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 (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 (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 50 credit hours of graduate-level study (coursework at the 500-level or above).
- A minimum of 24 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 minimum overall GPA of 2.67 or higher in all Rice coursework.
- A minimum GPA of 3.33 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.

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/degeworks/officialcertifier). Additionally, these 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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Credit Hours Required for the DLS Program</td>
<td>30</td>
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Diploma Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Core Requirement</td>
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<tr>
<td>MLSC 750</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION TO DIPLOMA RESEARCH</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Elective Requirements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Select 7 elective courses from MLSC course offerings at the 500-level or above</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>Research Requirements</td>
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<td>MLSC 798</td>
<td>DIPLOMA PROJECT I 3, 4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>MLSC 799</td>
<td>DIPLOMA PROJECT II 3, 4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total Credit Hours</td>
<td>30</td>
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Footnotes and Additional Information

1. All students must take MLSC 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, MLSC 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 MLSC 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 (MLSC 798 and MLSC 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 (MLSC 798 and MLSC 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 MLSC 798 and MLSC 799. MLSC 798 and MLSC 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 MLSC 750 *Introduction to Diploma Research*. Upon completion of these 24 credit hours, the student will then take 6 credit hours of research coursework (MLSC 798 and MLSC 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 Liberal Studies Graduate Handbook**

The General Announcements (GA) is the official Rice curriculum. As an additional resource for students, Liberal Studies publishes a graduate program handbook, which can be found here: [https://gradhandbooks.rice.edu/2019_20/Liberal_Studies_Graduate_Handbook.pdf](https://gradhandbooks.rice.edu/2019_20/Liberal_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 MLS 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 chosen 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.