

Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program (IPP)

Revised version approved May 2, 2018
by the OU Graduate Council

Purpose of the IPP: This program is designed to provide the opportunity for synergistic research beyond established doctoral programs and among the different disciplines currently represented at the University of Oklahoma. It is for admitted doctoral students with strong academic records who have demonstrated the ability to work independently and at a high scholarly level.

Prior to preparing an application, students will discuss the proposed research areas with relevant faculty members who hold the appropriate graduate faculty status. The student will prepare the application in close consultation with the prospective committee members.

Admission requirements:

- Cumulative GPA of 3.5 in graduate-level coursework at OU.
- Currently admitted to an existing OU Norman or Tulsa doctoral program, which will be referred to as the *home unit*. The home unit will serve the same role for IPP students as for other graduate students in the unit.

Application process:

- Deadlines: October 15 for spring (decision anticipated by December 15) and March 15 (decision anticipated by May 15) for fall admission.¹ These deadlines are designed to allow time for a meeting with the IPP subcommittee and revisions of application materials if requested.
- Students who hold a master's degree will be eligible to apply for the IPP during the second semester and before the end of the third semester in the home unit.
- Students who do not hold a master's degree will be eligible to apply during the fourth semester and no later than the end of the fifth semester.
- Deviations from the timelines above will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- After submission of the application, the student will meet with the IPP subcommittee of the Graduate Council, which is the body that evaluates the application. This meeting will allow the IPP subcommittee to learn more about the student's research plans and provide the student with feedback. The chair and/or co-chair of the student's proposed doctoral committee should attend the meeting. The subcommittee will have read the submitted materials, but the student is welcome to give a 5-10 minute presentation about their project if they wish.

Criteria the IPP subcommittee will use in evaluating the application:

- The student's past academic performance
- The clarity, significance, and feasibility of the proposed research project
- The essentially interdisciplinary nature of the project
- The student's demonstrated capacity to pursue the project
- The suitability and commitment of committee members to support the student in completing the project

¹ Decision timeline may be impacted by IPP subcommittee availability.

Items provided by faculty members for the application packet:

- The IPP cover sheet signed by the graduate liaison and home unit chair/director, listing the proposed committee members (minimum four). The chair must be appointed with M3 graduate status through the home unit and the Graduate College representative must not be appointed through the home unit. At least one member other than the Graduate College representative must be appointed through a unit other than the home unit.
- Letters of support for the project from each committee member addressing the student's suitability for the program, assessing the importance and interdisciplinary nature of the proposed project, and indicating the faculty member's commitment and specific planned contribution to mentoring the student to successful completion of the project.
- Letter from the home unit chair committing to financial and logistical support (stipend, assistantship, tuition waiver, office space, etc.), provided according to the same criteria that are applied to other doctoral students in the unit. IPP students are counted as actively enrolled students in and, later, graduates from the home unit. IPP students are subject to the home unit's performance standards and other criteria for continued support.

Items provided by the student, in consultation with the committee, for the application packet:

- A description, with appropriate citations, of the proposed research project. This description should include the research questions to be addressed, the methods for answering these questions, and the significance and originality of the project. It should acknowledge potential roadblocks and describe strategies for addressing them. It should explain why the project cannot be completed within a single academic unit, and outline the contribution of each discipline, including that of the home unit, to the project. Length: 1500-2500 words.
- A research methods and ethics statement (maximum one single-spaced page) describing how the student will master responsible scholarship requirements.
- A signed, completed *Advisory Conference Report* (ACR). The program will include a maximum of 90 credit hours, with at least 12 credit hours outside the home unit (excluding dissertation research). Directed readings and independent studies are limited to 6 credit hours in combination.
- A one-page explanation of how the courses listed on the ACR will provide the student with the subject-area knowledge and research tools to complete the project successfully.
- A one-page statement of career goals and degree completion timeline. The timeline should include academic and professional development deliverables supporting the student in achieving the career goals (see https://www.imaginephd.com/imaginephd_suggested_goals.pdf to get started).
- Transcripts of all previous post-secondary education (via the Office of Graduate Admissions).

Home unit:

- The doctoral committee chair must come from the home unit.
- The graduate liaison for the home unit will be responsible for all record-keeping for the IPP.
- Students will register for coursework under the IPP degree code, but will be counted as actively enrolled students in (and later, graduates from) the home unit.
- Students will follow general exam, defense, and other doctoral milestone processes of the home unit.

Annual progress evaluation:

- The doctoral committee will carry out an evaluation of the student's progress each spring, clearly indicating "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" progress. This evaluation will be submitted to both the graduate liaison and the IPP subcommittee of the Graduate Council for review.

The Graduate Council IPP subcommittee:

- This subcommittee will be chaired by the Graduate College associate dean and consist of faculty members of the Graduate Council.
- Responsibilities will include reviewing admission proposals and progress evaluations.
- Any change to the *Advisory Conference Report* or request for exceptions to the policies of the *Graduate College Bulletin* must be approved by the IPP subcommittee, the student's doctoral committee, and the graduate liaison of the home unit.
- The IPP subcommittee is responsible for monitoring and revising IPP guidelines and structure, subject to normal approval processes of the Graduate Council and university as required.

Building intellectual life:

- IPP students are encouraged to take part in the intellectual life of the university by attending talks and giving papers in the home unit and in units relevant to the interdisciplinary project.
- IPP students will elect a leader from among their peers to organize at least one informal symposium per year in which IPP students present their research. IPP students are strongly encouraged to present their research in this venue at least once prior to graduation.

Professional development:

- Students are strongly encouraged to continue to develop and update the individual development plan. Note the following resources for time-to-degree and professional development benchmarks: <https://www.imaginephd.com> (humanities and social sciences) and <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org> (sciences).
- IPP students are strongly encouraged to take full advantage of professional development workshops and other opportunities through OU's Graduate College, Career Services, the Center for Teaching Excellence, the Writing Center, and University Libraries.

Note: The transcript will list the degree title as follows: "Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Studies." It will not indicate an area of specialization. The student should discuss with the doctoral committee chair the pros and cons of pursuing the interdisciplinary degree, in terms of career outcomes, *vis-à-vis* pursuing an existing (more recognizable to search committees) degree at the University of Oklahoma.

Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Application Materials Checklist

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