

PROPOSAL TO RENAME A DEGREE PROGRAM

Proposals will only be accepted electronically as a Word document to the Office of the Provost when submitted to provost.deg.changes@wsu.edu

Current Degree Title:	Doctor of Philosophy - Individual Interdisciplinary
Proposed Degree Title:	Doctor of Philosophy – Interdisciplinary Studies
Academic Program:	Individual Interdisciplinary
Academic Plan:	See below
Number of Credits:	72
Department(s) or Program(s):	Graduate School
Campus(es):	Pullman
College(s):	Graduate School

Contact Name:	Arvin Sahaym	Email Address:	arvin@wsu.edu
Contact Phone:	509-335-6365	Proposed start date:	Summer 2026

Rationale for proposed name change:
<p>The current degree title, "Individual Interdisciplinary," no longer effectively serves students. Students report that the term "individual" is confusing and fails to clearly convey the nature and value of the degree, especially to employers. International students particularly struggle to explain the degree's seemingly incomplete name and its meaning when seeking employment in their home countries. Moreover, with the recent approval by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) on July 23, 2025, of the Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies (MSIS) degree, there is a need for consistency in nomenclature. Aligning the Ph.D. degree title with the term "Interdisciplinary Studies" will enhance clarity and coherence across graduate programs.</p> <p>Additionally, we propose adding ten specialization plans to provide structure and clarity for students pursuing interdisciplinary research. Currently, no specializations (plans) exist for this degree. Based on student feedback, these specialization areas represent the most common and academically robust interdisciplinary combinations pursued by current students. Formalizing them as distinct plans will significantly benefit student outcomes and program clarity, as these plans will be visible on student transcripts and diplomas.</p> <p>As such, the WSU Graduate School proposes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Renaming the degree to "Interdisciplinary Studies" 2. Adding the following ten specialization (plans): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics and Information Systems • Computational Social Sciences • Environmental Systems and Geochemistry • Applied Engineering and Materials • Population Health Analytics • Educational Psychology and Learning Analytics • Communication and Digital Intelligence • Social Research and Behavioral Analytics • Arts and Humanities • Business and Consumer Sciences <p>This comprehensive update will be clearer for employers to understand, easier for students to explain, and well-aligned with the master's degree and provide concrete examples of interdisciplinary</p>

scholarship. The changes maintain the interdisciplinary nature while distinguishing it from existing departmental degrees and providing recognizable academic frameworks.

Implications for currently enrolled students:

If approved, current students will have the option of adopting the new degree and plan name.

Students may choose to:

- Keep their current "Individual Interdisciplinary" degree title, or
- Switch to the new "Interdisciplinary Studies" format with or without a plan

This voluntary approach ensures no student is disadvantaged by the change while allowing those who prefer the clearer naming convention to benefit from improved degree recognition.

We surveyed current students regarding the proposed name change, the addition of specializations, and their potential implications. The results revealed overwhelming support for all proposed changes.

Describe the process by which all current faculty and staff were consulted about this change and summarize the response:

This degree is managed by the Graduate School and involves WSU system-wide eligible Faculty of the Graduate School. The proposed degree name change has been vetted by the Graduate Education Council.

Describe the process by which other degree programs, departments, colleges, and/or campuses were consulted about this change and summarize the response. Letters of support regarding the change from respective academic leaders are required.

Given that this is a unique interdisciplinary PhD program managed by the Graduate School, the consultation process focused on system-wide review rather than individual departmental approvals.

The proposed program and plan changes were reviewed and vetted by the WSU System Graduate Education Council, which includes representation from across the university system.

Summary of Response: No negative feedback was received during the review period.

If applicable, describe the process by which other stakeholders (e.g., advisory or alumni groups) were consulted about this change and summarize the response:

Unlike traditional PhDs housed in academic units, this degree draws eligible faculty from all units (Faculty of the Graduate School). Given this structure, there are no advisory groups other than the Graduate Education Council (GEC).

The name change is based in part on feedback from current students who find the current degree name confusing and difficult to explain to employers.

Please provide the current Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code for this program. If the proposed name change reflects a significant shift in curriculum or focus that warrants a different CIP code, identify the most appropriate new CIP code. You can refer to the CIP taxonomy at <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/>. Briefly explain why this code was selected.

CIP code = 30.0000 and does not change

- 1) The CIP code for this program is 30.0000 – same as before – consistent with that of the Individual Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program (IIDP).
- 2) The proposed name change does Not reflect any significant shift in curriculum or focus
- 3) The selected code is appropriate because the new name and plans are all interdisciplinary consistent with the CIP: 30.0000 (same as IIDP and MSIS).

SIGNATURES: The names typed below certify that the relevant academic and campus officials have reviewed and approved this proposal:

Chair or Director Signature:	 (Arvin Sahaym)	Date:	October 1, 2025
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Dean Signature:		Date:	October 15, 2025
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Signatures are required from all Chancellors (or delegates). A signature denotes endorsement if the degree will be offered and/or impact the respective campus. A signature will also denote receipt of notification if the degree is not being offered and/or will impact the respective campus. If needed, a signature abstention box is provided immediately below.

Everett Chancellor Signature:		Date:	10 - 20 - 2025
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Global Chancellor Signature:	Dave Cillay	Date:	10/28/2025
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Spokane Chancellor Signature:	NA	Date:	NA
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Tri-Cities Chancellor Signature:		Date:	10/29/25
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Vancouver Chancellor Signature:		Date:	10/29/25
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Comments regarding abstention of signature(s)

Submit completed form as a Word document to the Provost's Office at
provost.deg.changes@wsu.edu

Provost's Office Signature:		Date:	
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For Registrar's Office Use Only:			
Confirmed CIP Code:		Approval Date:	