

# INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

## MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.)

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### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies Degree (MAIS) at the University of South Dakota is designed to allow flexibility in program design and course selection for students who have determined the type of advanced education most beneficial in 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 a customized educational curriculum must possess 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.

### ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

Applicants to the MAIS program must have a baccalaureate degree earned 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 scale. Students with less than a 2.7 grade point average may be admitted provisionally.

#### **Applicants must submit:**

- Statement of purpose
- 3 letters of recommendation
- Resume
- Transcript
- Application
- \$35 application fee

### APPLICATION DEADLINE:

Priority: 6 weeks before class starts

### GETTING STARTED:

Prospective graduate students may apply for admission through the Graduate School at [www.usd.edu/grad/how-to-apply.cfm](http://www.usd.edu/grad/how-to-apply.cfm).

The Graduate School forwards completed applications to the appropriate academic department for review. The department will then recommend the admission status of the applicant to the Dean of the Graduate School, who will make the final decision on admission.

All students accepted into the MAIS program at the University of South Dakota Graduate School will receive provisional admission. A meeting is required with their advisor and the Graduate School Dean to develop a program of study, learning objectives, and to name an academic committee for full admission to the program.

### NON-DEGREE PURSUANT STATUS:

To experience the University of South Dakota as a non-degree pursuant student, the University offers graduate students the option of learning under a non-degree pursuant classification. Up to nine credit hours earned as a non-degree pursuant student may be applied to a graduate degree from USD at the discretion of the academic department.

**Please note:** Enrollment in a course does not guarantee acceptance into the program.

Enrolling as a non-degree pursuant student is easy. Simply complete the online registration form at <https://www.usd.edu/cde/registration> during the registration session open to the public.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For more information, please visit [www.usd.edu/grad](http://www.usd.edu/grad) or contact:

University of South Dakota  
Graduate School  
Phone: 605-677-6240  
Phone: 800-233-7937  
[grad@usd.edu](mailto:grad@usd.edu)  
[www.usd.edu/grad](http://www.usd.edu/grad)



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## PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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All accepted students are provisionally admitted into the MAIS program. To achieve full admission status, students must meet with the MAIS director and the Graduate Dean to develop a Program of Study and Learning Objectives. The MAIS program requires 32 credit hours, with courses taken from 2-3 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 MAIS Director and Graduate Dean. During the last semester of study, the student is required to successfully complete an oral defense (see below). Students must achieve a minimum cumulative GPA average of 3.0 in all courses (above a C) on the program of study. Failure to maintain a 3.0 GPA will result in academic probation and dismissal.

## ORAL DEFENSE

The purpose of the oral defense at the completion of the Program of Study is to provide the student and the University an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the program of study in attaining the student's goals and to assess the student's level of proficiency. The oral defense is conducted in a manner that demonstrates students are proficient in the intended knowledge, skill and abilities. Moreover, the oral defense assesses the student's communication skills and ability to think critically; as well as subject matter studied.

The oral defense is approximately two hours. The examination committee is comprised of two to three faculty members and the student's MAIS advisor. The Graduate Dean is an ex officio member of the oral committee and attends as schedule allows.



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