

General Regulations and Requirements for Interdisciplinary Graduate Degrees

Northeastern University offers individually designed and approved interdisciplinary graduate programs. The individually designed program is for the student who wishes to pursue graduate studies in an area that substantially overlaps two or more units. In such cases, that student may design, in consultation with their faculty advisor(s), an interdisciplinary program. The program will correspond in scope and depth to Northeastern's established degree standards but need not agree exactly with the regulations of individual units. Individually designed, interdisciplinary degree programs must be approved by the appropriate graduate office(s).

There are also approved, specified interdisciplinary programs in which two or more units have jointly established a graduate program. As with individually designed programs, such approved, specified programs must correspond to Northeastern's established degree standards but may not agree exactly with the regulations of individual units.

University-Approved Interdisciplinary Programs

Interdisciplinary programs are university-approved programs in areas of study that combine study in two or more units and have a specified curriculum.

Each interdisciplinary graduate program shall be managed as established in the approved design of the program. All interdisciplinary programs, both master's and PhD, shall identify a committee with representation from all of the units involved to oversee the administration of the program in accordance with the guidelines established here (<http://catalog.northeastern.edu/graduate/general-admission-transfer-credit/>). All administrative details, including but not limited to admission, probation notification, and graduation clearance, shall be carried out by the unit designated as the administrative home. Curriculum design and any subsequent modifications to a program shall be approved by the established procedures within all of the units involved.

Individually Designed Interdisciplinary Programs

In order to pursue an individually designed, interdisciplinary graduate program, a student must have been accepted into an approved graduate program that will serve as the administrative home unit for the interdisciplinary program.

Successful application for admission to an individually designed interdisciplinary program consists of a written proposal describing the areas of proposed study and research. Part of this proposal will be a list of courses to be taken; a description of the qualifying and comprehensive examination process to be used, if any; a timeline; and any other requirements of the program. This proposal must be designed and prepared in consultation with a faculty member at Northeastern who is qualified to serve as the thesis or dissertation advisor. At least two units must participate in order for the proposal to be deemed interdisciplinary. The proposal must correspond in scope and depth to Northeastern's established degree standards. All of the units and the respective associate dean(s) for graduate education of the participating college(s) must approve the proposal. Approval of the proposal indicates that appropriate curricular and other academic norms for the specified degree are satisfied. A proposal for a PhD must define an area of study in which original and independent research can take place.

Admission of the student to the interdisciplinary program of study requires favorable recommendation by all units involved, including the administrative home unit. It also requires the commitment by a faculty member at Northeastern to be the advisor of the student and chair of the interdisciplinary committee for the student. This faculty member may or may not be a member of the administrative home unit. The committee must be assembled within the first semester of the program and must include faculty members from all of the participating units. At least two units must be represented on the committee. This committee will be responsible for overseeing the completion of the degree requirements. It will also be responsible for the administrative elements of the program, such as the monitoring of satisfactory progress; the design and grading of the preliminary and comprehensive exams, if applicable; graduation clearance; etc. This interdisciplinary committee is also responsible for an annual review of the progress of the student and for reporting this progress to the administrative home unit on an annual basis.