

April 28, 2021

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Carl W. Lejuez, Ph.D. 
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

RE: Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Integrative Studies

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Trustees approve a new Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Integrative Studies.

BACKGROUND:

The University of Connecticut has many interdisciplinary centers and institutes. Some of these centers and institutes offer master's or doctoral degrees, e.g., the PhDs in Materials Science and in Systems Genomics or the MS in Clinical and Translational Science. A few interdisciplinary graduate programs are the result of collaborations among two or more departments, e.g., the MA and PhD in Medieval Studies or the MS in Energy and Environmental Management.

Occasionally, a PhD student may seek to pursue a novel course of study and research that integrates elements of two or more fields of study recognized by The Graduate School. The individualized PhD in Integrative Studies will allow highly motivated students whose research interests cannot be captured within an existing field of study to design an individualized PhD degree program that matches their interests.

Students who complete the individualized PhD in Integrative Studies will be conversant with major concepts and approaches in fields relevant to their research, they will have deep subject matter knowledge in at least two different fields of study, and the individualized program they design cannot be accommodated within any existing field of study at the University of Connecticut.

Request for New UConn Academic Degree Program

General Information

Name of degree program:	Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Integrative Studies
Name of sponsoring Department:	The Graduate School
Name of sponsoring College:	The Graduate School
Campuses:	Storrs
Contact persons:	Kathleen Segerson
Type of Proposal:	New
Type of Program:	Doctor of Philosophy
Anticipated Initiation Date:	Fall 2021
Anticipated Date of First Graduation:	
Program Payment Type:	Tuition based
CIP Code:	30.0000: Multi-/Interdisciplinary Studies, General.

Justification for the New Program

The University of Connecticut has many interdisciplinary centers and institutes. Some of these centers and institutes offer master's or doctoral degrees, e.g., the PhDs in Materials Science and in Systems Genomics or the MS in Clinical and Translational Science. A few interdisciplinary graduate programs are the result of collaborations among two or more departments, e.g., the MA and PhD in Medieval Studies or the MS in Energy and Environmental Management.

Occasionally, a PhD student may seek to pursue a novel course of study and research that integrates elements of two or more fields of study recognized by The Graduate School. The individualized PhD in Integrative Studies will allow highly motivated students whose research interests cannot be captured within an existing field of study to design an individualized PhD degree program that matches their interests.

Are there similar programs in CT or elsewhere?

There do not appear to be similar programs within Connecticut. Brown University also offers a PhD in Integrative Studies. Tufts University, the University of California Berkeley, Virginia Tech, and Marquette University offer interdisciplinary PhD programs. There may be other institutions with similar programs, but this degree program is designed primarily for students who have already been admitted to a UConn PhD program although applicants from outside the University will be considered if they meet the application requirement. We do not anticipate the program to be large, and we do not anticipate the existence of similar programs at other universities to affect demand for this program.

What are the desired learning outcomes of the program?

Students who complete the individualized PhD in Integrative Studies will be conversant with major concepts and approaches in fields relevant to their research, they will have deep subject

matter knowledge in at least two different fields of study, and the individualized program they design cannot be accommodated within any existing field of study at the University of Connecticut.

Program Description

Students enrolling in the individualized PhD in Integrative Studies will pursue individualized coursework that prepares them for research in a coherent, but integrated educational and research program that cannot be accommodated with any existing fields of study at the University of Connecticut. Admission to the individualized PhD in Integrative Studies is highly selective. In reviewing applications for admission, the Executive Committee of The Graduate School will expect to see an especially rigorous body of coursework and an especially innovative research idea before recommending admission. To be considered for admission to the individualized PhD in Integrative Studies, applicants must provide a detailed and comprehensive rationale for their program by submitting a proposal that includes:

- a) A list of graduate faculty members who have agreed to serve as advisors for the degree program, including at least two graduate faculty members from different fields of study who have agreed to serve as co-major advisors.
- b) A plan of study for the degree approved by all members of the advisory committee that includes a minimum of 21 credits of graduate-level coursework (for students holding a master's degree) or a minimum of 36 credits of graduate-level coursework (for students not holding a master's degree) and 15 credits of GRAD 6950. The coursework must be clearly related to the educational objectives of the degree program and must include at least 6 credits of graduate-level coursework from at least two different departments.
- c) Letters supporting the proposed degree program from the graduate faculty members identified as co-major advisors.
- d) A memorandum of understanding among the faculty and departments involved in the program outlining commitments for stipend/tuition support and for office/laboratory/studio space and materials for the duration of the degree program.
- e) A title for the proposed degree program.
- f) A description of the format and content of the general examination.
- g) A proposed timeline from admission through graduation.
- h) An outline of the proposed dissertation research including the broad questions to be investigated and the methods that will be used to investigate them.
- i) A description of the dissertation or other final product of the degree program, including plans to assure permanent archival access to final products that are not included in the PhD dissertation. Because of the rigor associated with the individualized PhD in Integrative Studies, students are required to maintain a minimum GPA of 3.5 to remain in good standing.

Proposed Graduate Catalogue Copy

The Graduate School offers Ph.D. students whose dissertation research integrates two or more distinct fields of study the opportunity to earn a Ph.D. in Integrative Studies. The program is intended for students who have already enrolled in a graduate degree program at the University of Connecticut, and it is aimed at students whose research interests cannot be accommodated within an existing field of study. The Ph.D. in Integrative Studies will allow students to acquire and demonstrate a large degree of disciplinary skills across fields that may not often intersect. Students considering a Ph.D. in Integrative Studies should be aware, however, that this degree may not allow them to qualify for employment in positions that require advanced degrees in a specific discipline.

Requirements for the Ph.D. in Integrative Studies

Specific course requirements for the individualized PhD in Integrative Studies are determined by the student's Advisory Committee. Students without a master's degree must complete a minimum of 36 credits of graduate-level coursework. Students with a master's degree must complete a minimum of 21 credits of graduate-level coursework. All students must complete at least 6 credits of graduate-level coursework from at least two different departments. In addition, all students must complete at least 15 credits of GRAD 6950 or GRAD 6960. Students are required to maintain a minimum GPA of 3.5 to remain in good standing. The individualized PhD in Integrative Studies does not have a related area or foreign language requirement, unless one is specified by the Advisory Committee.

Faculty Involvement

Individual faculty who agree to serve as co-major advisors or as associate advisors will determine coursework and other degree requirements (subject to approval by the Executive Committee of The Graduate School during the admissions process) in addition to evaluating the general exam, dissertation prospectus, and the final dissertation. Coursework associated with the degree will be part of regular departmental offerings in many different departments.

Enrollment and graduate projections

Enrollment in this program is likely to be quite small, no more than one or two students at any one time, and there may be periods when no students are enrolled.

Program Evaluation

Enrollment in this program is likely to be limited. As a result, formal evaluation will be limited. Students will be required to submit a brief annual report of progress to their advisory committee for review and approval during spring semester. That report and a brief evaluative report on the student's progress will be provided to the Dean of The Graduate at the end of each academic year. In addition, the Dean of The Graduate School will ask each student to provide a direct,

informal evaluation of their satisfaction with the program and recommendations for improvement at the end of the academic year.

Program Administration

Co-major advisors and the advisory committee will be responsible for day-to-day oversight of the student and for evaluating student progress. The application will identify an academic department responsible for providing office/laboratory/studio space and for administering graduate assistantship appointments (if available). The Graduate School will be responsible for overseeing the admission process and for annual monitoring of program effectiveness.

Funding and Financial Resources Needed

Graduate students will receive graduate assistantship support (if available) through an academic department. The application requires that faculty and departments involved in the program provide an MOU describing what funding, if any, will be available to them. No additional funding is needed for faculty.

Other Resource Needs

None

Consultation with other potentially affected units

This program is likely to be small and have little impact on other units.

Who can apply to this program?

Internal applicants (current UConn students enrolled in another UConn degree or certificate program)

Anticipated term and year of first enrollment

Annually on 10/1, beginning in 2021

Admission Requirements

Documented agreement of at least three current University of Connecticut faculty members to serve as an advisory committee, with at least two members of the graduate faculty in different fields of study agreeing to serve as co-major advisors. MOU among the faculty and departments involved in the program outlining commitments for stipend/tuition support and for office/laboratory/studio space and materials for the duration of the degree program.

Requirements for the application

a) A list of graduate faculty members who have agreed to serve as advisors for the degree program, including at least two graduate faculty members from different fields of study who have agreed to serve as co-major advisors.

- b) A plan of study for the degree approved by all members of the advisory committee that includes a minimum of 21 credits of graduate-level coursework (for students holding a master's degree) or a minimum of 36 credits of graduate-level coursework (for students not holding a master's degree) and 15 credits of GRAD 6950. The coursework must be clearly related to the educational objectives of the degree program and must include at least 6 credits of graduate-level coursework from at least two different departments.
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- f) A description of the format and content of the general examination.
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Term(s) to which students will be admitted

- Fall
- Spring

Application deadline: Specific Date, 10/1/2021

Initiator

Kathleen Segerson, kathleen.segerson@uconn.edu, 860-486-4567

Program Director Name

Kent Holsinger, Dean/Associate Dean, kent.holsinger@uconn.edu, 860-486-0983

Administrative Contact

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