

Master of Arts or Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies

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Students who are interested in studies that cross traditional disciplinary boundaries are offered a unique degree that offers flexibility, creativity and collaboration. Today's students are faced with an increasing demand for interdisciplinary approaches to research and education, and may be interested in the interdisciplinary studies program in either arts or sciences. The degree is overseen by the Graduate School and combines coursework in two or more disciplines/programs and may involve more than one academic college.

Program Objectives

An Interdisciplinary Studies Master's degree makes it possible for graduate students interested in combining disciplines to create a degree program to suit their needs, when no existing graduate program does. The program of study for each student will be designed by the student and the faculty mentors.

This degree supports the learner-centered, discovery-driven, and globally engaged missions of UAA by meeting individual student needs, promoting academic collaboration across the university, and producing scholars with a global approach to solving problems.

Student Learning Outcomes

In keeping with the above objectives, the expected student learning outcomes of the Master of Arts (MA) or Master of Science (MS) in Interdisciplinary Studies include the ability to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the various disciplines incorporated into the Graduate Studies Plan (GSP);
- Demonstrate proficiency of research methodology and research design, or creative activities appropriate to the interdisciplinary nature of their work through the culminating experience;
- Identify and apply the relevant theoretical framework of the disciplines incorporated into their Graduate Studies Plan;
- Demonstrate application of specific knowledge in the particular area of study associated with the thesis or project;
- Demonstrate mastery of their subject matter on their Graduate Studies Plan; and
- Demonstrate knowledge of the careers, professions and/or future academic opportunities available to them upon completion of their studies.

Admission Requirements

A prospective student must first contact the Graduate School before beginning the application process to ensure eligibility, viability of their proposed plan of study, and to discuss their educational goals.

Students must satisfy the Admission Requirements for Graduate Degrees (<http://catalog.uaa.alaska.edu/academicpoliciesprocesses/admissions/graduate/>) and deadlines. All students must also submit the following to the UAA Office of Admissions:

1. Submission of the official scores from the GRE General Test if the "home" program requires the test. The "home" department is that of the primary graduate advisor;
2. Current resume or curriculum vitae;
3. At least two letters of recommendation that address the academic qualifications of the applicant to complete graduate-level work for the degree program; and
4. A proposed Graduate Studies Plan (GSP) of at least 30 credits, signed by the proposed primary graduate advisor. The GSP must designate a concentration or emphasis area of study. It must also include the proposed graduate committee, who agree to serve. The proposed committee must represent at least two of the programs of courses listed on the GSP. At least one committee member must be from an existing graduate degree program at UAA.

Admission decisions will be based on having a robust and scholarly GSP that meets the above requirements. Both the GSP and admission recommendation must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Graduate Studies Plan (GSP) Requirements

- A minimum of 30 total credits;
- A minimum of 21 credits of 600-level courses, including at least two courses from a minimum of two different disciplines;
- One research methodology course; and
- At least 3 credits, and no more than 6 credits, of thesis or project.

Thesis Expectations

Students who undertake a research-based thesis should be able to demonstrate that they can:

- Develop a testable hypothesis or explore research questions;
- Locate, retrieve and utilize appropriate information;
- Read, understand, and critically review the primary literature;
- Utilize appropriate methodology to conduct a research-based study;
- Analyze results using qualitative or quantitative techniques;
- Compare their results to previous studies;
- Explain the contribution of their study to the broader field of existing knowledge;

- Communicate the importance of their work in an oral presentation; and
- Communicate the importance of their work in written format.

Project Expectations

Students who undertake a project should be able to demonstrate that they can:

- Develop a plan for the project or develop a plan for a scholarly or creative work;
- Locate, retrieve and utilize appropriate information;
- Read, understand, and critically review the primary literature or previous creative works;
- Utilize appropriate methodologies to conduct an applied study, implement a project, or utilize appropriate skills to produce a creative work;
- Analyze results using qualitative or quantitative techniques when appropriate;
- Compare their results to previous studies when appropriate;
- Explain the contribution of their work to the broader field of existing knowledge or to previously created works; and
- Communicate the originality of, as well as the independent thinking and rationale for their work, in written format.

Graduation Requirements

- Complete the General University Requirements for Graduate Degrees (<http://catalog.uaa.alaska.edu/graduateprograms/degreerequirements/>);
- Complete and defend a thesis or a project. The defense must be approved by the majority of graduate committee members, and by the Dean of the Graduate School; and
- All theses and projects must have final approval by the Dean of the Graduate School, including formatting requirements.