DIPLOMA IN LIBERAL STUDIES (DLS)

Program Learning Outcomes for the Diploma in Liberal Studies

Upon completing the Diploma in Liberal Studies, students will be able to:

1. Identify significant interdisciplinary problems or issues and select one that the student can successfully address in a research project.
2. Apply current interdisciplinary research methodologies and techniques, appropriate to the student's selected disciplines, to a problem.
3. Demonstrate a critical and creative use of primary sources and content appropriate for the research topic.
4. Analyze critically and evaluate one's own findings and those of others.
5. Communicate effectively ideas, methodologies, analyses, and interpretations of the research topic.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the current interdisciplinary work in at least two academic disciplines.

Requirements for the Diploma in Liberal Studies

For general university requirements, see Diploma Programs (https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-diploma-programs/). For additional requirements, regulations, and procedures for all graduate programs, please see All Graduate Students (https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-all-degrees/). Students pursuing the Diploma in Liberal Studies must complete:

- A minimum of 30 credit hours to satisfy diploma requirements.
- A minimum of 30 credit hours of graduate-level study (graduate semester credit hours, coursework at the 500-level or above).
- A minimum of 27 graduate semester credit hours must be taken at Rice University.
- A minimum residency enrollment of one fall or spring semester of part-time graduate study at Rice University.
- A maximum of 1 course (3 graduate semester credit hours) from transfer credit. For additional program guidelines regarding transfer credit, see the Policies (p. 2) tab.
- A minimum overall GPA of 2.67 or higher in all Rice coursework.
- A minimum program GPA of 3.00 or higher in all Rice coursework that satisfies requirements for the diploma program with a minimum grade of B- (2.67 grade points) in each course.[1]

The courses listed below satisfy the requirements for this degree program. In certain instances, courses not on this official list may be substituted upon approval of the program's academic advisor or, where applicable, the department or program's Director of Graduate Studies. Course substitutions must be formally applied and entered into Degree Works by the department or program's Official Certifier (https://registrar.rice.edu/facstaff/degreeworks/officialcertifier/). Additionally, these course substitutions must be approved by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Students and their academic advisors should identify and clearly document the courses to be taken.

Summary

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Total Credit Hours Required for the DLS Program		30

Diploma Requirements

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Core Requirement		
INDS 750	INTRODUCTION TO DIPLOMA RESEARCH [1]	3
Elective Requirements		
Select 7 elective courses from INDS course offerings at the 500-level or above [2, 3]		*21*
Research Requirements		
INDS 798	DIPLOMA PROJECT I [3,4]	1-9
INDS 799	DIPLOMA PROJECT II [3,4]	1-9
Total Credit Hours		**30**

Footnotes and Additional Information

1. All students must take INDS 750 in their first semester of study and successfully complete the course with a minimum grade of B (3.00 grade points), before taking any other DLS courses. Additionally, students may take only 1 course, INDS 750 in their first semester of study. Afterwards, students may take up to 2 courses per semester.
2. Students may choose to take up to 6 credit hours of INDS 797 *Advanced Independent Readings* to fulfill the Elective Requirements.
3. With respect to the two main disciplines chosen by the student for interdisciplinary work in completing the diploma project, a student must complete a minimum of 3 courses (9 credit hours) in each discipline (6 courses and 18 credit hours) before taking the two diploma project courses (INDS 798 and INDS 799). This is a minimum. Additional courses in the two chosen disciplines are recommended. A student may petition to have post-baccalaureate courses taken before entering the DLS program considered as a partial satisfaction of this requirement. An undergraduate degree in one of the disciplines could similarly serve as the basis of a petition. If one of the two main disciplines chosen by the student for the interdisciplinary work of the diploma project is outside the humanities, then the humanities discipline is the primary, the non-humanities discipline the secondary discipline. In such a case, the student must complete a minimum of 3 courses (9 credit hours) in the primary discipline before taking the two diploma project courses (INDS 798 **and** INDS 799), and a minimum of 2 courses (6 credit hours) in the secondary discipline. More are recommended. A student can petition to have post-baccalaureate courses taken before entering the DLS program considered as a partial satisfaction of these requirements. An undergraduate degree in one of the disciplines could similarly serve as the basis of a petition.
4. Students must successfully complete all Core and Elective Requirements (content coursework) before taking the Research Requirements of INDS 798 and INDS 799. INDS 798 and INDS 799 are taken for a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grade and must be completed with a Satisfactory grade. As S/U courses, they do not apply to the requirement of a minimum grade of B- (2.67 grade points) in each required course.

Other Information

As noted in the Requirements above, students in the Diploma in Liberal Studies program will complete 8 courses (24 credit hours) of Core and Elective Requirements (content coursework) from the Liberal Studies catalog of classes, beginning with INDS 750 *Introduction to Diploma Research*. Upon completion of these 24 credit hours, the student will then take 6 credit hours of research coursework (INDS 798 and INDS 799) under the direction of three readers, a first, second, and third reader. (The first reader is referred to also as "the advisor.")

The diploma project will typically take the form of an interdisciplinary diploma thesis. Alternatively, the student may opt to write two interdisciplinary academic papers (starred papers) of publishable length and thesis quality.

The interdisciplinary journal of the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs, *Confluence*, serves as an example of the academic research level required. *Confluence* is a peer-reviewed journal, publishing articles that reflect "the best scholarly and creative work produced by faculty, students and alumni of AGLSP member institutions," all of which programs offer graduate degrees in liberal studies, in some cases doctoral programs.

In order to complete the DLS program, students must defend their diploma thesis (or two starred papers) in a public diploma project defense and satisfactorily answer questions from their research advisor and readers and others in attendance. The three readers will then decide, with the first reader/advisor serving as chair of the discussion, whether the student has met all diploma project requirements, including passing the defense, with all three signing the appropriate papers if the decision is positive.

Policies for the Diploma in Liberal Studies

Department of Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Handbook

The General Announcements (GA) is the official Rice curriculum. As an additional resource for students, Interdisciplinary Studies publishes a graduate program handbook, which can be found here: https://gradhandbooks.rice.edu/2026_27/Interdisciplinary_Studies_Graduate_Handbook.pdf.

Admission

Admission to the Diploma in Liberal Studies program requires a 3.50 GPA in successfully-concluded post-graduate degree work from either: 1) the Rice MIS program or 2) a liberal arts or liberal studies graduate degree program at an AGLSP member institution. Other post-graduate degrees may be considered (e.g., MA, MD, JD), but only along with evidence of significant academic work in areas relevant to a student's proposed interdisciplinary work in the Diploma program -- for example, an interdisciplinary undergraduate major with relevance to the work proposed for the DLS program or an undergraduate double major in the two disciplines chose for interdisciplinary work in the DLS. Applications will be accepted for Fall admission only and will be due on the March 15 prior. Completed applications will be forwarded to the Graduate Liberal Studies Faculty Steering Committee for review and admission decision. Admitted students will attend a new student orientation.

Leave of Absence

Continuous enrollment in the diploma program is required. Enrollment of at least 2 courses (6 credit hours) per academic year and enrollment in at least 2 semesters of the academic year is required unless granted an official leave of absence.

Time to Degree

Students are allowed to take up to 7 years to complete the diploma.

Transfer Credit

For Rice University's policy regarding transfer credit, see Transfer Credit (https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-all-degrees/#transfer). Some departments and programs have additional restrictions on transfer credit. Requests for transfer credit must be approved for Rice equivalency by the appropriate academic department offering the Rice equivalent course (corresponding to the subject code of the course content) and by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS). Students are encouraged to meet with their academic program's advisor when considering transfer credit possibilities.

Program Transfer Credit Guidelines

Students pursuing the DLS degree should be aware of the following program-specific transfer credit guidelines:

- No more than 1 course (3 credit hours) of transfer credit from U.S. or international universities of similar standing as Rice may apply towards the degree.

Additional Information

For additional information, please see the Liberal Studies website: https://continue.rice.edu/diploma-liberal-studies/.

Opportunities for the Diploma in Liberal Studies

Association of Graduate Liberal Studies National Honor Society

DLS graduates who earn a 3.75 GPA or higher and have demonstrated leadership in the classroom and in the greater community are eligible for nomination to the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies National Honor Society.

Additional Information

For additional information, please see the Liberal Studies website: https://continue.rice.edu/diploma-liberal-studies/.