflection essay.

• Finally, committee members should meet as a committee with the master’s degree candidate. They should discuss the portfolio with the student and review the student’s career at Texas Tech. If the committee approves of the portfolio, all of the members should sign the title page of the work. Following this meeting, the chairperson of the committee should notify Lora Lopez (742-2781 or lora.lopez@ttu.edu) that the student has successfully completed his or her work on the portfolio.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND LOANS
There are many scholarships and loans that are available to graduate students. More detailed information about these scholarships and loans can be obtained from the graduate school web site, www.scholarships.grad.ttu.edu.

Examples of such scholarships:

Excellence in Health and Social Services Scholarship is for students with an interest in working in socially disadvantaged areas.

Graduate School Research Water Conservation awards graduate students involved in water conservation research.

Chancellor’s Graduate Fellowship is awarded to new graduate students who must be nominated by an advisor of the Interdisciplinary Studies program.

Graduate School-Junction Summer Scholarship is for students who are interested in one of the specialized areas represented at this camp.
James Douglas and Mary Hazelwood Memorial Fellowship is for new and continuing students.

Helen DeVitt Jones Graduate Fellowship is for new and continuing students.

McNair Graduate Fellowship is for McNair scholars.
AREA CONTACTS:

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**Legal Studies**  
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**Museum Science**  
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**Neural and Behavioral Sciences**  
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**Sports Health**  
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