



MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

The Program

The Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies Degree (MAIS) at The University of South Dakota is designed primarily for non-traditional students. The program is individually tailored for mature individuals who have several years of work experience since receiving an undergraduate degree and who feel the need for advanced academic training. The purpose of the Masters of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies Program is to allow flexibility in program design and course selection for students who have determined the type of advanced education most beneficial on terms of career development.

One of the unique elements of the degree is that students design their own programs of study in tandem with their advisor based on their perceptions of which academic disciplines are most beneficial in terms of personal and professional goals. Students seeking self-designed educational curriculum must reflect well-conceived educational and professional goals. Students seeking admission to the program must specifically explain in a statement of purpose the way in which their program of study will meet their goals.

Because the MAIS program is tailored to meet the needs of individuals, it is anticipated that a wide diversity of courses may be taken in a number of departments. The MAIS program requires 32 credit hours, with courses being taken from two to four academic departments. The 32-hour requirement is a minimum, and programs may exceed that number. Fifty percent of course work must be completed at the 700-level or above. The individual may choose a thesis or non-thesis program. Finally, a maximum of 9 hours of previously completed course work may be used toward the MAIS degree; this course work may only be used with the approval of the advisory committee and Graduate Dean. In addition, a final oral interview is required of all degree candidates.

Admission Requirements

Applicant to the MAIS program must have a baccalaureate or equivalent degree earned from a department of approved standing and granted by an accredited college or university. The baccalaureate cumulative grade point average must be at least a 2.7 on a 4.0 grading scale. Students with less than a 2.7 grade point average may be admitted provisionally; these students will be required to obtain a "B" or above in the first three graduate courses taken. In addition to the general application materials, applicants must submit a statement of purpose explaining their goals for the program, 3 letters of recommendation, and a resume.

Program Requirements

Upon acceptance into the program, MAIS students will meet with their lead advisor and the Graduate Dean to develop a Program of Study, Learning Objectives, and form an academic committee. The MAIS program requires 32 credit hours, with courses being taken from two to four academic departments. During the last semester of study, the student is required to attend an oral examination (more information below). Students must achieve a minimum cumulative average of 3.0 in all courses included on the program of study.

Oral Examination

The purpose of the oral examination at the completion of course work in the program is to provide the student and the University with an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the program of study in attaining the student's goals. The oral examination is conducted in a manner that demonstrates the degree to which the student has integrated the information and perspectives gained through the program of study. The oral examination assesses the student's communication skills and ability to think critically. The examination does not attempt to assess in-depth knowledge gained in specific courses.

The oral examination requires approximately one hour to conduct. The oral examination committee is comprised of a minimum of three faculty including the student's MAIS advisor and two faculty members from whom the student has taken courses in the MAIS program of study. The Graduate Dean is an ex officio member of all MAIS oral committees and attends as schedule allows.

Master of Arts Interdisciplinary Studies Advisor

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Additional Information

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