

Proposal for UNLV Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs

Spring 2018

Authored by the Top Tier RSCA Interdisciplinary Studies Working Group, 2016 - 2017 & 2017 - 2018

*Reviewed & approved by the Graduate Council & Graduate Executive Committee
& Dean, Graduate College, Spring 2018*

Reviewed & approved by Executive Vice President and Provost, Summer 2018

I. Introduction¹

Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs (IDGP) are a growing part of graduate education at the doctoral level at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and a thriving part of graduate communities on most top tier campuses. They are also consistent with federal agency funding priorities to support multi- and interdisciplinary research teams. Graduate programs are not required for such funding opportunities, but they often help develop and strengthen interdisciplinary faculty teams, research, and collaboration.

IDGPs are graduate programs that cross departments, schools, and/or Colleges, with participating faculty from multiple disciplines. For the purposes of this proposal, IDGPs that cross Colleges will be structured as per the guidelines below; IDGPs that cross departments and/or schools may opt to use this model but are not required to do so. Each IDGP has its own affiliated faculty, a program director, and an executive committee who together manage the graduate program. There are no formal tenure-track lines in IDGPs, but rather IDGP faculty members are drawn from existing units/departments where their faculty line is housed, and they join the IDGP to teach courses and mentor graduate students.

II. Administrative Structure and Overview

- a. IDGPs are structurally housed (i.e. build in MyUNLV, etc.) in and affiliated with the Graduate College, but their physical space (faculty offices, conference rooms, and student offices) will typically be in participating faculty departments/schools or the Host Unit.
- b. The Graduate College should establish an office formed to ensure IDGP oversight and support.

¹ The Policies and Procedures for UNLV Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs document was a culmination of discussions and research conducted in the Academic Year 2016-2017 by the Top Tier Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs sub-committee ([2016-2017 Final Report](#)). The document was approved for distribution in December 2017. It was adapted after review of aspirational peer institutions IDGP programs, and borrows in part from the following specific documents/guidelines: "Policies and Procedures Radiochemistry Ph.D. Program," University of Nevada, Las Vegas; "[Guidelines for Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs](#)," University of Nevada, Reno; "[Graduate Interdisciplinary Programs: Guidelines and Policies](#)," University of Arizona; and "[Graduate Interdisciplinary Programs: GDP Annual Performance Review Policy](#)," University of Arizona.

- c. Administrative support and functions are provided by the participating academic departments/schools or by the IDGP's Host Unit.
- d. Each IDGP must have a Governing Board, chaired by the Dean of the Graduate College (or designee), and including the Deans of all Colleges and the Program Director. The Governing Board is responsible for oversight of the IDGP.
- e. Each IDGP must have a Program Director, and their Bylaws must indicate the term, the responsibilities, and the system for selecting a Program Director.
- f. IDGPs with more than 15 students should also consider designating a Graduate Coordinator to support the Program Director and be the direct contact and program advisor for students.
- g. IDGP Program Directors should receive a suitable course reduction (defined by program bylaws) and be appointed for 12 months in the model of Chairs. If a program grows enough to warrant a Graduate Coordinator, the person fulfilling that role will be subject to the rights, responsibilities, and benefits associated with all Graduate Coordinators.
- h. As programs mature (within 5 years) and/or reach a critical number of students, a Program should establish a Community Advisory Board.

III. IDGP Structure and Function

a. Host Unit

The Host Unit shall be a department, school, college, or a well-established and thriving center/institute that is designated to serve as the administrative home of the IDGP. The Host Unit shall provide administrative support for the program. IDGPs may be in a fixed Host Unit where it remains in perpetuity, or in a rotating Host Unit wherein the IDGP moves every X years (not less than 2, and generally not more than 5).

- i. The Host Unit must be one of the participating academic departments. Participating academic departments are academic departments with research and/or tenured or tenure-track graduate faculty serving in the IDGP.
- ii. The Executive Committee will put forward a nomination to the Governing Board for which department, school, college, or center/institute should serve as the Host Unit. The nomination will be voted upon by the Governing Board, with the Dean of the Graduate College breaking any tie.
- iii. The Program Director must be a graduate faculty member at the rank of full professor from a participating academic department; s/he may or may not have their faculty line housed in the Host Unit.

b. Executive Committee

Each Interdisciplinary Graduate Program will be administered by an Executive Committee. The initial Executive Committee shall be appointed by the Governing Board. The Committee must consist of at least two IDGP graduate faculty members plus the Program Director (or three total with the Program Director to be selected later), but not more than ten members total, all of whom are elected by IDGP faculty, appointed by the Program Director of the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program, or selected by the Governing Board, depending on the IDGP Bylaws. Executive Committee members can be: academic faculty in the IDGP and/or Chairs from

participating academic units. Committee members will serve for a fixed time period, as stipulated in the IDGP Bylaws. Members should rotate off the EC in a staggered way so that, once established, the Executive Committee has some members leave and new members join the EC each academic year. The Executive Committee shall:

- i. Establish and maintain program bylaws. Bylaws should be annually reviewed by the Executive Committee.
- ii. Nominate new members to serve on the Executive Committee, and encourage nominations from other IDGP faculty, to ensure continuity of leadership.
- iii. Develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures regarding admissions, curriculum, student supervision, and completion of degree requirements.
- iv. Collaborate with the Graduate College and Governing Board to ensure student success and program reporting of data, engagement in strategic R2PC, etc.
- v. Provide broad management for the Program, including the budgets, funding, and policies.
- vi. Set policies for the appointment of new faculty members and review of current IDGP faculty members to ensure active faculty participation in the Program.
- vii. Establish and ensure a robust mechanism to provide annual evaluation input and metrics to IDGP faculty's home departments to ensure credit for their IDGP participation.
- viii. Appoint and advise a Program Director.
- ix. Plan for future developments in the subject area.
 - x. Design and implement a strategic recruitment plan, and strategic GEM plan.
 - xi. Ensure that Academic Program Reviews are consistent with the Nevada Board of Regents requirements and ensure that they are carried out in a timely manner.

c. Program Director

The Program Director will be appointed based on the criteria established in the individual IDGP Bylaws. A Program Director generally serves a three-year term, with a term limit in accordance with IDGP program bylaws. The Program Director shall:

- i. Be responsible for the daily supervision and management of the program, including overseeing the academic program budget, devising the class schedule and coordinating with participating academic units, overseeing applications of faculty to the program, conveying information to the program, and facilitating changes approved by the program.
- ii. Convene and chair meetings of the Executive Committee.
- iii. Serve as the lead representative of the IDGP to the Governing Board and the university administration.
- iv. Manage administrative matters according to University regulations.
- v. Prepare and submit annual reviews of program activities and accomplishments to the Governing Board.
- vi. Oversee all reporting requirements including but not limited to assessment reports, program reports, R2PC plans, and annual reviews of faculty and students.

- vii. Manage the day-to-day advising of graduate students, sign forms, handle appeals, etc. Should the program grow to 15 or more students, the IDGP may elect to establish a Graduate Coordinator to manage these responsibilities in collaboration with the Program Director.
- viii. Serve any other duties outlined in the Program bylaws.

d. Program Faculty Membership

There are three levels of faculty involvement in the IDGP:

- i. **Instruction only, through partner departments:** If a class is taught under a department prefix (but can be used for the IDGP), the faculty needs only Graduate Faculty Status in that department. These faculty would be participants in the IDGP, but they would not have Graduate Faculty Status in the IDGP. However, if the class is taught under an IDGP program prefix, the faculty should have Graduate Faculty Status in the IDGP area.
- ii. **Program Faculty:** Program faculty serve as mentors and Ph.D. advisors to students in the IDGP.
 1. Faculty members are proposed for appointment to the Program Director of the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program by the Executive Committee, based on established criteria in program bylaws (including such evidences of research and scholarly productivity as current publications in peer review journals and academic presses, recent service as thesis/dissertation committee chairs, etc.).
 2. Faculty will maintain their primary appointment in their home department, while maintaining an affiliation with the IDGP.
 3. Tenure will remain in the home department, however, affiliate department evaluations may contribute to promotion and tenure. In fact, it is recommended that promotion and tenure reviews include evaluations by the Program Director of the relevant IDGP. If requested, Program Directors will submit an evaluation of a faculty member's contribution to the IDGP to the faculty member's home department for the purposes of annual performance review.
 4. Graduate Faculty status will be granted in the IDGP.
 5. Participating IDGP faculty members who do not hold tenure eligible appointments may request special approval from the Graduate College to serve as committee members or co-chairs.
 6. IDGPs do not have faculty lines associated with them. Faculty lines will remain the responsibility of the contributing departments.
 7. Program faculty members, who are tenured, tenure eligible or tenure-equivalent at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, may serve on Executive Committees.
 8. Degrees will be granted to the home department of the Doctoral student's advisor.

- iii. **Executive Committee:** At least two thirds of the executive committee members shall be program faculty in the IDGP as outlined in the program bylaws (see above section b).

IV. Academics

- a. IDGPs must follow all the policies and procedures expected of other graduate programs (see [Graduate Catalog](#)).
- b. The IDGP will provide a multi-year class schedule and course offerings in a timely manner to meet the degree requirements established for the program.
- c. The IDGP will have a strategic plan that addresses R2PC goals, strategies, and program outcomes, as well as assessment and program metrics.
- d. The IDGP must promote and maintain high levels of quality and excellence, as demonstrated by established program metrics.
- e. The IDGP must undergo standard program review processes.

V. Funding

- a. Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs, like any other graduate program, typically require funding to cover:
 - i. Operational costs (e.g., administrative and clerical support, program activities such as seminar/forum series and social events, office equipment and supplies, and telecommunication costs)
 - ii. Recruitment costs (e.g., advertising and student visits)
 - iii. Instructional costs (e.g., class offerings, software, and lab expenses)
 - iv. Financial support for students (GAs, scholarships, awards)
- b. IDGPs may receive an allocation of scholarship awards and graduate assistantships from the EVPP, Dean of the Graduate College, Deans of the participating Colleges, and/or Chairs of participating departments. Participating Deans and Chairs also provide support through commitment of faculty release time.
- c. Weighted Student Credit Hours from the IDGP may be handled in one of two ways: 1) students enroll in courses in the participating academic units and the WSCH accrues there; or 2) students enroll in courses with the specific IDGP prefix, which may or may not be cross-listed with other academic units, and the WSCH accrues to the IDGP. The IDGP plan must include feedback from the Governing Board and be approved by the Dean of the Graduate College.
- d. The IDGP should work with the Governing Board to negotiate program funding based on ROI, as appropriate and consistent with prevailing campus approaches to program monetization.

VI. Guidelines for the Establishment of Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs

To establish an Interdisciplinary Graduate Program, a proposal must be prepared by the interested graduate faculty. The process follows the current new program procedure. For additional information,

please see the [Graduate College Curriculum Changes](#) website and the [Vice Provost's Academic Program Actions & Processes](#) website.

VII. Program Bylaws

To facilitate the administration of an Interdisciplinary Graduate Program, program bylaws and guidelines must be developed. These program bylaws should include a mission statement. In addition, the following items may be included in the program bylaws. At a minimum, these ideas should be discussed to determine if they are appropriate for the particular IDGP.

- a. Broad policy and program management issues
- b. Election of the Program Director, including the method of election and duration of term
- c. Evaluation of the Program Director
- d. Faculty membership in the IDGP and periodic review of such faculty for continued participation
- e. Election of Executive Committee members, including the method of election and duration of term
- f. Annual evaluation input on participating faculty that would be provided to the appropriate department chairs/college deans. These evaluations should be based upon the negotiated role statement and subsequent faculty time allocation to the IDGP.
- g. Definition of any standing, ad hoc, or user's committees
- h. Faculty meetings, including voting membership, quorum, presiding officer, agenda, minutes, and Class A Actions
- i. Graduate student recruitment, admissions, curriculum, student supervision, and completion of degree program requirements

VIII. Shared Department, College, and IDGP responsibilities regarding faculty participating in the IDGPs.

The following are shared issues/responsibilities that will need to be discussed and negotiated between departments, colleges, and IDGPs on an occasional basis:

1. Changes to the curriculum
2. Replacement of faculty with IDGP status
3. New faculty hires that might participate in the program
4. Fundraising opportunities
5. Resource allocation, including graduate teaching and research assistantships
6. Tenure and promotion processes that reflect graduate faculty participation in IDGPs

IX. Graduate Students: Admissions, Evaluations, and Monitoring Admissions Policies

- a. Student Admissions:
 - i. Each IDGP will have a committee that includes participating IDGP graduate faculty whose function will be to review applicants and recommend students for admission

to the IDGP using established best practices for graduate admissions. The charge of these committees will be to maintain the highest standards of academic quality and adherence to the Graduate College's [admission policies](#).

- ii. Interdisciplinary graduate programs should provide an orientation for new students (this is in addition to the Graduate College New Student Orientation and New Graduate Assistant Orientation) that focuses specifically on the program. Orientations should be held each semester that the IDGP admits new students.
- b. Student Evaluations
 - i. To ensure timely progression through the graduate program, students shall undergo annual progress reviews. These reviews should be consistent with department needs and Graduate College requirements.
- c. Student Progression follows the guidelines found in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

X. Deactivation of Graduate Interdisciplinary Programs

Refer to the [Vice Provost's Academic Program Actions & Processes](#) website for information on the deactivation process for a graduate program.