

**THE INTERDISCIPLINARY GRADUATE DEGREE  
PEARLS, PITFALLS AND PROVOCATIONS**

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**Abstract**

Interdisciplinary graduate degree programs can provide means for individuals with varied interests to pursue personal interests or provide a mechanism for solving complex social problems. The Texas State University Department of Occupational, Workforce, and Leadership Studies offers two interdisciplinary degree programs, the Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies and the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies. The purpose of this research paper is to present a multiple case study by an emic researcher. Although not generalizable in traditional ways, multiple case studies present an array of experiences of the phenomenon or situation under study. These multiple cases can provide examples of the way in which students utilize the program, as well as provide insight into the administration of such a program. Three student cases and the administration case are presented in order to provide data for the cross case analysis that follows.

Administratively, the programs operate within a department designed to serve the needs of working adults throughout three cities in Central Texas with hybrid and face-to-face classes and beyond, given the growth of Internet-based courses in the department. Because of the rule set governing the degree, students must seek classes from across four disciplines at the university. As a result, no two student programs are alike – they are personalized and individualized.