

New Interdisciplinary Graduate Program Proposal Requirements

The following guidelines are designed to promote efficient establishment of curriculum-based interdisciplinary graduate programs. Proposals for establishing interdisciplinary research centers that do not have a foundation in graduate education and curriculum should be directed to the Office of Research (<http://uwacadweb.uwyo.edu/Research/>). The Academic Plan II broadly outlines overarching criteria necessary for the administrative approval of new interdisciplinary programs. These should be consulted, however, the following guidelines are presented to facilitate actual proposal preparation and to clarify the evaluation process.

Proposed programs should explore new learning paradigms based upon an understanding of requirements necessary to position graduates for future competitive success. Curricula should focus on processes, relational problem solving and discipline integration. Successful and sustainable interdisciplinary programs will be characterized by rigorous content requirements and thoughtful innovation with a goal of preparing students to address complex, multi-dimensional issues. It is not sufficient to simply require a menu of established courses within a traditional framework. It is likely, at the least, that modification of existing courses or new seminar requirements will be needed to fulfill this requirement. Program development can be incremental; however, a definitive vision and mission must be articulated.

Proposals for new interdisciplinary graduate programs should address the following:

I. Program Specifics

- 1. Proposal Summary** – include program title, specific names of degree(s), relevant departments, program justification, vision/mission statement, specific program goals, projected student learning outcomes and “sunset” provisions.

2. Program Description

- a. Organization and management structure.** Outline the administrative structure in terms of leadership, reporting lines, faculty responsibilities, expectations and accountability. Describe how program decisions will be made, if there will be a formal meeting schedule and what standing committees will be established. What mechanisms will be used to ensure intellectual collegiality among faculty and students? Provide evidence of commitment and support from relevant departments and colleges. The Program chair will serve at the pleasure of the Dean of the Graduate School and will be chosen by the Dean based on consultation and election by the program faculty.

- b. Program Demand.** Provide evidence for program demand relative to current & projected student enrollment, capacity, marketability of graduates and measures to ensure competitive success of graduates. Describe how the program will contribute to strengthening graduate education and & interaction with other departments. Demonstrate that the program will foster verifiable strengths of current graduate programs. Describe the contribution to established areas of distinction at UW.
- c. Program requirements.** Specifically address issues related to:
- Recruitment and retention. Describe admissions standards for students, the process of admissions evaluation, recruitment strategies to ensure a diverse, high quality applicant pool. What degrees will the program offer? For doctoral programs will a masters degree be required? Discuss the proposed mentoring structure. Will there be recurring evaluations of student progress? What provisions will be made to ensure appropriate program transparency and oversight of student progress by the program? What measures will be taken to minimize time-to-degree and attrition? What career development opportunities will be provided? Describe developmental benchmarks and the timeline for a typical student's graduate pathway.
 - Program curriculum. Describe the curriculum including minimum credit hours required, required courses, curriculum flexibility and opportunities. List current courses and existing departments that will support the program. Describe any modifications to existing courses necessary to fulfill the concept of interdisciplinarity. Will courses be listed by department or cross-listed with the program designation? Programs should avoid simply presenting disciplinary based courses and relying on students to establish linkages. List new courses that will be necessary for program establishment. Who will teach the courses and what are the implications in terms of current job descriptions. Describe graduate committee composition and responsibilities, thesis/dissertation requirements and organization of preliminary exam and final defense events. Are there accreditation issues that need to be addressed?
 - Graduate assistantship responsibilities. Describe the expectations for GAs, formal program orientations, teaching training, mentoring guidelines. The Graduate School strongly supports a balanced approach that integrates meaningful teaching and quality research experiences.
 - Special requirements. Will there be internships and multiple research experiences? What provisions will be established to promote intellectual collegiality and collaboration among students and faculty?
- d. Program assessment & outcomes.** Provide a detailed program assessment plan describing expectations, indicators of achievement

for faculty and students, developmentally appropriate benchmarks for student learning and evaluation specifics. What are the consequences of substandard performance? Will there be a defined student progress evaluation? Describe elements of a “sunset” review plan to evaluate program sustainability.

- e. **Implementation plan & timeline.** Describe the 5 year schedule for program initiation and evolution.

3. Program resources and description of projected costs.

- a. **Current faculty.** Provide specific details supporting the national and international achievements and reputation of program faculty. List faculty and attach CVs including courses taught, publications, grants, awards, number of masters and doctoral students supervised (name, thesis/dissertation title, entry & graduation year), advisee achievements, career outcomes 5 years post-graduation, time-to-degree and graduate student committee service. Describe any requirements for program participation. What will be faculty expectations in terms of graduate student supervision and productivity?
- b. **Prospective faculty.** List and provide a justification for any additional faculty required for program sustainability and present a 5 year plan for hiring. Include new courses to be taught and projected costs for hiring, startup, support and salary. Is there demonstrated department/college commitment to this plan?
- c. **Current graduate students.** List current graduate students in affiliated departments that would be incorporated into the new program (current FTE graduate students/FTE faculty). How many are state and grant funded GAs? What are expectations for FTE graduate students/FTE faculty in the new program.
- d. **Requested GA lines.** Are new GA lines required for program initiation and sustainability? Provide rationale for all requested new GAs. Are the requested GA lines continuing or short-term? How will GAs lines be distributed? What is the projected graduate student capacity for the new program. Will program initiation result in a net increase in graduate student number? What percentages will be supported as state and grant funded GAs? List costs associated with all new GAs requested and outline a plan for GA management.
- e. **Library.** Describe current resources and the adequacy of resources. Are further library resources are required, desired or suggested? If so, specify titles and costs. What consequences will be forthcoming if no additional library resources are provided?
- f. **Physical Facilities and Instructional Equipment.** Describe the adequacy of existing facilities and instructional equipment. Are there other anticipated or required facilities and instructional equipment required for program viability?

- g. Other resources.** List present & proposed support staff, position responsibilities and other proposed resource requirements. Is administrative time for a program director requested? If so, provide a justification for a specific amount and provide evidence of commitment from appropriate department heads and deans.
- h. Miscellaneous.**
- Describe any other factor that will contribute to the feasibility analysis i.e. Will any aspects of current graduate programs be eliminated upon approval of the new program? How will resources be distributed to enhance faculty and student interaction and productivity?
 - Provide a detailed plan for development of a program webpage.
 - Provide a program description suitable for inclusion in the Graduate Bulletin.
- i. Projected program costs.**
- Summarize a comprehensive budget to program initiation and sustainability for 5 years.
 - Describe consequences if no additional resources are provided?
- 4. 5 year action plan.** Describe a plan for incremental growth of the program over the next 5 years.

II. Administrative Evaluation

- 1.** Prior to developing a full proposal it is advisable to discuss program feasibility with the Dean of Graduate School. All interdisciplinary programs must clearly address parameters outlined in Academic Plan II. These include scholarly foundation, hiring plans, degree programs, administrative structures and facilities. Additional areas that require attention include program need, program assessment plans, and expectations for graduate outcomes and contribution to faculty and student recruitment and scholarly productivity.
- 2.** Following a preliminary review at the Graduate School level, a formal proposal may be developed based upon guiding principles outlined below. It is essential that relevant department heads and college deans are consulted throughout the program development process. During the development process, minutes of all meetings should be taken and distributed to all relevant faculty, department heads, college Deans as well as the Dean of the Graduate School and Associate VPs for Academic Affairs.
- 3.** It is advisable to establish a steering committee charged with proposal development. However, central elements must be approved by program faculty, relevant heads and deans. To the extent possible, programs should seek to be inclusive.
- 4.** The proposal should have a cover sheet that includes signatures/dates from:

- Affiliated department heads
- Affiliated college deans
- Graduate dean
- Academic Affairs

The Graduate Council will provide a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School.

5. The President and the Board of Trustees are responsible for the final program approval.
6. New courses or course renovations must have the approval of the college and university course committees.