



Faculty/Student-Designed MA, MS, or MEd

Occasionally, prospective graduate students have research interests or goals that may be more interdisciplinary in nature than the existing master's programs offered. In close consultation with graduate faculty, students may propose a Faculty/Student-Designed master's program that better meets their specific needs.

First, the prospective student should explore whether electives or approved modifications to an existing, related program might work for them. Choice of electives, the thesis or research topic, and potential course substitutions may be considered. Contact the program advisor(s) to discuss this possibility. Applying to an established master's program has several benefits, including consideration for teaching assistantships and inclusion in a department and graduate cohort.

If you are certain that no other program will meet your needs and you choose to move forward with a faculty/student designed program, the proposal must be completed and approved prior to submitting the Graduate School's [Applyweb application](#). Contact the Graduate School to discuss the proposal and application process before you begin.

Program Proposal Requirements

1. Proposals require the support of three graduate faculty members who must be in at least two different academic departments. Meet with faculty early in the process to discuss your proposed program of study. One faculty member must agree to advise you throughout your program and chair your thesis, research, or capstone committee.
2. Develop a plan of study that meets faculty/student-designed degree requirements:
 - a. A minimum of 45 credits with thesis, or 48 credits without thesis
 - b. Coursework must come from at least two distinct disciplines

- c. No more than 10 credits of 400-level courses may be used
 - d. No more than 10 credits of independent study may be used
3. Write a statement of purpose describing your proposed program and goals. Describe the focus or interdisciplinary area of the program, why an established graduate program will not meet your needs, and any other information that might be helpful in reviewing your proposal.
 4. Submit your statement, detailed plan of study, and three letters from supporting faculty members to gradschool@wwu.edu.

Proposal Review

1. The Associate Dean and other Graduate School staff will review your proposal and may ask for revisions or clarifications to your proposed plan of study.
2. If your proposal is approved, you may then submit the online application. You must meet all general [eligibility requirements](#), upload your transcripts and other documents, and pay the application fee.
3. Supporting faculty will review the final application and make an admissions decision.