

## Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Option

<b>Subject:</b>	Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Option
<b>Sections:</b>	<a href="#"><u>Definitions</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Rationale for an Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Option</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Program Structure</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Enrolling in an Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Option</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Inclusion on Transcripts and Degrees</u></a>
<b>Approving Authority:</b>	Senate
<b>Responsible Committee:</b>	Senate Committee on Academic Policy
<b>Related Procedures:</b>	<a href="#"><u>Procedures for the Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Option</u></a>
<b>Officer(s) Responsible for Procedures:</b>	Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies)
<b>Related Policies:</b>	*
<b>Effective Date:</b>	July 1, 2023
<b>Supersedes:</b>	(NEW)

---

A Western Interdisciplinary Combined PhD entails the completion of the combined degree requirements of two Western doctoral programs simultaneously under the supervision of a faculty member from each program.

### DEFINITIONS

**Home Program:** For the purposes of the Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Degree Agreement Form, “Home Program” will refer to the graduate program that has administrative responsibility for the student, including providing work/office space, assignment of GTAships, completion of annual progress reports, etc.

The Home Program is also the “fall-back” program in the event that the student wishes to discontinue in the combined option.

## **Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Option**

**Partnering Program:** For the purposes of the Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Degree Agreement Form, “Partnering Program” will refer to the second graduate program.

### **1. Rationale for an Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Option**

- 1.1. Many current and emerging areas of research and professional practice are at the intersection of existing disciplines.
- 1.2. Advanced knowledge and research expertise that spans disciplinary boundaries is needed to effectively respond to emerging cultural, social, and scientific needs.
- 1.3. The creation of new interdisciplinary graduate programs would not provide the flexibility or responsiveness required to address these growing needs.
- 1.4. This option will be unique in Canada and will provide an innovative and competitive advantage for Western and its graduates.

### **2. Program Structure**

- 2.1. The student shall have two supervisors – one supervisor with doctoral membership in each graduate program. In exceptional circumstances, a single supervisor, with doctoral membership in both programs may be approved by the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS), conditional upon the supervisory committee representing both programs.
- 2.2. One of the two programs will be identified as the "Home Program" for the purpose of registration and administration.
- 2.3. Programs are encouraged to “share” or “merge” some of their usual requirements.
  - For example, a required course in one program can also be counted as an optional or elective course in the second program.
- 2.4. One thesis is to be completed; the thesis must meet the expectations of both programs, the content of the thesis should represent a blending of the disciplines.
- 2.5. The composition of the examining board for the dissertation will include representation of both participating programs and disciplines.
  - Some variation from the usual PhD Examination Board structure may be needed to achieve this; such variation must be approved by SGPS.
- 2.6. The student's individual program (structured to support completion in 4 years) must be determined and agreed upon by the two programs normally no later than by the second term, including:

## Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Option

- All courses to be completed to meet the learning outcomes of both programs
- The nature and timing of comprehensive(s) to satisfy both programs (if feasible, the comprehensive exam requirements of the two programs can be merged into one exam)
- Any additional milestones required to meet the learning outcomes of both programs
- The topic of the dissertation/research

### **3. Enrolling in an Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Option**

- 3.1. The student is accepted first into a “Home Program” and then requests admission to the “Partnering Program” ideally before the beginning but no later than by the second term after beginning in the “Home Program”.
  - The student must meet the entrance requirements of both graduate programs and must be admitted by both programs.
- 3.2. Following completion and approval of the “Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Degree Agreement” and admission to the Partnering Program, the student is transferred into the combined degree program.
  - Normally the Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Agreement will be completed prior to the student’s first term of registration but no later than two terms into the student’s registration in the Home Program.

### **4. Inclusion on Transcripts and Degrees**

- 4.1. One degree/parchment will be awarded; it will list both graduate programs.
- 4.2. The student’s transcript will note registration in both graduate programs, with one degree awarded upon completion of all requirements.
- 4.3. The student’s transcript will read under “Academic Program History”:

Program:	Home Program
Plan:	Interdisciplinary Combined Doctor of Philosophy
	Home Program and Partnering Program
Status:	Active in Program (or later, “Completed Program”)
- 4.4. The final degree awarded will appear on the parchment as: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, *Home Program and Partnering Program*