

**Handbook for Applicants and Students in
Interdisciplinary Studies (MIDST & PhD IDST)
2024-25
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Contributors

Dr. Jonathon Edwards (Associate Dean of IDST)

Dr. Sasha Mullally (Former Acting Dean of SGS; Former Acting Associate Dean of IDST)

Dr. Dann Downes (Former Associate Dean of IDST)

Dr. Mary McKenna (Former Associate Dean of IDST)

Dr. Linda Eyre (Former Associate Dean of IDST)

Andrea Guevara

Aimee Hughes

Scott Thomson (Ph.D. IDST student)

Divya Bhalla (Graduate Program Officer)

Sanhita Biswas (Graduate Program Officer)

Original layout and design assistance from **Michael Bongiorno**

This handbook was first drafted by **Justine Gibbings** (Ph.D. IDST 2014)

Edited by **Adnan Qayyum Khan**

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Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies (IDST)

Do you want to make a positive contribution in today's complicated world? Are you interested in research that focuses on a complex question, drawing on more than one discipline?

Students in the Interdisciplinary Studies (IDST) graduate program integrate knowledge, perspectives, and skills from two or more academic disciplines to address complex problems between or beyond discipline-based research.

Students work with faculty members from across the University of New Brunswick (UNB) as they pursue innovative interdisciplinary research while obtaining relevant discipline-based grounding. As part of their studies, students apply skills such as teamwork, leadership, communication, critical analysis, integration, creativity, and flexibility.

With approximately 100 IDST students on the Fredericton and Saint John campuses, IDST is one of the largest graduate research programs at UNB. Approximately 50 faculty members across all major disciplines supervise students.

Students in the IDST program pursue individualized programs that offer a valuable learning experience, from research conceptualization to dissemination.

A timely degree completion for fulltime students is 2 years in the master's program and 4 years in the PhD; the program also accepts part-time students. Graduates from the UNB IDST program are successful in academic, public, and private sectors.

Overview of the IDST Handbook

The School of Graduate Studies (SGS) maintains an extensive website that contains requirements and regulations for graduate programs (<https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/index.html>), including information pertaining to Admissions, Programs, Regulations, Financial Information, and Graduate Student Life.

The SGS standards and regulations apply to all UNB graduate programs. Note that only information on the UNB SGS website is official. Avoid accessing outdated forms or information through other web links.

This handbook provides guidance for prospective and current master's or PhD IDST students. This handbook includes:

- ✓ Guidance for prospective students
- ✓ Information for current students
- ✓ Contact information for prospective and current students.

This handbook augments the information available through the SGS. The SGS website and this handbook are the first places to consult for help. Due to the nature of the IDST program, however, the handbook cannot anticipate or address all questions and circumstances. Please refer to the contact information on page 24 for additional assistance.

Guidance for Prospective Students

Every student's program in IDST is individualized and for this reason, the application package serves as a foundation for an applicant's program. Thus, the application process requires greater effort from the applicant and potential supervisor than when applying to a standardized graduate program.

This section summarizes eligibility criteria, application details, and the assessment process.

Eligibility

There are several requirements to be met prior to applying:

1. Applicants must possess a strong academic background

Master's applicants require a 4-year program (preferably honors or equivalent) with at least an A-average. PhD applicants require a master's degree with thesis, or equivalent research experience, and at least an A- average.

2. Applicants must secure a research supervisor

UNB has two primary campuses, **Fredericton**, and **Saint John**. Eligible faculty members who can supervise students are members of a Graduate Academic Unit (GAU) at UNB and are usually Assistant, Associate, or Full Professors. The supervisor-student relationship is critical to program progress and outcomes. While a student holds "the primary responsibility for successful completion", a "foundational principle of research-based graduate programs is that they entail regular consultation and collaboration with and support from, a faculty supervisor. Hence, supervisors are making a serious and enduring commitment to their students and their programs." For more information on the roles and responsibilities of students and supervisors, see: https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/current/resources/regulations-and_guidelines/regulations/general-regulations-for-research-based-degrees.html

Most faculty members provide research profiles on the UNB websites, and these are a useful starting point to identify a potential supervisor. Applicants will also want to speak with prospective supervisors about mutual research interests and approaches to research, student supervision, potential courses and resources relevant to their proposed research topic, etc.

3. Explore UNB resources relevant to the research topic

Because the IDST program is individualized, there are very few IDST-specific courses. Independently and with a potential supervisor, applicants will find it useful to explore course availability (including independent study courses) and potential co-supervisors, if applicable, and committee members.

4. Submit a viable, interdisciplinary research topic

The applicant's proposed research must fall within Interdisciplinary Studies, i.e., integrate knowledge, perspectives, and skills from two or more academic disciplines to address complex problems between or beyond discipline-based research. The applicant's research must be capable of meeting the standards for graduation, reprinted below from the SGS website:

[School of Graduate Studies | Master's and PHD programs | UNB](#)

The Master's thesis must demonstrate the candidate's competence to undertake independent research work; it must contribute to knowledge in the candidate's field of study; it must show that the candidate is fully aware of the pertinent published material; and it must be written in a satisfactory literary style. It should be free of typographical and other mechanical errors. (<https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/current/resources/regulations-and-guidelines/regulations/masters-degree-regulations.html>)

Candidates for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy shall present a dissertation embodying the results of their investigations on an approved topic. The work upon which the dissertation is based must have been done by the candidate under the direction of an approved supervisor. The dissertation must demonstrate the candidate's competence to undertake independent research work. It must contribute significantly to knowledge in the candidate's field of study and must be of sufficient merit to suggest publication in an appropriate scholarly journal or other scholarly format. The dissertation must show that the candidate is fully aware of the pertinent published material, must be written in a satisfactory literary style, and must be free of typographical and other mechanical errors. (<https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/current/resources/regulations-and-guidelines/regulations/phd-regulations.html>)

5. Provide evidence of English proficiency and strong academic writing

Applicants whose first language is not English must provide proof of language proficiency, i.e., test score results: a TOEFL score of 100, TWE 5.5, or IELTS of 7 (must indicate 'academic' not 'general') and all applicants must demonstrate strong academic writing.

Application

The **application consists** of several components, which are the same for PhD and Master's applicants:

1. A **screening sheet** (Appendix A) that includes:
 - ✓ An explanation of the different disciplines the applicant will bring to the research topic, how the disciplines will be integrated into the research, and the reasons for the applicant's interest in pursuing a degree in IDST.
 - ✓ Information about UNB resources relevant to the proposed program, such as potential courses and faculty members.
2. A **Statement of Research** (approximately five pages plus references) consisting of a mini-research proposal that includes:
 - ✓ Background information, introduction of key concepts, and research question/purpose of the research
 - ✓ Summary of key related literature
 - ✓ Theoretical or conceptual frameworks relevant to the research (if applicable)
 - ✓ Potential methods to collect and analyze data (to the extent possible)
 - ✓ Potential significance of this research

✓ References (APA format)

3. A **letter from the prospective supervisor** (a letter sent by email is acceptable) that comments on the applicant's proposed program and research, willingness to supervise, and other relevant information.
4. Three **references** from referees well-positioned to comment on the qualities identified in the invitation letter (referees submit these independently of the applicant; academic references preferred).
5. **Official transcripts** of all undergraduate and graduate work from all postsecondary institutions attended by the applicant.
6. A **sample of academic writing** of approximately 15-20 pages where the applicant is the sole author, such as a term paper, article, or excerpt from a thesis.
7. For **international applicants** whose first language is not English, **proof of language proficiency**, i.e., test score results: an Internet-based TOEFL score of 100, TWE 5.5, or IELTS of 7 (must indicate 'academic module' not 'general').
8. **Other information**, such as name, address, proposed term to begin the program, application for full- or part-time student status, etc. Note that the home campus is the campus of the proposed supervisor.

Complete your application form here

Assessment

An assessment committee reviews all applications annually. The applicant must ensure the application is complete (e.g., all references and supervisor letter submitted, transcripts received) as the committee only reviews completed applications.

The criteria for assessing applications include:

- The interdisciplinary nature of the proposed research, its scope, quality, and perceived viability; applicant's expertise regarding the topic area
- The applicant's academic, work, background, achievements, skills, and experience – especially in relation to the proposed research
- Input from the proposed research supervisor and referees
- Academic writing proficiency and English language skills

Information for all IDST Students

Congratulations! You are now a master's or PhD student in the IDST program, having received a letter via email notifying you of your formal acceptance and providing additional information. This section contains important information, including student cards, the composition of a supervisory committee, registration for university terms and coursework, completion of mandatory annual progress reports, as well as other supports and services.

MUST DO - TO-DO LIST

To remain in the IDST program, the minimum requirements are as follows:

Every year:

- ✓ Obtain student card/validation sticker.
- ✓ Submit progress report.

Every term:

- ✓ Register for the thesis course and any other courses.

COMMUNICATION ALL IDST STUDENTS

Communication is imperative for a student to be successful in your graduate program. First, it is important that you are in constant communication with your supervisor. If there are any issues, they are the first person you would approach. Second, communication from the Graduate School and IDST come primarily through emails. Please make sure you are monitoring your emails for new announcements and opportunities. Information can be found through emails from the IDST listserve, which you can be added to by contacting Sanhita Biswas (sanhita.biswas@unb.ca). In addition, please also follow the IDST on social media by “liking” their Facebook page (Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies at UNB).

I. Student card and validation sticker

Student cards are essential! All new students require a student card, and returning students must have card validation stickers. For students based in Fredericton, the cards and stickers can be obtained from the UNB Card Office in Room 106, Student Union Building (SUB). In Saint John,

information about U cards can be found here: <https://www.unb.ca/ucard/> and parking information can be found here: <https://www.unb.ca/saintjohn/security/parking.html>

II. Supervisory Committee

Each student has a Supervisory Committee comprising the research supervisor, two co-supervisors, and two or three committee members. In the case of Ph.D. students, the supervisory committee must have a minimum of 3 members:

- 1- Supervisor or Co-Supervisor (this counts as one)
- 2- Members (must be a UNB faculty member or have adjunct or HRA status)

In the case of Masters student's supervisory committee composition, we would like to see a minimum of three supervisory members; however, in situations where the supervisor cannot get three supervisory committee, two will be permitted upon approval from the IDST office.

Co-supervisors are common for students in IDST due to the integrative nature of students' research. Typically, IDST committees consist of members from different disciplines/faculties relevant to the proposed research.

Committee members may be identified during application or while coursework occurs; they must be chosen before a student's research proposal is finalized (MIDST students) or before comprehensive exams commence (Ph.D. candidates).

All committee members must have an appropriate research background, such as earned Ph.D. degrees, and may be from other universities or public or private organizations approved by the School of Graduate Studies.

For Ph.D. and Master's students, an individual who is not a UNB faculty member must apply to become an Adjunct Professor or Honorary Research Associate (HRA) or Associate in order to become a committee member. Approval for these applications can take 6 months or longer. Please plan accordingly.

Adjunct Professors:

https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/_assets/documents/adjunct_policy_application.pdf

Honorary Research Associates:

https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/_assets/documents/hra_policy_application.pdf

The supervisory committee, led by the supervisor or co-supervisors, guides the student through the program, providing input on all program requirements and research expertise in relevant methodologies and methods, interdisciplinary and disciplinary content and literature, theories, etc.

Committees often support students in various ways, such as networking, mentoring, funding, identifying relevant conferences to attend, and dissemination of research.

III. Term Registration

Registration is not automatic. **Each and every term, students MUST register for their program by completing online registration** for either the Interdisciplinary Master's thesis or Interdisciplinary PhD thesis, whether you are taking courses or conducting research. Each program has a course number, which differs depending on whether the supervisor is on the UNB Fredericton or UNB Saint John campus.

Fredericton : **IDST 6998 or 6997 FR01A**
 Saint John : **IDST 6998 or 6997 SJ01**

Registration is an online process through the my-UNB portal. **You must register and pay tuition fees each and every term and must always be registered in your thesis.**

Be aware of deadlines for course registration (see important dates link). There is a fee for late registration.

Note: the SGS handles all registrations for graduate students (not the UNB Registrar's office).

IV. Coursework

Students select courses in close consultation with their supervisors/committee. Courses relevant to the student's course of study are selected from those offered by IDST and other graduate programs and faculties across the university.

Typically, IDST students take IDST 6206 (summarized below), a research methods course or courses, and courses to strengthen areas related to their research, which may be pre-existing UNB courses, independent study courses, or courses offered at other institutions. Students can check IDST courses at UNB here:

<https://www.unb.ca/academics/calendar/graduate/current/courses-/fredericton-courses/interdisciplinary-studies-courses/index.html>

and determine their availability here:

<http://es.unb.ca/apps/timetable/>

Full-time students usually complete their coursework in the first two semesters, but there is no specific timeframe.

Part-time students usually take one or two courses per term. With permission of the (co)supervisor(s), a student may take a course later due to timetabling or other challenges.

Recommended Course

IDST 6206, Research Seminar in IDST is recommended highly for all IDST students. This course is designed for interdisciplinary students to further their understanding of the science, craft, and politics of doing interdisciplinary research; prepare them to become informed, questioning, self-critical researchers; enhance their sense of belonging to a larger scholarly interdisciplinary research community; and provide direction for the successful and timely completion of the interdisciplinary degree.

Other Coursework

Students commonly take a research methods course or courses, often in a disciplinary area related to their research topic. Students often also take graduate courses offered by other faculties that further their research projects and/or skills. Some courses have restrictions such as prerequisites that must be met before a student can enroll. When registering for courses outside IDST, students need to **complete a course change form**, which requires permission and signatures from the instructor, instructor's department of faculty, and IDST.

Link to form:

https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/_assets/documents/graduate_student_course_change_2017.pdf

Independent Study courses:

Students may take up to two Independent Study courses with permission of the instructor, supervisor, and Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies. Course supervisors or committee members often offer these courses.

Students need to complete the form and submit a **course outline** that includes details of the course and how it will be evaluated.

Link to form:

https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/_assets/documents/independentstudyform2017.pdf

Colloquium

We will host a colloquium on Friday mornings for the 2024-2025 year. This will be both Masters and PhD students to come together and listen to different presentations. Some of the presentation topics will include, to name a few:

- How to write an ethics submission
- Student presentations
- How to write a manuscript for submission
- Guest research presentations externally and internally

Colloquium will be delivered through a hybrid approach and will be conducted starting in October. Presentations will occur 2-3 times a month. At least one monthly presentation will be conducted on the Saint John Campus.

Courses from another university:

Students may take up to two graduate-level courses from another university with advance permission from the course instructor, supervisor, and Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies. Students need to submit a course outline that includes details of the course and how it will be evaluated to Sanhita Biswas, sanhita.biswas@unb.ca.

The office of IDST will reimburse students \$500 towards tuition costs, with receipts, with a mark of B or better in the course.

Undergraduate courses:

Rarely, students may find it necessary to take an upper-level undergraduate course. In this case, the student must submit a request to the course instructor to determine if the instructor will assign extra work to qualify the course as a graduate course. If so, the student then follows the procedures for an Independent Study. The strength of a student's graduate transcript is maximized when it consists entirely of graduate-level courses.

V. Mandatory Student Annual Progress Report

All IDST students must complete an annual progress report by September 1st EACH year, no matter when a student commenced the degree. A completed student-supervisor checklist must accompany the first progress report:

<https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/assets/documents/studentsupervisorchecklist.pdf>

The supervisor/co-supervisors contribute to the progress reports and must sign the report before it is submitted. However, it is a student's responsibility to submit the complete report by the **September** deadline.

The report becomes part of the student's file and serves as a vital reference point to document the student's progress. SGS regulations state: **“Failure to submit a Progress Report and thereby demonstrate good academic standing, may prompt withdrawal from the program.”**

The progress report form is available here:

https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/assets/documents/student_annual_progress_report.pdf

VI. Services and Support

Financial Assistance: A limited amount of funding is available to applicants based on academic merit and the strength of their application.

IDST encourages students to apply for scholarships for which they are eligible: <https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/current/financial/scholarships/>, including external funding programs (a live link on the web-page) and tri-council funding: <https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/current/financial/scholarships/tri-council/index.html>. Supervisors are often helpful in navigating the scholarship application process.

Assistance with study and travel costs for conferences: The SGS offers limited travel grants to attend conferences. To be eligible, you must present a paper or equivalent. There is a form to complete before attending the conference, which your supervisor and the Associate Dean IDST must sign. If approved, receipts must be submitted on your return. Awards are given quarterly; please contact Sanhita Biswas, sanhita.biswas@unb.ca, for deadlines and information.

The Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Society (IGSS) has a small fund that may be used for travel. Check with the IGSS executive for details at igss@unb.ca.

The IDST program offers a limited number of awards to support students who complete the Diploma in Undergraduate Teaching. Upon successful completion and proof of payment, students may be reimbursed for the program. Contact Sanhita Biswas for details: sanhita.biswas@unb.ca

Other resources and groups

Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Society: The IGSS supports students in the IDST program with financial support for travel and offers opportunities for networking and student leadership.

Graduate Student Association: All graduate students belong to this association, which advances and serves the interests of all graduate students at UNB and offers opportunities for student leadership and involvement (<http://www.unbgsa.ca/>).

Library services and facilities: Libraries on the Fredericton and Saint John campuses and librarians, whose specialized expertise positions them well to assist with various aspects of research, are a critical resource to graduate students. Libraries frequently offer workshops to assist students during their program. See: <https://lib.unb.ca/>

Writing and Study Skills Centres: These centres offer all UNB students free tutoring in a wide range of academic skills, including report and essay writing, time management, and examination preparation. The websites provide additional information, including announcements for sessions and workshops. Centres are available in

Learning Strategist- Student Accessibility Centre offers services as they relate to your learning in order to help you achieve success in the program. The Learning Strategist on the Fredericton Campus encourages positive development and change to your learning and studying practices and help you achieve success through enhanced learning support experiences through:

- Helping you identify your personal barriers regarding the learning and research process and identifying strategies to help you overcome them

- Breaking tasks and deliverables down to be more manageable and approachable
- Helping you develop and advance personal and academic skills that will help you in your education journey and beyond

If you want more information about Learning Strategy Support and how it can help you succeed, please contact Krystal Edwards at krystal.edwards@unb.ca.

Writing Centre Contact:

Fredericton:

<https://www.unb.ca/fredericton/studentservices/academics/writing-centre/>

Saint John:

<https://www.unb.ca/saintjohn/studentservices/academics/writingcentre/index.html>

Fitness and recreation: The Currie Center is a health and wellness facility on the UNB Fredericton campus:

<https://www.unb.ca/fredericton/currie/>

UNBSJ has a number of facilities available:

<https://www.unb.ca/saintjohn/athletics/fitness/schedules.html>

Membership and access are free to all full-time graduate students.

HELP

If you need assistance with course registration or have course forms to submit, your IDST contact is Sanhita Biswas at sanhita.biswas@unb.ca

The link to details on important dates and deadlines for the SGS:

<https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/current/resources/important-dates.html>

The link to details for completing the student registration process:

www.unb.ca/academics/registration/

The link to check the availability of courses through the UNB graduate course timetable:

<http://es.unb.ca/apps/timetable/>

The SGS link to a variety of forms (e.g., independent study course forms):

<https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/current/forms.html><https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/current/forms.html>

The link to information about academic offenses, including plagiarism:

<https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/current/resources/regulations-and-guidelines/regulations/academic-offenses.html>

The Master's Degree (MIDST)

The MIDST degree has three key components:

- i. **Coursework**
- ii. **Research proposal and ethics**
- iii. **Master's thesis and final defence** (submission of the thesis to the SGS for examination, oral defence of the thesis, and submission of final thesis to the SGS and completion of forms)

I. Coursework

A minimum of five graduate level courses are required. Suggested course of studies:

Term one	Term Two	Term Three	Term Four	Term Five
IDST 6203	Research Methods Course	Thesis Proposal	Research	Thesis Defence
IDST 6206	IDST 6205			
	Elective			

II. Research Proposal and Ethics

Research Proposal:

The proposal summarizes the interdisciplinary research problem and rationale, research questions, relevant literature, methodology/methods, and research design of the proposed study, and is usually 30 to 40 pages, plus references. The student works with the supervisor to develop the proposal. The student submits a formal written research proposal to the committee who may suggest changes, edits, further drafts, etc. Suggested guidelines for the proposal are provided here www.unb.ca/gradstudies/programs/interdisciplinary/researchproposal.html (Note that the 'Research Proposal' heading is a live link).

Important steps in the proposal process include:

1. The written proposal must be approved by the supervisor and the committee.
2. The supervisor informs the Associate Dean IDST that the proposal is ready to go forward to the oral examination.
3. An oral presentation on the proposal is required, as follows.

Oral Proposal Defence:

1. The Associate Dean IDST, in consultation with the supervisor/co-supervisors, committee members, and the student, sets a date and time for the oral presentation of the proposal.
2. At least 10 days before the oral presentation, the student submits the proposed thesis title along with a one paragraph proposal abstract to the IDST Program Officer (Sanhita Biswas) to publicize the oral.
3. Normally, the supervisor(s) and all members of the committee attend the oral; the Associate Dean IDST (or delegate) acts as Chair.
4. An oral proposal defence typically lasts up to 2 hours.
5. The presentation is open to university members and guests.
6. The student gives a 20 – 30 minutes presentation that summarizes the proposal, followed by questions and comments from the supervisor(s) and each committee member (usually two rounds of 10-15 minutes per person per round). The Chair may also invite questions from members of the audience and may have additional comments or questions at the end.
7. The committee convenes alone with the chair to discuss the student's proposal and presentation and identifies any revisions and next steps required prior to the student undertaking the research.
8. The committee invites the student to re-join them and discusses their decision.
9. There is no formal paperwork associated with an oral presentation of the proposal.

All members of the committee must approve the proposed research before the student undertakes the research.

Ethics Review:

Depending on the type of research, ethics approval may be necessary. The proposal must be defended successfully, and a final proposal approved before ethics approval is sought (the student attaches an approved proposal to the ethics application).

Note that the Associate Dean reviews all ethics applications from IDST students prior to the student submitting the application to the university ethics review board. Before submitting the application to the Associate Dean of IDST, the students must check with the GAU and supervisor to ensure that they are adhering to the policies of the of the unit.

More information about ethics review at UNB is available here:

www.unb.ca/research/vp/ethics.html

III. Master's Thesis and Final Defense

The thesis incorporates all elements of the research proposal identified above plus all other relevant information, such as research results, analysis, discussion, conclusions, recommendations, significance, limitations, and strengths.

Students have the option of writing a traditional thesis, which is the most common choice, or an article-based thesis. The supervisor and committee members will provide input as to which format is most appropriate.

Information on the proper format for a thesis plus requirements for a traditional or articles-based thesis is found here:

https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/_assets/documents/thesisformattingguide.pdf

The presentation of the thesis and subsequent final oral examination must meet all UNB requirements. The Master's thesis must demonstrate the candidate's competence to undertake independent research work, contribute to knowledge in the candidate's field of study, show that the candidate is fully aware of the pertinent published material, and be written in a satisfactory literary style.

It should be free of typographical and other mechanical errors:

<https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/current/resources/regulations-and-guidelines/regulations/masters-degree-regulations.html>

Conducting research and writing the thesis can be challenging and students are advised to seek guidance from their supervisor, committee, and others. For example, the library contains many books that cover all aspects of the process – from time management to thesis writing. Using at least one book/resource as a reference is recommended.

Some students find it helpful to join (or establish) an in-person or online formal or informal academic writing group.

The process of writing a thesis often involves an iterative process of completing chapters of the thesis, obtaining comments from the supervisor and committee, revising each chapter and then revising the whole document one or more times before submission.

The finished thesis must meet all UNB guidelines for format (https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/_assets/documents/thesisformattingguide.pdf), including an acceptable referencing style, e.g., APA, MLA.

The **completion of the thesis and final submission** to the SGS can be divided into three stages:

1. Submission of the thesis to the SGS for examination
2. Oral defence of the thesis
3. Submission of final thesis to the SGS and completion of forms

A. Submission of the thesis to the SGS for examination

Once the supervisor(s) and the committee members are satisfied that the thesis is ready for the oral defence, the supervisor notifies the Associate Dean IDST who, in consultation with the supervisor, organizes the Examining Committee.

Structure of the Examining Committee

The constitution of the Examining Committee for the MIDST consists of a maximum of three persons:

- a) Supervisor(s)
- b) One member who may (but need not) have been associated with the development of the thesis.
- c) One member who must be from outside the student's GAU and must not have been associated with the development of the thesis.
- d) Additional members may be added but are not required.

Other members of the existing supervisory committee may join the Examining committee, but together with the supervisor(s), they have only one vote.

Examination of the thesis

Each examining committee member reads the thesis and will sign off on the thesis to move forward to an oral defence. As such, members of the examining board will need to provide an email confirming the Masters candidate is ready to move forward to the oral defense, which is submitted to the Associate Dean of IDST (IDSTAssocDean@UNB.ca). There are four possible outcomes:

- a) The thesis is ready for an oral defence
- b) Minor changes are needed before the defence. These changes are monitored by the supervisor and the revised thesis is not re-read by the examining committee.
- c) The thesis needs more extensive changes. The examining committee will re-read it before the oral defence is considered.
- d) The thesis is rejected by the committee.

The examining committee needs to agree on any necessary changes before the Associate Dean informs the student of the thesis examination decision.

The student needs to make any needed changes to the thesis in a timely fashion. Once the student makes the changes and the committee agrees the thesis is ready for the oral defence, the supervisor informs the Associate Dean of IDST the thesis is ready for a defense.

B. Oral defence of the thesis

After consulting all parties, the IDST Program Officer (Sanhita Biswas) confirms the date, time and place of the oral examination. At least 10 days prior to the defence, an announcement of the oral is made in a campus-wide electronic news bulletin together with announcements to the examining committee and the student.

Procedure for the oral defence of a thesis:

- a) The thesis defence takes approximately two hours.
- b) The Associate Dean of IDST or delegate chairs the proceedings.
- c) The oral defence delivery has two options: hybrid or virtually. This is chosen by the examining committee and the Master's candidate.
- d) The defence is open to university members and guests.
- e) The student gives a 20-to-30-minute presentation that summarizes the thesis, followed by questions and comments from the supervisor(s) and each committee member (usually two rounds of 10-15 minutes per person per round). The Chair may also invite questions from members of the audience and may have additional comments or questions at the end.
- f) The student and members of the audience withdraw to enable the examining committee to assess the thesis and oral defence.
- g) The committee reconvenes with the student, informing the student of the defence outcome and summarizing any revisions and who needs to read and assess the revisions in an official letter.
- h) The chair provides forms from SGS that the student/supervisor need to complete as part of the thesis submission process.

C. Submission of final copies

If the outcome is positive, the student prepares the thesis, including all required revisions, for submission to the SGS along with the required forms.

Prior to final submission, the student sends an electronic copy of the thesis in pdf format to Andrea Ruehlicke, andrea.ruehlicke@unb.ca who checks to ensure the thesis follows the UNB formatting guidelines. One electronic PDF copy of their completed thesis is sent to gradthesis@unb.ca.

All paperwork is sent to Andrea Ruehlicke, andrea.ruehlicke@unb.ca. If you want a bound copy of the thesis, SGS recommends Lehmann Bookbinding; you can request printing and binding directly from them - any questions contact info@pageforpage.com.

The “application to graduate” form is completed online by the student (note there are deadlines associated with this requirement). The link is here: www.unb.ca/graduation. Along with submission of the final copies, the student signs and submits the following forms:

- a) The “Authorization for Deposit of Dissertation” form.
- b) The “Non-exclusive License to Reproduce Thesis” from the National Library; and
- c) The “Dissertation/Thesis/Report Binding form for Library copies” form.

***Please Note:**

Students should check the current Calendar of Academic Dates on the SGS website to confirm official deadlines: <http://www.unb.ca/academics/calendar/graduate/current/index.html>

In particular, please note the deadline dates for thesis submission to

- a) meet October or May graduation, and
- b) avoid fees for the following term.

The PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies (PhD IDST)

The degree has four key components:

I. Coursework

II. Comprehensive examinations

III. Research proposal and ethics

IV. Doctoral dissertation

Student progress is an important consideration in the PhD program (see Appendix A for a sample timeline). Students usually complete coursework in the first 2-3 terms, followed by comprehensive exams, which may also take 2-3 terms.

The student then moves forward with their research proposal, ethics submission, and research, culminating in a completed dissertation and a final defence, revisions, and submission.

To maintain students' momentum, it is important for supervisors and students to finalize supervisory committee membership in a timely fashion and discuss topics for the comprehensive exams in advance of the term they begin.

Each research project follows its own timeline: 1.5 years is an approximate timeframe. It is important for students to recognize that the degree completion process, i.e., once the dissertation goes to the Examining Committee for review, can take approximately 1.5 months.

PhD Coursework

A minimum of four graduate-level courses are required.

Suggested courses of studies:

Term One	Term Two	Term Three	Term Four	Term Five	Term Six- Eleven	Term Twelve
IDST 6203	Research Methods	Comprehensive Exams	Comprehensive Exams	Thesis Proposal	Research	Defence
IDST 6206	IDST 6205			Proposal Defence		

Comprehensive Examinations

Students register for the comprehensive exam as a Pass/Fail non-credit course. The comprehensive examinations ensure that students are prepared in at least two substantive areas relevant to the research project before engaging in doctoral research.

The examination typically serves to consolidate an area of knowledge or to address a gap in the knowledge base required to conduct the research and write the dissertation, and with reference to the fact that the student is in an IDST program.

The Comprehensive Exam questions can assist with theory, content and methodologies or other aspects associated with the research or fields of study. While the final dissertation may contain excerpts from the exam, the exam is a distinct body of work that is separate from the final dissertation. The timeframe for a student to complete one comprehensive exam is approximately 3 months and more information about comprehensive exams is available here: <https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/programs/comp-exams.html>.

- a) The supervisor(s) and/or supervisory committee members will determine the number of questions to be addressed, areas to be examined, and the format for the examination. Typically, two questions are set.
- b) Normally, the two questions are agreed upon after successfully completing all coursework and prior to developing the thesis proposal.
- c) Each question is set and examined by the supervisor and supervisory committee or by a subset of committee members. However, if specific expertise outside of the committee is required, a question may be set or examined by someone external to the committee.
- d) The most common exam format is a written paper, which may be written as an article for publication (note that the website provides information about an oral exam-only format). The length of the paper will vary but is typically 20-30 pages, excluding references. The student may seek guidance from her/his supervisor during the writing process. The student may be asked to revise the paper before it is accepted. If written as an article for publication, it does not need to be accepted for publication for the student to pass the exam. Alternative exam formats not described here or on the website (link above) must be discussed and approved by the Associate Dean IDST in advance of setting the exam.
- e) Each completed written exam is graded pass/fail. A student who is deemed to have failed a question will be required to rewrite the paper.
- f) Each written question is accompanied by an oral presentation. Usually, the oral presentation is set after the committee agrees that the written exam is acceptable. Sometimes, the student presents one oral presentation covering both exams; this decision is left to the supervisor and committee.

Structure of comprehensive exam presentation

- a) The total length of one comprehensive exam is approximately 1.5 hours.
- b) The Associate Dean IDST often chairs the exam, alternatively the Supervisor chairs.
- c) The supervisor and all committee members are expected to attend the exam.
- d) The student gives a 20–30-minute summary presentation on the exam, followed by questions and comments from the supervisor(s) and committee
- e) The committee excuses the student temporarily to assess the exam (written and oral). If either part is not acceptable, the student may be asked to revise and redo.
- f) The student returns for a discussion with the committee about the exam outcome

- g) The committee completes the Comprehensive Examination Form and submits it to Sanhita Biswas (form available at this link:
<https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/programs/comp-exams.html>

Research Proposal and Ethics

Research Proposal

The proposal summarizes the interdisciplinary research problem and rationale, research questions, relevant literature, methodology/methods, and research design of the proposed study. It is usually 35 to 50 pages long and includes references.

The student works with the supervisor to develop the proposal. The student submits a formal written research proposal to the committee who may suggest changes, edits, further drafts, etc. Suggested guidelines for the proposal are provided here.

<https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/programs/research-proposal.html>

(Note that the ‘Research Proposal’ heading is a live link).

Important steps in the proposal process include:

1. The written proposal must be approved by the supervisor and the committee.
2. The supervisor informs the Associate Dean IDST that the proposal is ready to go forward to the oral examination.
3. An oral presentation on the proposal is required, as follows.

Oral Proposal Defence

1. The Associate Dean of IDST, in consultation with the supervisor/co-supervisors, committee members, and the student, sets a date and time for the oral presentation of the proposal.
2. At least 10 days before the oral presentation, the student submits the proposed thesis title along with a one paragraph proposal abstract to the IDST Secretary (Andrea Guevara) to publicize the oral.
3. Normally, the supervisor(s) and all members of the committee attend the oral; the Associate Dean of IDST (or delegate) acts as Chair.
4. An oral proposal defence typically lasts up to 2 hours.
5. The presentation is open to university members and guests.
6. The student gives a 20 - 30-minute presentation summarizing the proposal, followed by questions and comments from the supervisor(s) and each committee member (usually two rounds of 10-15 minutes per person per round). The Chair may also invite questions from audience members and may have additional comments or questions at the end.

7. The committee convenes alone with the chair to discuss the student's proposal and presentation and identifies any revisions and next steps required prior to the student undertaking the research.
8. The committee invites the student to rejoin them and discuss their decision. There is no formal paperwork associated with an oral presentation of the proposal.

All members of the committee must approve the proposed research before the student undertakes the research.

Ethics Review

Depending on the type of research, ethics approval may also be necessary. The proposal must be defended successfully, and a final proposal approved before ethics approval is sought (the student attaches an approved proposal to the ethics application).

Note that the **Associate Dean** reviews all ethics applications from IDST students prior to the student submitting the application to the university ethics review board. More information about ethics review at UNB is available here: www.unb.ca/research/vp/ethics.html. Before submitting the application to the Associate Dean of IDST, the students must check with the GAU and supervisor to ensure that they are adhering to the policies of the of the unit.

Doctoral Dissertation

The dissertation incorporates all elements of the research proposal identified above plus all other relevant information, such as research results, analysis, discussion, conclusions, recommendations, significance, limitations and strengths. Students have the option of writing a traditional or articles-based dissertation. The supervisor and committee members will provide input as to which format is most appropriate. Information on the required format for a dissertation plus requirements for a traditional or articles-based format is found here:

https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/_assets/documents/thesisformattingguide.pdf

The dissertation and subsequent oral examination must meet all of the SGS requirements and regulations, i.e.:

Candidates for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy shall present a dissertation embodying the results of their investigations on an approved topic. The work upon which the dissertation is based must have been done by the candidate under the direction of an approved supervisor. The dissertation must demonstrate the candidate's competence to undertake independent research work. It must contribute significantly to knowledge in the candidate's field of study and must be of sufficient merit to suggest publication in an appropriate scholarly journal or another scholarly format.

The dissertation must show that the candidate is fully aware of the pertinent published material, must be written in a satisfactory literary style, and must be free of typographical and other mechanical errors.

<https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/current/resources/regulations-and-guidelines/regulations/phd-regulations.html>

Conducting research and writing a dissertation is a taxing task, and students are advised to seek guidance from the available sources of help. The Library has many books that cover all aspects of the PhD process, from time management to writing conclusions. Using at least one as a reference is strongly recommended. Writing a complete dissertation often involves an iterative process of completing chapters, obtaining comments from your supervisor and committee, making revisions chapter by chapter and then revising the whole document before submission. Take care in formatting your thesis following UNB guidelines, and follow an acceptable referencing style, e.g., APA, MLA

Submission of the dissertation for examination:

The completion of the dissertation and final submission to the SGS can be divided into three stages:

1. submission of the dissertation to the SGS for examination
2. oral defence of the dissertation
3. submission of final dissertation to the SGS and completion of forms

Submission of the dissertation

When the supervisor(s) and committee decide the dissertation is acceptable for final examination, the supervisor informs the Associate Dean of IDST who establishes the Examining Committee (i.e., neither the supervisor or any committee members or the student approach prospective committee members). After consulting with the supervisor and potential examiners and ensuring there is no conflict of interest between the supervisor/co-supervisor or student and the proposed external examiner, the Associate Dean forwards nominations for membership on the Examining Committee to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The structure of the examining committee

Appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the GAU concerned, the Examining committee acts on behalf of the SGS and consists of the candidate's supervisor(s) and three other members of the SGS, at least one of whom must be from the candidate's GAU and at least one of whom must be from another GAU (note that in IDST, one member is from a GAU closely allied with the supervisor's GAU and one member is from an unrelated GAU). In addition, there will be an external examiner from outside the University of New Brunswick. The constitution of the Examining Committee is as follows:

- a) Internal Examiner(s)-Supervisor(s)
- b) Internal Examiner from the student's GAU
- c) Internal Examiner from the student's GAU, or from another GAU at UNB

- d) Internal Examiner from another GAU at UNB
- e) External Examiner (outside of UNB)

Other members of the student's committee may also join the Examining committee but together with the supervisor(s) have only one vote. The Dean of Graduate Studies, or delegate, chairs the proceedings at the oral defence.

The supervisor should avoid discussing the dissertation and assessment of the candidate with the members of the examining committee until the examination is complete. Importantly, the student is not to have any contact with the external examiner or members of the examining committee prior to the examination. Each member of the examining committee submits a formal report about the dissertation to the SGS. If they indicate they are satisfied with the dissertation, or require only minor revisions, then the student may proceed to the oral defence. If any member thinks revisions are required prior to defence, the examining committee will meet with the Dean of SGS and the Associate Dean of IDST to discuss the matter and decide next steps. The PhD oral defence is organised by the SGS Administrative Coordinator, Andrea Ruehlicke, andrea.ruehlicke@unb.ca

The oral defence

After consulting all parties, the Administrative Coordinator will confirm the date, time, and place of the oral examination with the examining committee, the student, and the Associate Dean of IDST. An announcement of the oral defence will be in the campus-wide electronic news bulletin and the Grad sphere (The SGS blog) together with announcements to the examining committee and the PhD candidate.

Procedure for Oral Defence:

- a) The defence takes approximately 2-3 hours.
- b) Oral defence proceedings will be chaired by a member of the Decanal group in the SGS, or by a nominee of the Dean. The examination will be open to all members of the University community and the public.
- c) The oral defence delivery has two options: hybrid or virtual. This is chosen by the examining committee and the PhD candidate.
- d) It is attended by the supervisor(s) and members of the examining committee and is open to university members and guests. Members of the examining committee who are not able to attend in person may attend by telephone/remotely or submit questions to be read by the chair of the examining committee.
- e) The student gives a 30-minute presentation on the thesis, followed by questions and comments from the examining committee.
- f) There are usually two rounds of questions from the examining committee, where each committee member will have 15 minutes to ask as many questions in that timeframe. After the second round is complete, the examining committee will have the option to ask additional questions to the candidate. In addition, the Chair may invite members of the audience to ask questions.
- g) The student and members of the audience withdraw to enable the examining committee to assess the dissertation and oral defence.

- h) The committee reconvenes with the student, informing the student of the defence outcome and summarizing any required revisions, and identifying who needs to read and assess the revised dissertation and sign-off on the final version.
- i) The chair provides forms from SGS that the student/supervisor need to complete as part of the thesis submission process.

Submission of the final dissertation

If the defence outcome is positive, the student finalizes the dissertation and provides all required approvals for submission to the SGS and the required forms. Before final submission, the student sends an electronic copy of the dissertation in pdf format to Andrea Ruehlicke, who checks to ensure the thesis follows the UNB formatting guidelines. One electronic PDF copy of the completed thesis is sent to gradthesis@unb.ca. All paperwork is sent to Andrea Ruehlicke. If you wish to obtain a bound copy of their thesis, SGS recommends Lehmann Bookbinding; you can request printing and binding directly from them – any questions, contact them at info@pageforpage.com

The “application to graduate” form is completed online by the student (note there are deadlines associated with this requirement). The link is here: www.unb.ca/graduation

Along with submission of the final copies, the student signs and submits the following forms:

- a. the “Authorization for Deposit of Dissertation” form.
- b. the “Non-exclusive Licence to Reproduce Thesis” form from the National Library; and
- c. the “Dissertation/Thesis/Report Binding form for Library Copies” form.

After a successful oral defence, the Administrative Coordinator, Andrea Ruehlicke, will send the student a letter stating the requirements for submitting final copies of the thesis.

Please Note: Students should check the current Calendar of Academic Dates on the SGS website to confirm official deadlines:

<http://www.unb.ca/academics/calendar/graduate/current/index.html>

In particular, please note the deadline dates for thesis submission to:

- a) meet October or May graduation, and b) avoid fees for the following term.

Questions for Prospective Students

Thank you for your interest in Interdisciplinary Studies (IDST) at UNB. Before you begin, ensure you meet the admissions criteria for the degree (<https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/programs/interdisciplinary.html>). As part of the process, you must identify a potential supervisor. The questions below are designed to help you with preparing your application to the program. Please feel free to discuss them with your potential supervisor and with the Associate Dean of Interdisciplinary Studies, Dr. Jonathon Edwards, IDSTAssocDean@UNB.ca. Please upload your responses to these questions as part of your application.

1. Please confirm that you meet the admissions criteria for IDST, yes or no: _____.
2. What is your proposed research topic area? Does your proposed research fit into any of the following areas: Technology and Innovation, Health, Policy Studies, or Cultural Studies?
3. How is it interdisciplinary?
4. What are the key disciplines the proposed research will draw upon and how (e.g., content, theories, methods, analyses, etc.)
5. Summarize the key aspects of your proposed research using the diagram below. Place your proposed research question in the center. On each line, identify a key relevant discipline and summarize how it will assist you in addressing the research question (use only the number of disciplines/lines that are relevant to your research).



****representation of the information in picture can be improved for better understanding**

6. Are there other professors at UNB who have expertise relevant to your topic? If so, please list their name, area of expertise, faculty, email address, and phone number.
7. What courses are available at UNB, if any, that are relevant to your research? Please list the campus where they are offered, the faculty that offers them, and the course number and name.
8. What is your motivation for applying to the IDST program at UNB?
9. What is your motivation for wanting to conduct this research?
10. If accepted, what type of career/further studies do you wish to pursue after you complete this degree.

Contact Information

The most important administrative difference for students in IDST compared with other graduate programs are that your Graduate Academic Unit (GAU) is the SGS. The Assistant Dean of Interdisciplinary Studies, Dr. Jonathon Edwards, oversees the IDST programmes. His contact information is:

Dr. Jonathon Edwards

Associate Dean of Interdisciplinary Studies

IDSTAssocDean@UNB.ca

Phone 506-453-5139

Office: SGS, 3rd Floor, Sir Howard Douglas Hall 3 Bailey

Dr. Jonathon Edwards can help you with degree processes, course selection, scholarship applications and travel funding. Regardless of your home campus, the Administrative Assistant (IDST) Sanhita Biswas, and her contact information is:

Sanhita Biswas

Office: SGS, 3rd Floor, Sir Howard Douglas Hall 3 Bailey

Email: sanhita.biswas@unb.ca

Sanhita Biswas can help you with:

- Problems with registering for courses
- Updating of contact email address.
- Submission of forms: Independent Study; changing full-time / part-time status; leave of absence.
- GRA and GTA payments and travel award
- Degree processes
- Scholarships and Awards:

For questions, regarding SSHRC, CIHR, NSERC scholarships and UNB awards contact:

Sarah Hall s.hall@unb.ca