

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE
INTERDISCIPLINARY PH.D. PROGRAM GUIDELINES
Revised - July 17, 2003

OVERVIEW

The Interdisciplinary Ph.D. program allows qualified individuals to pursue doctoral study in areas in which the University offers no formal degree program but has significant resources and expertise. Students pursue the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. under the direction of a five-member Academic Advisory Committee. Four committee members are members of the Graduate Faculty of the University representing at least two academic departments, while the fifth member is from an institution other than the University of Maine. The student may designate a particular field as the major field of study.

In pursuing the degree, students follow a Plan of Study approved by an Academic Advisory Committee. The Plan includes coursework, applicable language and/or methodological requirements as determined by the committee, a comprehensive examination, a dissertation, and a final oral examination. All requirements must be completed within the time limits specified for University of Maine Doctor of Philosophy degree programs in the Graduate School catalogue at the time of admission.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Prior to submitting an application for the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. program, each prospective candidate must meet with a representative to discuss the student's educational goals.

In order to be considered for admission to the program, applicants will normally hold a master's degree in a relevant discipline from an accredited institution of higher learning.

Plan of Study

An applicant together with the chair of the proposed Academic Advisory Committee develops a Plan of Study. The Plan includes:

- (a) a two to three page prospectus outlining the proposed focus of study and a description of the relevance of the study based on a review of the existing literature;
- (b) a list of courses to be taken (including prerequisite courses, language requirements, and any courses to be taken on an audit basis) and a statement outlining the importance of the proposed coursework in light of prior academic and/or professional training and future professional plans. Normally, 30 to 60 hours of graduate credit excluding transfer credit is expected to be included in the applicant's Program of Study. No more than 6 credits may be taken at the 400-level. Up to 12 from the University of Maine earned after a master's degree may be applied toward the doctoral program. The Program of Study must also detail specific courses which will provide the applicant with appropriate training in research methodology;
- (c) a brief description of topics to be covered in the comprehensive examination and the names of the faculty members responsible for the comprehensive examination;

Admission Materials

The proposed Plan of Study, after approval by the Academic Advisory Committee and any necessary approvals within the department or program representing a major field, is forwarded to the Graduate School.

The Plan is accompanied by:

- * a completed Graduate School application which includes transcripts of prior undergraduate and graduate work, scores from the Graduate Record Exam and letters of recommendation;
- * a résumé of the applicant;
- * a completed Program of Study signed by the student's Academic Advisory Committee;
- * résumés of members of the proposed Academic Advisory Committee if they do not currently hold University of Maine graduate faculty appointments;
- * in the case of international students, appropriate financial statements and scores from the TOEFL examination; and
- * a brief statement prepared by the committee chair stating that no existing University of Maine doctoral program meets the requirements and interests of the applicant. The chair of the proposed Academic Advisory Committee is encouraged to consult with the Graduate School before the application is considered by the Admissions Subcommittee.

Admission Procedure

The Graduate School forwards completed applications to a three member subcommittee of the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Steering Committee selected on the basis of compatible interest with the applicant. The Admissions Subcommittee ensures that the applicant's academic background and proposed Plan of Study conform to current policies and standards of the Graduate School. In circumstances where more than one member of an applicant's proposed Academic Advisory Committee are also Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Steering Committee members, the student's application will be considered by the entire Steering Committee. Final approval of the application is given by the Graduate School, who will then formally appoint the Academic Advisory Committee.

Completed applications must be received by the Graduate School by **April 1** for admission in the Fall and Summer semesters and **November 1** for the Spring semester.

COMPOSITION OF THE ACADEMIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Academic Advisory Committee consists of at least five members, four of whom are members of the faculty of the University of Maine. All committee members, including the external member, must be members of the Graduate Faculty of the University of Maine before formal appointment to the committee will be made by the Dean of the Graduate School. Those who are not members of the Graduate Faculty should submit a *Record of Qualifications For Proposed Participants in Graduate Education* form before or with the submission of the application to the Graduate School. Appointments to the Graduate Faculty are made by the Dean of the Graduate School.

It is expected that the applicant's Academic Advisory Committee will undertake the responsibility of assisting the student in the development of the dissertation proposal. Therefore, it is essential that the research interests of the faculty on the Academic Advisory Committee closely match the applicant's proposed focus of study. In making its decisions, the Admissions Subcommittee will place a great deal of weight on the composition of the student's Advisory Committee and on the coherence of the proposed Plan of Study.

Committee Chair

The chair must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty at the University of Maine. Since the chair normally directs the dissertation research, he or she must have demonstrated expertise in the major research area of the student.

University of Maine Committee Members

The three additional University of Maine committee members should be chosen on the basis of substantive expertise in multiple areas of study or expertise in the language or methodological areas selected by the student.

External Member

The fifth member of the committee may be from another institution, and shall be selected on the basis of his or her demonstrated expertise in the topic of the dissertation research. The external member must be identified prior to the student's admission to candidacy.

Additional Requirements

Ideally, the committee chair and at least one additional committee member have prior experience in directing and supervising doctoral-level research. A summary of this experience (e.g., a list of past doctoral committees) must be submitted to the Graduate School when the application is submitted.

PROGRESS TOWARDS THE DEGREE

The Program of Study developed by the Academic Advisory Committee in the application is the plan which is followed in completing the degree. The committee is responsible for directing the degree and ensuring that satisfactory progress is made towards completing all degree requirements (coursework, comprehensive exam, dissertation proposal, dissertation research and final oral examination). The chair of the committee has primary responsibility for coordinating the degree program. All requirements must be completed within time limits specified in the Graduate School catalogue at the time of admission.

Coursework

The Academic Advisory Committee monitors progress being made towards the degree to ensure that coursework outlined in the plan of study is satisfactorily completed. Minor changes in specific courses (e.g., substituting a particular course in one department with a similar course from another department) require the approval of the Academic Advisory Committee, while significant changes in the scope of coursework (including the number of credits in specific areas or *in toto*) require the prior approval of the Graduate School.

Comprehensive Exam

The content and administration of the comprehensive exam is the responsibility of the Academic Advisory Committee. Normally the comprehensive exam is taken at the end of coursework, although in unusual cases a committee may wish to make alternative arrangements based on individual circumstances.

Admission To Candidacy

When the Academic Advisory Committee certifies to the Graduate School that the comprehensive exam has been passed and all other requirements set out in the Plan of Study (except the dissertation) have been satisfactorily completed, the Graduate School admits the student to candidacy.

Dissertation

The dissertation must be completed and defended within the time limits specified by the Graduate School at the time of admission. The student is responsible for acquiring the approval of appropriate human subject or other review boards before beginning research.

Final Oral Examination

The final oral exam for the Ph.D. is administered and evaluated by the Academic Advisory Committee. Final oral examinations are open to the University community.

LIAISON BETWEEN THE ACADEMIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

In special circumstances, the Graduate School may appoint one member of the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Steering Committee to serve as a liaison between the Graduate School and the Academic Advisory Committee of an Interdisciplinary Ph.D. student. At the end of each semester, the chair of the Academic Advisory Committee provides the liaison with a report outlining progress made towards the degree, areas of potential concern, etc. The role of the liaison is to serve as an intermediary, providing information and advice to the chair or members of the Advisory Committee concerning Graduate School policies, etc. The liaison does not make decisions concerning changes in the Program of Study or other parts of the Interdisciplinary Ph.D., or have a role in the Advisory Committee.

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE
GRADUATE SCHOOL
INTERDISCIPLINARY DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
PROGRAM OF STUDY

TO BE FILLED OUT AND SUBMITTED WITH YOUR I.P.H.D. APPLICATION

Name: _____
(Last Name) (First Name) (ID#)

Address: _____

Degree Program: Ph.D. Area of Specialization: Interdisciplinary

Course Work Proposed: (Include transfer work, prerequisites, and required non-degree courses.)

[illegible]

Transfer credit for _____ hours is recommended. (Subject to approval of the Graduate School.)
Include on a separate sheet, a list of course(s) to be transferred and institution(s) attended.

Institutional Unit Requirements (specify language and/or skill requirements and comprehensive examinations - include topics and the person(s) who will be administering the exams):

Human/Animal Subjects Review Committee Approval: YES _____ NO _____ N/A _____

Topic of Dissertation: _____

Statement of the Scope and Proposed Plan of Treatment of the Dissertation: _____

Signatures of Advisory Committee:

_____ (Chair's Signature)	_____ (Please Print)
_____ (Signature)	_____ (Please Print)
_____ (Signature)	_____ (Please Print)
_____ (Signature)	_____ (Please Print)
_____ (Signature)	_____ (Please Print)

Changes in this program may be made by filing a *Request for Change in Program* form in the Graduate School. It is the student's responsibility to obtain approval of major changes in his/her course of study at the time such changes are made. If you have questions call 581-3222.