CHECKLIST FOR STUDENTS SEEKING A MASTER OF ARTS OR SCIENCE DEGREE IN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

This checklist has been established to give graduate students a guide to preparing and commencing a degree plan through the Interdisciplinary Studies Program (IDS). The items are listed in the order that a student should complete them. The checklist does not replace the need to communicate initially with the IDS Program Director nor, once admitted to the IDS Program, to communicate regularly with the student’s graduate committee. The student is responsible for adhering to pertinent university policies in completing the master’s degree. This checklist is one tool to facilitate that responsibility. Other important information is available to students through the Boise State University Graduate Catalog, the Boise State University Directory of Classes and the Boise State University Student Handbook.

☐ 1. Consider your educational goals.
The IDS Program is an alternative to existing, discipline specific degree programs at Boise State University. You should consider carefully what you want to achieve in your graduate education. Will the degree enhance your professional life? Will the degree provide you specific skills useful to you in the work place? Are you interested in a field that is still developing and which crosses between disciplines? These are the types of questions that you should define for yourself and you should be able to articulate your answers to someone unfamiliar with you personally.

☐ 2. Make an appointment to see the IDS Program Director
The meeting with the IDS Program Director is critical in making your educational plans. It provides you an opportunity to articulate your educational goals and to state why you want to apply to the IDS Program. It also provides you a chance to tell the Program Director your thoughts about the areas of study you want to pursue and which classes you have already noted that could fulfill your needs. The Program Director can tell you whether your educational goals can be served through the IDS Program. The Program Director will need to see a copy of your transcript, so bring one with you. Finally, the meeting is a time for you and the Program Director to review the admission and degree requirements.

☐ 3. Contact the Boise State University Graduate College about admission.
You must apply to and be admitted into the Graduate College before you apply for admission to the Interdisciplinary Studies Program. You may receive a copy of the current Graduate Catalog, which contains an application form and instructions by contacting the Graduate College directly. The phone number for Graduate Admissions is (208) 426-4204.

☐ 4. Review the Boise State University Graduate Catalog.
You likely have looked at the Graduate Catalog already and have some idea about degree programs that exist. Review the catalog again but look for the two or three areas of study that would serve you in achieving your educational goals. You might begin to note those classes which seem to deal most directly with your goals. As you make these observations, keep a record (for your use in completing application materials) stating why the classes seem to fit your needs.

☐ 5. Select a graduate committee.
The graduate committee provides you critical support in the creation of your degree program and in the pursuit of your degree. The committee is comprised of three Boise State University graduate faculty members who represent the areas of study you will combine in your degree. One person will serve as committee chair and be the official graduate advisor. The graduate committee serves the same function that a graduate committee serves in a discipline specific program. The committee chair is the person you will have the most contact with. That person
should be someone you respect, not just for his or her academic expertise but also his or her interpersonal skills. You should rely on your graduate committee to help you formulate your degree plan and to advise you whether to choose the project, thesis or examination option as a culminating activity. (See the explanatory information included as a separate item with this checklist.) Before submitting the application materials you must meet with the committee as a whole to develop and review the list of classes that will comprise your degree plan. There is a form attached in this packet that must be turned in with the application.

6. Prepare the IDS Program application materials.
The IDS Program office (Science/Nursing Building 106) provides the necessary forms for application to the program. Make sure you fulfill each of the following:
   a) Personal Data form,
   b) degree plan form with the classes you intend to take (with the semester and year you intend to take them) and the signatures of your graduate committee,
   c) Confirmation of Meeting With Graduate Committee form signed by your graduate committee stating that they have met and approved your degree plan,
   d) a typewritten, two to three page, Statement of Justification. The Statement of Justification is most important. It is a narrative explaining your educational goals; why existing BSU degree programs do not help you reach your educational goals; and, why a combination of two to three different areas of study will facilitate the fulfillment of your educational goals. In preparation of the Statement of Justification, you are encouraged to provide your graduate committee members and the IDS Program Director a draft so that they can help you create the best possible Statement. This narrative is the only personalized part of your application materials. Make it clear, reasonable and persuasive,
   e) provide an itemized listing of the classes you wish to take. With each class listed, write a two or three sentence explanation that indicates why that class supports your educational goals. (There should be a clear connection between the Degree Plan, the Statement of Justification and the itemization of the classes with explanations.)
   f) Transcripts of your undergraduate college work (submit online with application for admission to the Graduate College),
   g) Two letters of recommendation (submit online with application for admission to the Graduate College).

7. Deliver your application materials before the deadline date.
Your application materials are reviewed by the University-wide Interdisciplinary Studies Committee. The IDS Committee is comprised of nine people representing each college at Boise State. The IDS Committee reviews applications twice during the academic year, once in the fall for admission the following spring semester and once in the spring for admission the following fall semester. Application materials for the fall review must be received by 1 October. Application materials for the spring review must be received by 1 March.

8. Receive the decision on your application for admission.
Normally, the IDS Committee will meet within the month and the results of the review will be sent to you by mid-November or mid-April (at the latest.) The committee will make one of three determinations on your application: admitted, admitted with conditions (and the IDS committee will give you specific recommendations on how to resolve the conditions) or denial (with specific reasons given as to why the application was not approved.)
Once you have been admitted to the IDS Program without condition, you should immediately begin taking the courses listed in your degree plan. Your contact with the IDS Program office from this point will be minimal. But your communication with your graduate committee should continue on a regular basis. Keep your graduate committee informed of your progress; seek their advice if you foresee difficulties in completing your program as planned; rely upon them, and your graduate committee chair especially, as you would an advisor in a discipline specific degree program.

You should begin contemplating the graduation process when you are in the next to last year of your degree plan. Here are tasks that you will need to complete.

a) File an application for admission to candidacy with the Graduate College. The application must be filed at least one semester before graduation and after the satisfactory completion of at least eighteen credit hours of your Degree Plan (with a minimum GPA of 3.0.) Be sure to check the current Graduate Catalog for pertinent deadline dates.

b) File an application for graduation with the Graduate College no later than the semester preceding the semester in which you intend to graduate. Be sure to check the current Graduate Catalog for pertinent deadline dates.

c) Meet with your graduate committee to finalize whether you will have a project, thesis or an examination as the culminating activity for your degree. Regardless of your choice, the activity is meant to reflect the interdisciplinary nature of your degree and it should be a project of some significance. Check the Graduate Catalog for an explanation of the differences in these three alternatives.

d) File a copy of your approved prospectus for the thesis/project option with the IDS Program Director’s Office immediately following the approval of your committee.

e) If you have chosen the thesis option, you will need to arrange the defense of the thesis with your graduate committee no later than mid-term of the semester in which you intend to graduate. Be sure to check the Graduate Catalog for pertinent deadlines.

f) If you have chosen the project option, you will need to arrange a meeting with your graduate committee to discuss your project no later than mid-term of the semester in which you intend to graduate. Be sure to check the Graduate Catalog for pertinent deadlines.

g) If you have chosen the examination option, you will need to arrange a time to take the examination before mid-term of the semester in which you intend to graduate. Be sure to check the Graduate Catalog for pertinent deadlines.

11. Complete your project or thesis.
Enroll in INTDIS 591 “Project” if you are doing a project or INTDIS 593 “Thesis” if you are doing a thesis and complete either during your final semester. You may have been gathering data, maintaining an experiment or doing other work related to the project or thesis previously but the final year is the time to bring it to closure. After its completion, your graduate committee must have an opportunity to examine you about the work in verbal fashion. They, and the IDS Program office, will need a written record of your work (regardless of the type of project you undertook.) You may examine examples from past students in the IDS Program office. After your graduate committee has met, they will need to complete the “Report of Culminating Activity” and your committee chair will file a pass/fail grade for you. Each student who completes a thesis or project must prepare three bound copies for distribution. One copy is given to the IDS Program Director and two copies are given to the Dean of the Graduate College within one month following commencement. The copies must conform to specifications outlined in Standards for Preparation of Theses and Projects in the Graduate College (available at the BSU bookstore.) A student can order and pay for as many thesis copies he or she wishes to have.
12. Participate in commencement ceremonies.

Once you file an application for graduation and the Graduate College indicates that you will be able to complete your degree plan, you are automatically listed as eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies. Information about commencement regalia and the event will be sent directly to you.

CELEBRATE!