

# INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES, MASTER OF (M.I.S.), INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM OF STUDY

The Master of Interdisciplinary Studies (M.I.S.) degree program provides an opportunity for the highly motivated student to pursue a unique course of study that combines graduate course work in a learner-centered approach to graduate education. The student is an active participant in proposing a curriculum that supports an individualized and scholastically rigorous academic goal in a clearly defined, multidisciplinary program. To expand the program's range of options and interdisciplinary perspectives, the program allows for cooperative ventures with other approved colleges and universities.

## Program goals

1. To provide the highly motivated graduate student with the opportunity to develop and complete an individualized and learner-centered course of study that combines graduate course work in multiple academic disciplines in order to meet a unique scholarly goal
2. To provide skills required for a wide range of positions or for further advanced study
3. To provide for the student's mastery and synthesis of course content in the academic focus areas, culminating in the design, implementation, interpretation and communication of the results of a capstone research project related to the scholarly goal of the student's interdisciplinary course of study

## Student learning outcomes

1. Students must demonstrate general knowledge and synthesis of two or more academic focus areas combined in an approved interdisciplinary course of study with relevant electives, research methodology and independent study through mastery of individual course work and the synthesis of that course work into a final research project.
2. Students must demonstrate oral and written communication skills to convey effectively the assimilated, synthesized knowledge gained from their interdisciplinary study.
3. Students must demonstrate the ability to design and conduct an independent research project or study that exhibits skills of synthesis, analysis and critical thinking, that is directly related to the purpose of the unique scholarly goal identified as part of the admissions process and that is reflected in the academic focus areas in the approved course of study.
4. Students must demonstrate the achievement of an appropriate level of competence in the ability to design and develop the research protocol and to evaluate and present the outcomes.

## VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs

The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the

graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website (<http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/>) and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

**Visit the academic regulations section** for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/>)

## Degree candidacy requirements

A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master's or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student's graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student's faculty regarding the student's academic achievements and the student's readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

**Visit the academic regulations section** for additional information on degree candidacy requirements. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/candidacy/>)

## Graduation requirements

As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

**Visit the academic regulations section** for additional information on graduation requirements. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/>)

Apply online today. (<https://www.vcu.edu/admissions/apply/graduate/>)

## Admission requirements

| Degree: | Semester(s) of entry: | Deadline dates: | Test requirements: |
|---------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| M.I.S.  | Fall                  | Apr 1           |                    |

## Special requirements

- Applicants must schedule a preliminary advising interview with the director of the M.I.S. program and complete a preliminary curriculum proposal.

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements/>), applicants who are proposing an individualized course of study must:

1. Schedule a preliminary advising interview with the director of the M.I.S. program to discuss academic goals and curricular proposals.
2. Articulate in the written statement of intent, including:
  - a. The applicant's academic goal
  - b. How the M.I.S. degree program will facilitate the achievement of that goal
  - c. How a more traditional program does not meet those goals
3. Complete a preliminary curriculum proposal form identifying the specific course work that will support the academic goal articulated in the written statement of intent. This form is available from the Graduate School by sending an email request to: [gradschool@vcu.edu](mailto:gradschool@vcu.edu).
4. Students who are interested in working toward a degree are encouraged to apply to the program as early as possible, since a maximum of six credit hours taken as a nondegree-seeking student may be counted toward the degree.

Members of the admission committee include the directors of graduate study of the two focus areas identified in the curriculum proposal and the director of the M.I.S. program.

## Degree requirements

In addition to the general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/>), students who are admitted to the M.I.S. individual program of study concentration must:

1. Obtain approval for all transfer and elective course work as part of the formal advising process for developing and/or changing the approved curriculum plan
2. Identify two focus areas and complete nine to 15 graduate credit hours in each
3. Complete a minimum of three graduate credits in a research methods course relevant to the final research project before beginning the final research project
4. Be approved for degree candidacy before beginning the final research project
5. Complete three to six graduate credits as part of the final research project in the form of an approved directed research, independent study, special project or thesis
  - a. A student who chooses the thesis option must identify a thesis adviser and committee before beginning formal work on the thesis. The student will follow the thesis guidelines of the school/program of the thesis adviser, as well as the general guidelines for completion of theses/dissertations (<http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/student/thesis.html>) as prescribed by the VCU Graduate School, the University Graduate Council and VCU Libraries.
  - b. A student who chooses the directed research option must obtain formal approval for the final research project. Before beginning formal work on the final directed research project, the student must submit to the director of the M.I.S. program a copy of the proposed project, along with a signed copy of the Final

Project Proposal Approval form (available from the M.I.S. program director).

## Curriculum requirements

All course work and any substitutions must be approved by the M.I.S. graduate program director.

| Course   | Title   | Hours |
|----------|---|-------|
|          | Focus area I  | 9-15  |
|          | Focus area II   | 9-15  |
|          | Electives (additional related course work)            | 0-12  |
|          | Research methods (relevant to final research project) | 3     |
|          | Final research project                                | 3-6   |
| GRAD 697 | Directed Research                                     |       |

**The minimum total of graduate credit hours required for this degree is 36.**

### Contact

Graduate School  
[gradschool@vcu.edu](mailto:gradschool@vcu.edu)  
 (804) 828-2233