

INTERDISCIPLINARY PH.D. PROGRAM

Mission, Philosophy and History

Research is rapidly expanding as global problems and issues require scholars with an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving. It will no longer be enough to know one area, one discipline, one field. Inquiry and discovery are crossing disciplines. For this reason, in 1990, UMKC developed and introduced an interdisciplinary doctoral degree program that spans traditional boundaries across disciplines while helping students develop knowledge and skills for independent research on the fundamental questions of the present and the future.

The Interdisciplinary Ph.D. program is designed to provide self-directed students with academic training at the highest level of scholarship, while allowing their participation as colleagues in research of fundamental importance. Students in the program develop the ability to integrate principles and theories from at least two disciplines (Primary and Co-Discipline), using approaches, methods, ethical principles, and tools to pursue a research line of inquiry.

There are currently 20 Primary disciplines and 22 Co-Disciplines accepting applications for the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. program. Enrollment in the program includes more than 360 students. More than 970 students have graduated during the program's existence.

The following core values and attributes underscore UMKC's Interdisciplinary Ph.D. program:

Learning is enhanced by a search for knowledge across discipline boundaries.
Therefore, the program:

- Is student-centered.
- Enables students to acquire the skills of interdisciplinary scholarship and research.
- Broadens students' exposure to multiple academic fields.

Interdisciplinary research draws on discipline-based knowledge, generating integrated solutions to problems that cross discipline boundaries.
Therefore, the program:

- Is problem-oriented.
- Integrates the attributes of a broad-based interdisciplinary approach with the grounding of a traditional academic focus.
- Provides a solid grounding in theories, concepts and methodologies of two or more disciplines.

Learning thrives in an environment open to a diversity of ideas, cultural backgrounds, discipline perspectives and approaches to problems.
Therefore, the program:

- Instills an appreciation of different disciplines.
- Integrates the disciplinary perspectives to give students the methodological and theoretical tools to thrive in a wide range of scholarly and professional environments.

Society derives great benefit from collaborative efforts that transcend discipline boundaries to solve problems. Therefore, the program:

- Prepares individuals to be multi-functional; to combine disparate skills to solve problems.
- Provides opportunities for individuals to gain skills in working within a collaborative environment.

In the course of pursuing a Ph.D., there are many skills students obtain that are transferable to other occupations. Acquisition of transferable skills allows graduates to compete for positions in a variety of work settings. Transferable skills such as analytical thinking and problem solving, verbal communication, project management, and technical writing and design, allow students to be nimble throughout their careers, changing positions and career directions.