

PROPOSAL TO OFFER A NEW DEGREE PROGRAM*

Proposals will only be accepted electronically as a Word document to the Office of the Provost when submitted to provost.deg.changes@wsu.edu

**If a new unit will be created to offer the proposed degree, a notice of intent to establish the new unit (program, department, or school) will also be required.*

This proposal will be circulated to other institutions in the state via the Interinstitutional Committee on Academic Program Planning (ICAPP). You may be asked to interact with other institutions if they have questions or concerns.

Degree Title:	Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies (MSIS)
Academic Program:	Interdisciplinary Studies
Academic Plan:	
Number of Credits:	30
Department(s) or Program(s):	Graduate School
College(s):	Graduate School
Campus(es):	Pullman
Method of Instructional Delivery:	Hybrid (Face-to-Face, Videoconference, Asynchronous)

Contact Name:	Arvin Sahaym	Email Address:	arvin@wsu.edu
Contact Phone:	509-335-6424	*Proposed start date:	Fall 2025

****Proposed Start Date: Approval must be received from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities before the program may be advertised or recruited for. Financial aid may not be available until the program has been approved by the Department of Education subsequent to NWCCU approval. Approval notification will be sent by the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President.***

Proposal

Mission and Strategic Goals:

Provide a clear statement of the nature and purposes of the new degree in the context of WSU's mission and strategic plan.

The mission of the Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies (MSIS) is to provide an advanced educational platform that aligns with Washington State University's mission to foster innovative and integrated academic programs. This degree will cater to students seeking to synthesize knowledge from multiple disciplines to address complex, real-world challenges. By leveraging WSU's diverse academic resources, the MSIS program will produce graduates equipped with interdisciplinary expertise and a unique skill set tailored to contemporary and future societal needs.

Educational Offerings*:

Describe the degree program, including the total number of credits required. Provide the four-year degree plan (undergraduate) or appropriate plan of study (graduate and professional).

****Please note that all courses for the degree must be approved before the degree will be reviewed by the Catalog Subcommittee.***

The MSIS program will require a total of 30 credits, which include core interdisciplinary courses, elective courses from at least two different disciplines, and a culminating project or thesis. Students can choose between a Thesis Master's Degree and a Non-Thesis Master's Degree. See Appendix B for details.

Program of Study for Thesis Master's Degree

- 30 hours minimum of total credits
- 21 hours minimum of graded (A-F) coursework, which may include up to 6 hours of undergraduate 300-400 level graded coursework.
- 4 hours minimum of 700-level credit in the major, 2 of which must be taken in the semester of the final exam or thesis completion
- Courses taken for audit or courses graded Pass/Fail may not be used on the *Program of Study*.

Interdisciplinary nature of the program requires that of the above:

- At least six graded credit hours are from each of the two independent degree-granting academic disciplines.
- INTERDIS 591: Interdisciplinary Studies (1 hour; graded) is taken as a core course.
- INTERDIS 598: Interdisciplinary Seminar (1 hour; satisfactory/fail) is taken as a research course.

Students will typically take a minimum of nine credits from at least one of the two or more degree-granting disciplines.

Program of Study for Non-thesis Master's Degree

- 30 hours minimum of total credits
- 26 hours minimum of graded (A-F) coursework, which may include up to 9 hours of undergraduate 300-400 level graded coursework.
- 4 hours minimum of 702-level credit in the major, 2 of which must be taken in the semester of the final exam/project completion
- Courses taken for audit or courses graded Pass/Fail may not be used on the *Program of Study*.

Interdisciplinary nature of the program requires that of the above:

- At least six graded credit hours are from each of the two independent degree-granting academic disciplines.
- INTERDIS 591: Interdisciplinary Studies (1 hour; graded) is taken as a core course.
- INTERDIS 598: Interdisciplinary Seminar (1 hour; satisfactory/fail) is taken as a research course.

Students will typically take a minimum of nine credits from at least one of the two or more degree-granting disciplines.

Provide descriptive information regarding (the) method(s) of instructional delivery (percent face-to-face, hybrid, distance, and/or competency-based).

The program will be delivered through a combination of face-to-face, videoconferencing, or asynchronous, depending on the existing graduate program coursework requirements.

Assessment of Student Learning and Student Achievement

**For graduate programs, please contact the Graduate School before completing this section.*

Please provide a list and description of expected student learning outcomes.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate a thorough understanding of interdisciplinary concepts and methodologies.
2. Apply interdisciplinary approaches to solve complex problems.
3. Conduct independent and original research that integrates multiple disciplines.
4. Communicate effectively in written and verbal formats across various disciplines.
5. Demonstrate practical skills in their chosen interdisciplinary fields.

For undergraduate programs, provide the department's plan for assessing student learning outcomes. Describe briefly how information on student learning will be collected and incorporated into existing processes for evaluating student learning in the department. Please attach the plan and a curriculum matrix.

Assessment Methods:

- **Direct Measures:**
 - **Course Evaluations:** Regular assessments through exams, projects, and presentations in core and elective courses.
 - **Thesis/Project Evaluation:** Assessment of the thesis or non-thesis project by the student's advisory committee.
 - **Oral Defense:** Evaluation of the student's ability to defend their research or project work before a committee.
- **Indirect Measures:**
 - **Student Surveys:** Feedback on program satisfaction and perceived learning outcomes.
 - **Alumni Surveys:** Long-term feedback on career outcomes and the applicability of skills learned.
 - **Advisory Committee Feedback:** Regular input from faculty advisors on student progress and program effectiveness.

Data Collection and Analysis:

- **Semester Evaluations:** Collect data on student performance each semester.
- **Annual Reviews:** Conduct annual reviews of student progress and program outcomes.
- **Exit Surveys:** Administer surveys to graduating students to gather feedback on their experiences and learning.

Use of Assessment Data:

- **Program Improvement:** Use collected data to make informed decisions on curriculum changes and program enhancements.
- **Student Support:** Identify areas where students may need additional support or resources.

Please indicate as appropriate:

- ☐ Assessment of this program will be incorporated into the existing assessment plan for _____. Please attach a copy of the existing plan.
- ☒ A draft assessment plan is attached.
- ☒ A curriculum matrix is attached.

Planning:

Describe plans and include descriptions which provide evidence of:

1. The need for the new degree:

The MSIS program addresses the growing demand for interdisciplinary expertise in both academic and professional fields. Stakeholders, including faculty, peer institutions, and students, have identified a need for such a program to explore and address complex phenomena that do not fit within traditional disciplinary boundaries. A Ph.D. in interdisciplinary studies has been in place at WSU for over 40 years; however, unlike most doctoral programs there is no master's degree. The latter is needed for the students whose academic and career goals can be met with a master's degree.

2. The student population to be served

- Provide realistic justification for the projected FTE.
- How can transfer students articulate smoothly into the program and complete it with approximately the same number of total credits as students who enter WSU as freshmen?
- Please describe specific efforts planned to recruit and retain underrepresented students in this discipline.

The program targets high-achieving students interested in combining multiple disciplines to address unique research questions. It is expected to attract 2-3 students per academic year, consistent with the demand observed in similar interdisciplinary programs. And it has the existing Individual Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program (IIDP)-based built-in capacity to serve them.

3. Procedures used in arriving at the decision to offer the new degree (e.g., consultation with advisory boards, input from industry or employers, commissioned studies, faculty task force, etc.).

The decision to request the MSIS degree was driven by the existing IIDP administration's recognition of a growing demand for a flexible, interdisciplinary master's program among current and prospective students. Additionally, current IIDP (Individual Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program) students who may decide to transition from the Ph.D. pathway can off-ramp to the MSIS program, providing a flexible alternative that more effectively supports their academic and career goals.

4. Organizational arrangements required within the institution to accommodate the new degree.

The program will be housed within the Graduate School. The program will be administered by current IIDP faculty and staff and leverages existing resources and faculty expertise from participating graduate programs - these faculty and staff will be actively involved in tracking the students and guiding them toward their goals. No new organizational units or staff are required.

5. Lay out a three-year timetable for implementation, including hiring plans, partnership contracts if needed, facilities modification, recruiting, and other elements of implementation. Provide dates for each step. **If faculty need to be hired, provide a written commitment from your funding authority of the necessary faculty lines.**

Year 1 (Fall 2025):

- First cohort of students begins the program.

Years 2-4 (2025-2028):

- Continue recruitment and support for ongoing student research.
- Evaluate program effectiveness and make necessary adjustments.
- Graduate the first cohort.

Budget:

☒ Attach the Financial Worksheet with five-year FTE, revenue and expenditure projections. Fully account for costs such as staff support, training, library, facilities and so on.

Please describe the funding picture narratively, including funding sources, department, college and/or campus commitments, investments already made, one-time costs, facilities costs (labs, classrooms, offices, telecom etc.) and library costs.

Tuition generated will be distributed to the respective departments offering the courses. The Graduate School will require no additional funding and will receive no tuition for delivery of the program. That is, all revenues will be returned to individual colleges as students work with the program committees therein, and no new costs will be incurred as existing Individual Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program (IIDP) and Molecular Plant Sciences (MPS) ecosystem within the Graduate School covers all the costs. In sum, the program will use existing resources including personnel within the Graduate School with no additional financial burden on WSU.

The Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education serves an equivalent role as both graduate program chair and college dean and will appoint an Associate Vice Provost to serve as Program Director and delegate appropriate duties. The Program Director, who will jointly oversee the IIDP and MSIS, provides overall academic leadership and represents the program's interests to system administrators.

As with the IIDP, the MSIS will be supported by an Academic Coordinator who supports all the above activities as needed. They assist the program director with the day-to-day program management and advising IIDP and MSIS applicants and students.

No new costs to WSU are anticipated.

Student Services:

Describe the capacity of student support services to accommodate the new degree. Include a description of admissions, financial aid, advising, library, tutoring and other services specific to this request.

The Graduate School and associated departments will provide admissions, advising, financial aid, library, and tutoring services to support MSIS students across the system.

Describe the implications of the new degree for services to the rest of the student body.

There are no foreseeable negative implications for the rest of the student body.

Physical Facilities and Equipment:

Outline the provision/s made for physical facilities and equipment at the proposed location that will support the program and its projected growth. Include videoconferencing and other technologies that support course delivery as well as classrooms, labs, and office space.

Existing facilities at WSU, including classrooms, labs, and offices, will support the MSIS program. Videoconferencing, asynchronous delivery, and other technologies will be employed to enhance course delivery.

Library and Information Resources:

Using the Library Analysis form, describe the availability and adequacy of library and information resources for this degree, degree level, and location. Note plans to address gaps.

Current library resources are deemed adequate for the MSIS program.

Faculty:

List the educational and professional qualifications of the faculty relative to their individual teaching assignments.

List the anticipated sources or plans to secure qualified faculty and staff.

Qualifications:

- Faculty from at least two different disciplines with expertise in the relevant fields.
- Most faculty will hold Ph.D. degrees and have significant research and teaching experience. Typically, they will have the status of Faculty of the Graduate School.

Recruitment:

- The program will use existing faculty.

Impact on Other Locations/Programs:

Briefly describe any impacts on other WSU programs and locations, and how you came to these conclusions (who was consulted?). If there are potential adverse impacts, describe how these will be addressed. Consider such things as: reallocation of faculty time, reallocation of AOI courses, impact of blended courses, internal competition, “cannibalization” of other programs, curricular effects for other degrees, effects on recruitment markets for other campuses. Indicate how such problems will be addressed for each campus or department affected.

The MSIS program is expected to complement existing programs by fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and research. Potential impacts on faculty time and resources will be managed through careful planning and coordination. The MSIS program will be available systemwide for any faculty group willing to mentor a student with shared interests.

Sustainability

What are the plans for continuing the program past 5 years if the goals for enrollment are not met, or other circumstances prevent the execution of the plan described here?

If enrollment goals are unmet within five years, the program will undergo a strategic review. Potential adjustments may include program restructuring or the introduction of certificate programs to maintain viability. Given the sustained interest in the IIDP, the master's program is expected to remain viable in the long term.

External Reviewer Contact Information

If this program is new to the Washington State University system, please provide the names and contact information for 2-3 external experts from similar institutions *who could* be contacted to provide reviews of this program.

Name	Contact Information (email and phone)


Attachments:

- ☒ Financial Worksheet
- ☒ Four-Year Degree Plan (undergraduate); curriculum overview (graduate and professional)
- ☐ Curriculum Map (undergraduate)
- ☒ Assessment Plan
- ☐ Letters of financial commitment
- ☐ Contracts or MOUs if applicable

Submit completed form as a Word document to the Provost's Office at provost.deg.changes@wsu.edu

SIGNATURES: The names typed below certify that the relevant academic and campus officials have reviewed and approved this proposal:

Chair or Director Signature:		Date:	8/26/2024
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Dean Signature:		Date:	8/26/2024
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Signatures are required from the Chancellor(s) if the degree will be offered and/or impact the respective campus:

Everett Chancellor Signature:		Date:	9/10/24
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Pullman/ Global Chancellor Signature:		Date:	9/10/2024
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Spokane Chancellor Signature:		Date:	9/20/24
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Tri-Cities Chancellor Signature:		Date:	9-18-2024
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Vancouver Chancellor Signature:		Date	9/10/24
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Comments regarding abstention of signature(s)

Submit completed form as a Word document to the Provost's Office at
provost.deg.changes@wsu.edu

For Registrar's Office Use Only:					
Current CIP Code:		New CIP Code:		Date:	

Appendix A - Financial Worksheet:

As the program will be housed within the Graduate School just as the current well-established Individual Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program (IIDP), no new costs to WSU are anticipated.

Tuition generated will be distributed to the respective departments offering the courses. The Graduate School will require no additional funding and will receive no tuition for delivery of the program. The program will use existing staff resources within the IIDP with no additional financial burden on WSU.

The program will be administered by current IIDP faculty and staff and leverages existing resources and faculty expertise from participating graduate programs. No new organizational units or staff will be needed, ensuring no new costs.

		Budget Template (Traditional)							
		Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies (MSIS)							
			8/16/2024						
<i>Note: All revenues are returned to individual colleges as students work with the program committees therein, and no new costs are incurred as existing Individual Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program (IIDP) and Molecular Plant Sciences (MPS) ecosystem at the Graduate School covers all the costs.</i>									
			1st	2nd	Nth*	1st	2nd	Total at the end of every 2nd year	
			1st	2nd	Nth*	Academic	Academic	Academic	
						Year	Year	Year	
Total Student						2	3	5	
						↑Enrollment values linked to Planning #2 on page 4↑			
Personnel									
	Faculty		↓Insert employee FTE by job title↓			↓Insert annual salaries by job title↓			
	Associate Vice Provost for Interdisciplinary Initiatives		0.25			27287.07			
	Subtotal		0.25			27287.07			
	Staff								
	Academic Coordinator		0.25			13432.74			
	Subtotal		0.25			13432.74			
	Classified								
	<Insert Job Title>		0	0	0				
	Subtotal		0	0	0				
	Graduate								
	TA		0	0	0				
	Subtotal		0	0	0				
	Total Personnel		0	0	0	40719.81			
Benefits						↓Insert benefits based on current benefit rates↓			
	Faculty					No extra benefits			
	Staff					No extra benefits			
	Classified								
	Graduate								
	Total Benefits								
	Link to current benefits model rates								
Goods and Services						N/A			
Travel						N/A			
Equipment (laptops, cameras, software)						N/A			
	Total Direct Costs					40719.81			
	Total Indirect Costs					0			
	Total Costs					40719.81			
Total Revenue	All revenues are returned to individual colleges								
Total Expenses	Same as total costs which are absorbed by already existing ecosystem at the Graduate School (specifically, existing Individual Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program (IIDP) and Molecular Plant Sciences (MPS) ecosystem.								
Tot. Rev. - Tot. Exp.	All revenues will be returned to individual colleges. Costs are already absorbed by the existing ecosystem at the Graduate School.								

Appendix B - Curriculum Overview for Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies (MSIS)

Program of Study for Thesis Master's Degree

Total Credits Required: 30 minimum

- **Total Graded Credits:** 21 minimum
- **Total Research Credits:** 4 minimum

Year 1

Fall Semester

- INTERDIS 591: Interdisciplinary Studies (1 credit; graded)
- Elective Course in Discipline 1 (3 credits; graded)
- Elective Course in Discipline 2 (3 credits; graded)
- **Total Graded Credits:** 7

Spring Semester

- INTERDIS 598: Interdisciplinary Seminar (1 credit; satisfactory/fail)
- Elective Course in Discipline 1 (3 credits; graded)
- Elective Course in Discipline 2 (3 credits; graded)
- Research Credit(s) (1 credit; 700-level)
- **Total Graded Credits:** 6
- **Total Research Credits:** 1

Year 2

Fall Semester

- Elective Course in Discipline 1 or 2 (3 credits; graded)
- Elective Course in Discipline 1 or 2 (3 credits; graded)
- Research Credit(s) (1 credit; 700-level)
- **Total Graded Credits:** 6
- **Total Research Credits:** 1

Spring Semester

- Research Credits (2 credits; 700-level; thesis completion)
- Elective Course (3 credits; graded)
- **Total Graded Credits:** 3
- **Total Research Credits:** 2

Total Credits (Graded + Research): 30 minimum

Total Graded Credits: 21 minimum

Total Research Credits: 4 minimum

Students will typically take a minimum of nine credits from at least one of the two or more degree-granting disciplines.

Program of Study for Non-thesis Master's Degree

Total Credits Required: 30 minimum

- **Total Graded Credits:** 26 minimum
- **Total Research Credits:** 4 minimum

Year 1

Fall Semester

- INTERDIS 591: Interdisciplinary Studies (1 credit; graded)
- Elective Course in Discipline 1 (3 credits; graded)
- Elective Course in Discipline 2 (3 credits; graded)
- **Total Graded Credits:** 7

Spring Semester

- INTERDIS 598: Interdisciplinary Seminar (1 credit; satisfactory/fail)
- Elective Course in Discipline 1 (3 credits; graded)
- Elective Course in Discipline 2 (3 credits; graded)
- Research Credit(s) (1 credit; 702-level)
- **Total Graded Credits:** 6
- **Total Research Credits:** 1

Year 2

Fall Semester

- Elective Course in Discipline 1 or 2 (3 credits; graded)
- Elective Course in Discipline 1 or 2 (3 credits; graded)
- Elective Course (3 credits; graded)
- Research Credit(s) (1 credit; 702-level)
- **Total Graded Credits:** 9
- **Total Research Credits:** 1

Spring Semester

- Elective Course (3 credits; graded)
- May take another Elective Course (1 credit minimum preferably 3 credits; graded) – this is one additional course for students not pursuing Thesis Master's Degree as this brings the number of total graded credits to 26.
- Research Credits (2 credits; 702-level; project completion)
- **Total Graded Credits:** 6 if two 3 credits courses taken, 4 if one 3 credits and one 1 credit course is taken.
- **Total Research Credits:** 2

Total Credits (Graded + Research): 30 minimum

Total Graded Credits: 26 minimum

Total Research Credits: 4 minimum

Students will typically take a minimum of nine credits from at least one of the two or more degree-granting disciplines.

Admission Requirements:

- Hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a minimum GPA of 3.0.
- Provide evidence of capability for independent research.
- Submit three recommendation letters highlighting academic ability, experience, and potential for interdisciplinary research.
- An initial program proposal of no more than three pages covering the interdisciplinary statement of purpose, discussion of the applications and contributions of specific learning to the world, and identification and justification for the two (or more) essential academic disciplines.

Program Administration:

The Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education serves an equivalent role as both graduate program chair and college dean.

The Vice Provost may appoint a Program Director and delegate appropriate duties, providing overall academic leadership and representing the program's interests to campus and university administrators.

The program is supported by an Academic Coordinator who assists with day-to-day management and advising applicants and students.

Advisory Committee:

The advisory committee assists students with their formal proposal and guides them throughout their interdisciplinary master's program.

- The committee will include at least three faculty members from two different academic disciplines.
- The committee chair must be a Graduate Faculty member with previous experience on graduate committees.
- The committee provides critical oversight, including approving the program of study, research proposal, and evaluating the final project or thesis.

Appendix C - Assessment Plan

Assessment Plan for Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies (MSIS)

Mission Statement

The mission of the MSIS program is to develop advanced interdisciplinary knowledge and skills, enabling graduates to address complex challenges through integrative and innovative approaches.

Program Objectives

1. To provide students with comprehensive training in interdisciplinary methodologies and concepts.
2. To equip students with the ability to synthesize knowledge from multiple disciplines.
3. To foster the development of advanced research skills.
4. To prepare students for careers in academia, industry, and other fields requiring interdisciplinary expertise.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the MSIS program, graduates will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a thorough understanding of interdisciplinary concepts and methodologies.
2. Apply interdisciplinary approaches to solve complex problems.
3. Conduct independent and original research that integrates multiple disciplines.
4. Communicate effectively in written and verbal formats across various disciplines.
5. Demonstrate practical skills in their chosen interdisciplinary fields.

Assessment Methods

Direct Measures:

- **Course Evaluations:** Regular assessments through exams, projects, and presentations in core and elective courses.
- **Thesis/Project Evaluation:** Assessment of the thesis or non-thesis project by the student's advisory committee.
- **Oral Defense:** Evaluation of the student's ability to defend their research or project work before a committee.

Indirect Measures:

- **Student Surveys:** Feedback on program satisfaction and perceived learning outcomes.
- **Alumni Surveys:** Long-term feedback on career outcomes and the applicability of skills learned.
- **Advisory Committee Feedback:** Regular input from faculty advisors on student progress and program effectiveness.

Data Collection and Analysis

- **Semester Evaluations:** Collect data on student performance and course effectiveness each semester.
- **Annual Reviews:** Conduct annual reviews of student progress and program outcomes.
- **Exit Surveys:** Administer surveys to graduating students to gather feedback on their experiences and learning.

Use of Assessment Data

Revised 10.01.22
Proposal for New Degree Program
Washington State University

- **Program Improvement:** Use collected data to make informed decisions on curriculum changes and program enhancements.
- **Student Support:** Identify areas where students may need additional support or resources.
- **Faculty Development:** Provide feedback to faculty on teaching effectiveness and areas for improvement.