

**Graduate School**  
**Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs**  
**Graduate Student and Faculty Guide to IGP Programs, Policies & Procedures**

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## 1. Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs Overview

Welcome to the Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs (IGP) at the Graduate School. This document is intended to help incoming and current IGP students understand the requirements, policies, and procedures associated with graduate education in the IGP, and to describe a set of basic expectations of all graduate students. This handbook contains detailed information about IGP guidelines, but students should also consult The University of Montana Graduate School website (<http://www.umt.edu/grad/>) for additional and up-to-date information on degree requirements, transfer credit policies, and residency requirements. The student may also contact the Director of Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs if he or she has questions.

It is the hope of the IGP office that students will become increasingly effective interdisciplinary scholars through these programs. More specifically, during the student's graduate education, he or she will:

- a) Demonstrate mastery in oral and written communication;
- b) Demonstrate a distinct familiarity with the literature pertaining to the student's fields of study;
- c) Demonstrate an understanding of current research and methodology;
- d) Design, conduct, and report research in a scholarly fashion, if appropriate for the specific degree;
- e) Develop investigative skills to promote independent pursuit of learning beyond the confines of curricular requirements, if appropriate for the specific degree;
- f) Demonstrate a sense of responsibility and professional behavior in the student's field of study.

**Prospective Graduate Students.** Prospective students (i.e., students who have not been formally admitted to a graduate program) can find information about the degree programs and the application process, current IGP degree program admission policies and requirements (including application procedures) on the IGP webpage:

<http://www.umt.edu/grad/Interdisciplinary%20Graduate%20Programs/Prospective%20Students/default.php>.

## 2. IGP Degree Programs

The Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs offers two degrees, one Master's and one Doctoral. Each is a student-driven degree that promotes student's individuality, originality and intellectual synergy with different disciplines on campus, and the opportunity to tailor the educational experience to the student's needs and goals with the expert guidance of UM's faculty.

### **Master of Interdisciplinary Studies (M.I.S.)**

The M.I.S. program allows students, in consultation with faculty, to combine the curricula of two or more programs from this university to produce a hybrid program. This degree is appropriate for students that want to tailor the degree to fit their personal and professional goals, and who are looking for an interdisciplinary and integrative approach that cannot be achieved through a traditional degree offered by the University of Montana. There is a 30-credit thesis option and a 36-credit non-thesis option for this degree.

### **Individualized Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program (I.I.P.)**

The I.I.P. is focused on identifying a research problem(s) that will be approached from different perspectives to create a unique and innovative research project. The student must seek out faculty with the resources and expertise to assist them in defining and executing the research goals, and designing a curriculum to acquire the skills and competencies needed to reach those goals. The I.I.P. student is highly motivated, has a focused goal/research project in mind, and is able to actively participate in his or her educational process.

- a) Collaboration with Montana Tech of the University of Montana. The I.I.P. is available to qualified Montana Tech students. The degree is conferred through the University of Montana and the student's committee will constitute of faculty from UM and MTech.

### **3. IGP Student Funding**

Most Interdisciplinary Studies graduate students are self-funded. We recommend that students refer to the Graduate School website at [http://umt.edu/grad/Tuition\\_and\\_Funding/Financial%20Assistance.php](http://umt.edu/grad/Tuition_and_Funding/Financial%20Assistance.php) for information on possible scholarships and other funding opportunities. The IGP office may have some Teaching Assistantships to offer, although availability varies from year to year. The graduate student should be proactive in looking for funding.

### **4. Student responsibilities and expectations**

Graduate school is significantly more demanding than undergraduate studies, and the interdisciplinary approach adds another layer of demands. Graduate studies require intensive work and scholarship outside of, and in addition to, formal classes, making graduate school seem like a fulltime job. We expect that graduate students will be willing to commit the time and energy to research and scholarship production that occurs both in and outside the classroom, and to contribute to a thriving intellectual community within the university. A graduate student is also expected to:

- Be familiar with the requirements and procedures unique to the Interdisciplinary Studies programs.
- Be familiar with the requirements and procedures established by the Graduate School for graduate degrees as published on the website <http://www.umt.edu/grad/>
- Adhere to a schedule for completion of all stages of the student's program, and meet appropriate deadlines.
- Meet with the committee chair or co-chairs when requested and report fully and regularly on progress and results.
- Meet with the IGP Director when requested and complete the annual surveys, or other surveys, as requested.
- Allow committee members adequate time (e.g., 3-4 weeks) to review documents, and contact committee well in advance to schedule meetings.
  - Hold at least one meeting a year with the student's IGP committee.
- Be prepared for, and receptive to, constructive criticism and academic advice from the student's committee and the IGP Director.
- Contribute to the intellectual life of the university as a whole, providing constructive feedback and support to peers, engaging in collaborative problem-solving, mentoring incoming students (in areas such as the particulars of interdisciplinary studies procedures

and policies; library/literature database research strategies; university norms and policies; professional networking; etc.) and working to create a thriving community of scholars.

- Attend seminars and defenses.
- Understand that plagiarism and cheating are unacceptable and are not tolerated under any circumstances.
- Represent the IGP at professional meetings and conferences when possible. Graduate students (and faculty) are encouraged to participate in the University of Montana Graduate Student and Faculty Research Conference, held annually during the spring semester.
- Present and publish thesis, dissertation or professional paper results in appropriate venues when possible.
- Recognize that self-motivated study outside of formal classroom settings, supported by mentoring but driven by student initiative, is a primary focus of graduate studies.
- Engage in civil discourse with student, faculty, and off-campus colleagues.
- Communicate clearly with the student's committee chair or co-chairs any concerns and questions. The student should not be afraid to let faculty know if he or she needs guidance or resources.
- Provide the Graduate School with current email addresses for committee members from outside of the University of Montana.

##### **5. Faculty responsibilities and expectations**

As faculty, mentoring graduate students is one of the most rewarding, challenging and intellectually stimulating aspects of the job. A student's acceptance letter identifies the faculty member that is willing to serve as the student's committee chair or co-chair (only one person is identified in the document), and this assigned faculty person works closely with the student through the entirety of the student's degree program. Committee chair or co-chairs help students gain depth and expertise in their field of study, understand the norms and practices of the profession, and improve communication skills through review and feedback on drafts of proposals, professional papers, theses and dissertations, manuscripts, and presentations. The committee chair or co-chairs is responsible for ensuring that a student's work is ready for committee review and must approve all proposal and thesis/dissertation material before they are circulated to the rest of the committee. Some specific responsibilities of the committee chair or co-chairs include:

- Remaining accessible to the student on a regular basis for consultation and discussion of the student's academic progress and professional development.
- Helping students make appropriate progress by responding in a timely manner to written work submitted by the student with constructive suggestions for improvement and continuation.
- Making arrangements to ensure continuity of supervision when the committee chair or co-chairs will be absent for extended periods (e.g., one month or longer).
- Helping the student gain access to facilities or research materials.
- Ensuring that the working environment is safe, healthy and free from harassment, discrimination, and conflict.
- Providing career and professional advice, and assisting in professional networking.
- Advising the student about current graduate program requirements, deadlines, sources of funding, etc.

- Encouraging the student to make presentations of research results within the University and to outside scholarly or professional bodies as appropriate, and assisting the student to obtain funding to attend conferences or professional meetings.
- The nature of interdisciplinary studies makes all committee members important in advising the student at different stages of the project, but the student should always keep the committee chair or co-chairs equally informed of his or her progress.

## 6. Policies

### Continuous Registration

Graduate students in degree programs must register for credits each Fall and Spring Semester. To ensure that costs for services are covered for continuing graduate students, a **continuous registration requirement of three credits per semester is mandatory**, except in documented and approved instances such as the following and for which registration of at least one credit is required. This policy applies to the regular academic year (fall and spring semesters) and to those students whose academic year may be an exception such as spring-summer or summer-fall). It does not apply to on-line, off-campus only programs.

1. International assignment with an NGO, Peace Corps, etc. as a program requirement (program registration documentation)
2. Parental leave or major illness (documented by physician, psychologist, etc.)
3. Extended family-leave due to illness (documented by physician, psychologist, etc.)
4. Significant off-campus field assignment (documented by committee chair or co-chairs and IGP Director)
5. Post-defense periods in which there is thesis, dissertation, or professional paper clean up only (no registration is required for one month); after one month, one-credit registration is required for one semester; beyond one semester, three-credits continuous registration is required

Application for exception to the three-credit mandatory continuous registration policy should occur using the following procedures:

1. All exceptions must be approved by the Graduate School Dean.
2. All requests for exception should be submitted to the Graduate School Dean before the first day of classes for the semester for which an exception is requested.
3. Exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis, except for programmatic exceptions (e.g. ICD program in Resource Conservation, IYFD program in Education) which can be requested by a programmatic memorandum from the IGP Director to the Graduate School Dean. The memorandum from the IGP Director will constitute suitable documentation.
4. Parental or major illness and extended family leave exception requests should be in the form of a memorandum from the major professor (committee chair or co-chairs) to the Graduate School Dean, and suitable documentation (from physician, psychologist, other medical professional, etc.) should be included as an attachment.
5. Significant off-campus field assignment (domestic or foreign) exception requests for each student should be in the form of a memorandum to the Graduate School Dean from the committee chair or co-chairs and endorsed by the IGP Director. This memorandum will constitute suitable documentation.

6. Exception request memoranda need not be lengthy, but should include the specific request including the student's name and student identification number, the reason for the request, and any supporting documentation.

Students who step out of the IGP and who do not maintain continuous registration will be un-enrolled from the program. The student will need to petition the program and the Graduate School for readmission. The petition for readmission will require an evaluation of the student's progress and a plan with timetable for completing the degree. Not all students will be readmitted.

In an attempt to discourage students from stepping out of the IGP without a leave of absence, the Graduate Council established a policy that readmitted students may be required to register for up to four credits not taken under continuous registration or additional terminal credits in their final term.

### **Leave of Absence**

The Graduate School allows a one-year leave-of-absence with no penalty with approval of the Graduate School (e.g., for parental, major illness, or personal need). The form for requesting a leave-of-absence is available on the Graduate School website. Because a leave-of-absence presumes the student is off-campus and not engaged in university activities, no university resources (except those available to the general public) are available during the leave-of-absence.

Students who leave the graduate program without prior permission from the program and the Graduate School, and who do not maintain continuous registration, will be dropped from the IGP's roster. They will need to petition the program and the Graduate School for readmission. The petition for readmission will require an evaluation of the student's progress and a plan with timetable for completing the degree. Not all students will be readmitted.

### **Transfer credits**

Students may transfer up to nine graduate/graduate non-degree semester credits or a full semester of graduate work on the recommendation of their IGP committee, after a semester of satisfactory work at UM. The transfer credits must meet the following requirements:

1. The courses must have been taken for graduate credit. This information is verified by the Graduate School when the student submits a transcript of the transfer coursework.
2. Grades must be either an A or a B.
3. Credits must be earned at an institution that offers a graduate degree in the discipline of the course being transferred.
4. Credits must be applicable to the degree being sought.

Credits that cannot be transferred into a UM graduate program, including the IGP:

1. Thesis or correspondence credits.
2. Extension credits outside the Montana University System.
3. Credits earned at the undergraduate level.
4. Credits taken in undergraduate or post-baccalaureate status.
5. Credits already used in completing a graduate degree program.

See Appendix A for template of transfer non-UM credits. UM transfer credits from grad non-degree or previous graduate work that were not used for another degree and previously approved by the student's committee do not need a memo, they need to be identified in the appropriate column of the graduation application.

### **Terminal registration**

All students must be registered at the time of their defense. Spring and Fall semesters must be at least three credits; Summer semester must be at least one credit.

### **Grades**

An average of B must be maintained in all courses taken for graduate credit at the University. Courses in which a grade of C or below has been received are not accepted for degree requirements, but grades in all courses taken for graduate credit will be included in grade point computations. All classes must be taken for a grade except those listed only as a CR/NCR basis. The grade of CR does not enter into grade point computations. Only N (continuation) and Credit or Not Credit grades are given for Research and Thesis or Dissertation. Grades of I (Incomplete) not removed within one year revert to the alternate grade, usually F, assigned by the instructor when the incomplete was submitted.

The student is automatically on academic probation if the cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0. The Graduate School may place limits on the time the student has to remediate the academic problem.

## **7. Procedures**

### **Committee member changes**

There may be occasions where the composition of a student's M.I.S. or I.I.P. committee would change due to extenuating circumstances. The student needs to consult with the full committee in those instances and get the committee's approval. The committee chair or co-chairs would then send a memo to the IGP Director and include a letter of commitment from the new member, that also addresses the new member's role in the student's program. The committee member change has to be done within the areas identified by the student upon application to the program, as each M.I.S. or I.I.P. student has a unique discipline composition for the degree. In addition, the member who is stepping down needs to send a memo to the IGP Director stating just that; and the new committee member needs to send a memo to the IGP Director stating he or she is filling that position and acknowledges the change from the previous person.

### **Communications**

Email to Students - An employee must use *only* UM assigned student email accounts for all email exchanges with students, since such communication typically involves private student information.

Email to IGP Director – The director is a non-voting member of every I.I.P. committee and should be informed of a full committee meetings, comprehensive exam/portfolio presentations or defenses, and final project defense. The director will be present as his or her schedule allows.

### **Coursework changes**

M.I.S. and I.I.P. students have to identify their coursework before the class schedules are released, as such, there is a strong possibility that the intended class will not be available in the anticipated term. The student and his or her committee should work together when such is the case to find alternative coursework. The committee chair or co-chairs will then send a memo to the IGP director describing the changes. See Appendix B for a template.

### **Institutional Review Board**

If the student's research involves human subjects, the student must work with his or her committee chair or co-chairs to complete and submit the UM IRB required paperwork and forms and complete an online self-study course in human subject protection (<http://www.umt.edu/research/complianceinfo/IRB/>) BEFORE the student begins collecting any data for the proposed thesis or dissertation, and if applicable, professional paper or project. Allow enough time before data collection begins to apply for the IRB.

### **I.I.P. Milestones**

I.I.P. students (those starting the program Spring 16) are required to submit the IIP Milestones document as soon as possible. The form can be downloaded at <http://www.umt.edu/grad/Interdisciplinary%20Graduate%20Programs/igp-forms/iip-milestones.docx>

### **Major, substantive revision to an I.I.P.**

The I.I.P. is housed in the Graduate School and does not have a specific department. Thus, the student's I.I.P. committee serves as his or her department. The Director of Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs oversees the I.I.P., and serves in the role of department chair with support from the I.I.P. Admissions Committee, the I.I.P. Oversight Committee, and, when needed, the Dean of the Graduate School. Upon admission into the program, the student's prospective committee becomes the official acting committee (i.e., the "department"). This committee is responsible for directing the student's program and committing their time and effort to mentor and guide the student through program and degree completion.

If an I.I.P. student makes substantive changes to his or her I.I.P. program (e.g., original research plan, scope of work, timeline, comprehensive examination format, or committee member composition), a formal review and approval process of the revised I.I.P. must occur. The Graduate School (which is the responsible academic unit) must approve of the proposed changes. The formal approval process can occur through one of two different courses of action; the student can choose which course of action.

Course of Action #1: The I.I.P. student convenes the current committee (i.e., the committee approved by the I.I.P. Admissions committee and recognized by the Graduate School) and presents to them the proposed revisions to the I.I.P. Specifically, this presentation should include:

- 1) A brief summary of the revised research plan, including methodology. If the student is proposing revisions to the I.I.P. committee (i.e., the 'department') the student must explain how revisions will successfully contribute to the revised research plan and degree completion.

- 2) Present a revised timeline, showing coursework completed and any new courses that might be needed to meet the goals of the revised research plan and any changes in committee member composition.
- 3) Describe any changes to the comprehensive exam format that was originally agreed upon.

After the presentation, the student will be excused, and the committee members will discuss the students' proposed revisions to the I.I.P.. After this discussion, the student will be informed of whether the current proposal is acceptable as submitted or require minor changes. If major changes are required, the revisions will need to be reviewed, evaluated and approved by all members of the student's current committee. All documents prepared for this meeting will be kept on record in the student's file at the Graduate School.

If the changes do not implicate committee membership, members of the existing committee will indicate their approval verbally during the meeting. If the approved changes include new committee members, these new members will be required to write letters of commitment and submit them to the Graduate School. These letters should mirror in scope and format the letters submitted by prospective committee members at the time of the student's original application to the I.I.P. As noted in the application guidelines, the letters must, "...include a statement about the value and rigor of the student's proposal, [the committee members'] willingness to participate in the collaborative effort and [the committee members'] specific areas of expertise and how this strengthens the student's I.I.P. program of study and dissertation project(s)" (see PhD Individualized Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program, item 5b <http://www.umt.edu/grad/Interdisciplinary%20Graduate%20Programs/Prospective%20Students/IP.php>). These letters will be kept with the student's file.

Course of Action #2: The I.I.P. student prepares a new I.I.P. application that includes the revisions to the research plan, course of study, comprehensive exam format, timeline and committee member makeup and submits this to the I.I.P. Admissions Committee. The application can and should include relevant coursework and research activities that the student had already completed in the course of his or her original plan. The application submission deadlines are November 15 and April 1, each academic year. The I.I.P. Admissions Committee will review the application and decide to fully approve, provisionally approve, or deny the student admission into the I.I.P.

### **M.I.S. Milestones**

M.I.S. students (those starting the program Spring 16) are required to submit the MIS Milestones document as soon as possible. The form can be downloaded at <http://www.umt.edu/grad/Interdisciplinary%20Graduate%20Programs/igp-forms/MIS-degree-milestones.docx>.

### **MTech students**

I.I.P. students in the collaboration with MTech are required to email the IGP director and/or the Program Coordinator their GPA information after each semester and the courses they are registered in MTech in the appropriate semesters. The person responsible to sign UM paperwork

will be the UM faculty that is the co-chair of the student's committee. Dissertation credits will be taken at UM.

Student will need to submit a Readmission form to update law-required information to the University if they have not taken classes at UM for over two semesters. The fee for the form will be waived.

### **Transcript comment**

A transcript comment will be added to IGP students upon request. The description must be submitted by the student's chair via email to the IGP office no later than the **third** Friday in March (Spring semester) or the **third** Friday in October (Fall Semester) prior to the anticipated graduation date of the student. Description should be short and start with "Focused on ... ." For more details, please contact the Graduate School.

### **University of Montana paperwork**

Students in the Interdisciplinary Programs must write Graduate School in any paperwork that requires information about the student's department. Any signature required by a Program Chair will be signed by either the IGP Director or the Graduate Dean's designee.

## **8. Exams, Defense and Graduation**

### **Exams**

There are three exam options for the IGP: the comprehensive exam, the comprehensive portfolio or a hybrid. The graduate student in concert with his or her committee will define the appropriate examination for the degree.

**M.I.S. Comprehensive Exam:** The M.I.S. comprehensive exam requirement applies only to students enrolled in the 36-credit, non-thesis option. This exam must be completed and assessed on the semester prior to graduation. The student and his or her committee will determine the best format of the comprehensive exam.

**I.I.P. Exam:** There are three exam formats for the I.I.P. One is the comprehensive exam; the second is the comprehensive exam portfolio; the third is a hybrid between the comprehensive exam and portfolio. These exam formats are described below.

- a) The comprehensive examination (sometimes referred to as qualifying exams) is a more traditional format of a written exam consisting of a number of questions. The student and his or her committee would have jointly decided in the proposal on when the student must take the exam, the type and number of questions in the exam, who will write and grade the questions, if the questions are short-answer and closed-book or long-answer and open-book, what constitutes a pass/fail grade, and if there would be an oral portion of the examination. This exam will occur prior to collection of data for the dissertation. The chair or co-chairs of the student's committee will send an email to the IGP director or designee to formally inform of the student's exams results.
- b) The comprehensive portfolio is designed to allow for a series of deliverables or products relating to acquiring the competencies and skills during the doctorate. These deliverables will demonstrate the practical application of the competencies and skills acquired and

evaluated by the student's committee members. The student and his or her committee would have jointly decided in the proposal on when and how the final portfolio or the different deliverables of the portfolio must be submitted or presented to the committee, what are the evaluation benchmarks, what constitutes a pass/fail grade, and if there would be an oral portion of the examination. The comprehensive portfolio must be completed prior to the dissertation defense. The chair or co-chairs of the student's committee will send an email to the IGP director or designee to formally inform of the student's exams results.

- c) The hybrid comprehensive exam and portfolio is designed to combine elements of both formats. This will also be jointly decided in the proposal and must be completed prior to the dissertation defense. The chair or co-chairs of the student's committee will send an email to the IGP director or designee to formally inform of the student's exams results.

### **Defense**

All M.I.S. students pursuing the thesis option and all I.I.P. students are required to conduct a public thesis/dissertation presentation and oral defense. Prior to formally scheduling the defense, the student must send the final draft to his or her chair or co-chairs for approval and verification that it is defensible. At least two weeks prior to the intended defense date (earlier if possible) the student must send a draft copy of the thesis/dissertation to each member of the committee for review. One copy should also be sent to the Graduate School for formatting approval. The thesis or dissertation must show originality and demonstrate competency in independent scientific inquiry. It must constitute a real contribution to knowledge; it must exhibit a mastery of the literature on the subject; and it must be lucid, well organized, and written in correct and concise English. Previously published material will be accepted for satisfying the thesis or dissertation requirement if the committee has authorized early publication of some of the material that appears in the thesis or dissertation. The student is responsible for sending the Graduate School a notice of the date, time and place for the defense to be published on the IGP webpage and announced to the other M.I.S. and I.I.P. students.

During a private voting procedure by the student's committee, the student may pass the defense with one negative vote. If the student fails, or if the thesis or dissertation requires major revision, the committee may permit a repeat exam, but this repeat exam may not be given until at least one academic semester has elapsed. The same requirements hold for the re-exam as for the original. The chair or co-chairs of the student's committee will send an informational email to the IGP Director of the student's defense results, if the director or his or her designee is not present during the defense. The program coordinator will be responsible on providing the student's committee chair or co-chairs the audited copy of the student's graduation application by the time of the defense.

### **Applying for Graduation**

Students nearing the completion of their degree (i.e., within one year) should refer to the Graduate School website for graduation application procedures and deadlines. However, in most cases, students should apply to graduate at least one semester prior to their anticipated date of graduation. In the event that the graduation date changes, please notify the IGP Director and the Graduate School, rollover fees may apply. (Go to

<http://www.umt.edu/grad/Current%20Students/Graduation%20Resources/default.php> for detailed information).

## **9. Assessing Student Progress**

Graduate student progress will be assessed every spring to verify that the student is making acceptable and timely progress toward the completion of the degree. Students will be sent an email with a link for an online survey on the first week of April and they will have two weeks to submit the information requested. This information has to be approved by the IGP student's chair or co-chairs before final submission.

The following items will be tracked annually:

- a) Credits earned to-date applicable to graduate program (excluding current spring semester enrolled credits);
- b) Credits currently enrolled in for Spring semester;
- c) Comprehensive exam/portfolio completion or anticipated date of completion;
- d) Anticipated date for Thesis or Dissertation defense;
- e) Anticipated date for program completion;
- f) An up-to 500 word abstract describing the project;
- g) A narrative of the progress on the degree in the last year (completing coursework, applying for IRB, finishing exams, collecting or analyzing data, writing thesis or dissertation);
- h) Overview of the student's latest professional activities in the past 12 months, relevant to the degree.

If any deficiencies are identified, the student will be informed of what they are and given one semester to rectify them. Students who do not meet the stated deadlines will be placed on probation the following semester and may become ineligible for TA or RA support, unless the committee approves a revised timeline. If deficiencies continue, a formal meeting of the student's committee will then be held to determine whether additional conditions need to be set. If deficiencies are still not rectified by the end of the second semester after being identified, the student will be dropped from the program.

## **10. Complaints, Grievances & Conflict Resolution**

Graduate students who have a complaint or grievance regarding another student or a faculty member are encouraged to speak to their committee chair, co-chairs or the IGP Director. If the situation is not resolved at this level, the student is advised to seek council with the Dean of the Graduate School

The Graduate Dean advises students that experience difficulty in working with or communicating with the program or the committee chair or co-chairs about the steps involved in the grievance process, which is described in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (21.000). In the initial encounter with the student, the Dean discusses ways to help develop improved communication. If the situation is not resolved, however, the Student Resolution Officer next hears the grievance. The role of the Dean is to be an advocate to ensure due process.

The student is encouraged to be familiar with the University of Montana's guidelines and expectations as outlined in the Student Conduct Code:

[http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student\\_conduct.php](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php)

Students should follow the University of Montana's student grievance procedure

[http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/student\\_grievance.php](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/student_grievance.php) from CBA 21.000.

Students and faculty are encouraged to review Graduate School Guidelines for Advising found in Appendix C.

## **Appendix A: Memorandum for Transfer Credits**

### **MEMO**

**TO:** Graduate School Graduation Coordinator

**FROM:** [Chair or co-chairs of the I.I.P./M.I.S. committee]

**DATE: XXX**

**RE:** Request for Transfer credits

The Memo is to request the transfer of the following graduate credits to the [I.I.P. or M.I.S.] program of the student XX. The student's committee has met and agreed of the relevance of these courses towards the degree.

[List courses and semester/year taken with a catalog description of the course]

Enclosures: Student's official transcript.

NOTE: Please refer to  
<http://www.umt.edu/grad/Current%20Students/Enrolled%20Students/Graduate%20Credit%20Transfer.php> for more information

**Appendix B: Template for coursework changes**

**MEMO**

**TO:** Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs

**FROM:** [Chair or co-chairs of the I.I.P./M.I.S. committee]

**DATE: XXX**

**RE:** Coursework changes

This memo is to inform the Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs that student XX original coursework plan listed taking class XXX during the [semester/year]; however, this class [is not currently being offered/is not appropriate/the committee believes another class would fit better to the student's plans], and thus the committee agreed to substitute such class for class YYYY.

## Appendix C: Graduate Advising Guidelines



## The University of Montana – Missoula Procedures

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Procedure Number:	302.30
Procedure:	Graduate Advising Guidelines
Date Adopted:	4/30/14
Last Revision:	4/30/14
References:	UFA Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA); <a href="#">Graduate School Policy</a> C6.000, D4.000, F1.000, G1.000; The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) Accreditation Standards 2.D.3 and 2.D.10; University Policy 410
Approved by:	Graduate Council
Resources:	Samples of Best Practices see section F

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### A. Purpose & Scope

Provide students and faculty with guidelines for graduate advising at the University of Montana, and provide reference for existing policy.

### B. Assumptions

Academic programs have various cultures and styles for student advising that meet their program requirements and student needs. Each Master's and Doctoral degree program has an orientation session to introduce graduate students to the policies, practices, and resources of the department, including a mechanism for addressing student complaints.

### C. Definition(s)

Advisors are critical to the success of a graduate student's education. Graduate advisors provide essential training and mentoring through close collaboration with students. The primary responsibility of the advisor is to assist the student to reach their academic and professional goals. The advisor and student should work together to determine suitable thesis, professional paper / project, or dissertation objectives per program requirements. While students may seek mentorship and advice from any source, particularly the students' dissertation or thesis committee, the term "principal faculty advisor(s)" refers to the principal formal supervisor(s) overseeing their work.

### D. Relevant Existing Policy

Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) found at <http://www.umt.edu/provost/faculty/CBAs/default.php>:

Graduate School Policy found at [www.umt.edu/grad/Academic%20Policies/default.php](http://www.umt.edu/grad/Academic%20Policies/default.php)

C6.000 – Thesis/Professional Paper Examining Committee

D4.000 – The Dissertation

F1.000 – Graduate Student Advising

G1.000 – Qualifications of Graduate Committee Members

#### E. Guidelines for Graduate Students and Advisors

Graduate programs should provide students with timely, specific, accurate information and advising about the requirements of their program of study, including key steps with timelines towards graduation. This information could be in the form of a student handbook, and disseminated at appropriate points in students' education.

General guidelines for all graduate students are available on the Graduate School website and specific information is on the program's website.

Faculty advisors are available to assist graduate students in planning their academic programs, but students have the responsibility for meeting all requirements for their degree. To identify an advisor for their graduate studies, students are urged to consult with professors, academic advisors, department chairpersons, Graduate School staff and others, as needed and following specific programs' guidelines.

Graduate students take primary responsibility for informing themselves of the regulations, policies, and practices governing their degree, course requirements, research activities, and conflict resolution. They understand faculty advisors' central role:

- Students should understand that advisors are essential to the intellectual and instructional environment.
- Students are responsible for ensuring that the contributions of all participants in research and creative activities are properly acknowledged in publications and presentations.
- Students should be aware of time constraints and other demands imposed on faculty members and program staff.
- Students should take the initiative to arrange meetings with faculty advisor as often as necessary and to keep the advisor informed of any factors that might affect progress towards achieving their graduate degree. Circumstances and diverse academic cultures will dictate the frequency of meetings; best practices suggest a minimum of twice a semester.
- Students should seek an early and informal resolution of problems that may occur in their working relationships with their advisor, or others, by first consulting with the advisor prior to starting a formalized process.

Faculty advisors must take an active role in understanding the relevant university policies that pertain to graduate students. These include, but are not limited to, requirements of coursework, tools and methods used by the student in the course of scholarly or creative activity and research, examinations, authorship, intellectual property, environmental health and safety, ethical standards and standards of conduct relevant to the student's

graduate work, Institutional Review Board guidelines, and the Student Code of Conduct.

- Faculty advisors or graduate programs should clearly communicate to students who receive funding the expectations, requirements, limitations and duration of financial support, whether through teaching or research funds.
- Advisors serve as intellectual and professional mentors to their graduate students. Because certain academic, research or creative traditions encourage faculty-graduate student collaborations and the sharing of authorship or rights to intellectual property developed in research or other creative or artistic activity, advisor and advisee are counseled to seek mutual agreement about expectations for such collaboration.
- Advisors are responsible for monitoring the accuracy, validity, and integrity of the student's research, scholarship, or creative works to the extent dictated by graduate program policy and practice.
- Advisors provide students with evaluation of their progress and performance in regular, timely and informative ways.
- Advisors seek to prepare students to be competitive for employment, encouraging them to participate in professional meetings, perform or display their work in public settings, and publish the results of their research.
- Advisors seek to provide a realistic view of the field and the current job market.
- Advisors maintain a high level of professionalism and excuse themselves from participating in committees where they have a conflict of interest.
- Advisors shall never impede a graduate student's progress toward the degree sought, either through negligence or to benefit from a student's proficiency as a teaching or research assistant.

#### F. Resources for Evaluating the Effectiveness of Advising

In general, all units of the University of Montana must meet the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Standard for Accreditation 2.D.10 for advising

<http://www.nwccu.org/Standards%20and%20Policies/Standard%202/Standard%20Two.htm>. Specifically, the Graduate Council and Graduate School expect units to develop mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of advising within the unit, and procedures employed to mitigate instances of ineffective advising.

Guidance and information on best practices adopted by public universities for Advising is available at The University of Michigan publication *How to mentor graduate students: a guide for faculty* at <http://www.rackham.umich.edu/publications/>, and The Ohio State University Graduate Student Handbook at <http://www.gradsch.ohio-state.edu/Depo/PDF/Handbook.pdf> and mentoring guide at <http://www.gradsch.osu.edu/DEPO/PDF/MentoringAdvisingGradStudents.pdf>.