

**INTERDISCIPLINARY GRADUATE PROGRAM IN DISASTER SCIENCE &  
MANAGEMENT (DISA)**

**Program Policy Statement**

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1.0 Program History .....	3
1.1 Mission Statement .....	3
1.2 Origin of the Program .....	3
1.3 Description of the Planning Process .....	3
1.4 Current Status .....	4
1.5 Degrees Offered .....	4
1.6 Program Administration .....	4
2.0 Admission .....	4
2.1 University Policy on Admission .....	4
2.2 University Admission Procedures .....	4
2.3 Expected Minimum Requirements for Admission into the Disaster Science & Management Program .....	6
2.4 Admission Application Processing .....	6
2.5 Admission Status .....	7
3.0 Degree Requirements for the Master of Science in Disaster Science & Management .....	7
3.1 Overview .....	7
3.2 Course Requirements Non-Thesis Option .....	7
3.3 Course Requirement Thesis Option .....	8
3.4 Planned Program of Study and Revisions .....	9
3.5 Regulations Governing Theses .....	10
3.6 Articulation between Master's and Doctoral Degrees .....	11
4.0 Degree Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Disaster Science & Management .....	13
4.1 Course Requirements .....	13
4.2 Planned Program of Study and Revisions .....	16
4.3 Regulations Governing Dissertations .....	17
4.4 Residency Requirements .....	19
4.5 University Requirements and Deadlines for Admission to Doctoral Candidacy .....	20
4.6 Registration Requirements Prior to Doctoral Candidacy .....	20
4.7 Registration Requirements after Admission to Candidacy .....	20
5.0 Assessment .....	20
5.1 Purpose and Goals .....	20
5.2 Measurements of Learning Objectives .....	21
6.0 General Information Relevant to Both Master's and Doctoral Degree Candidates .....	21
6.1 Financial Assistance .....	21
6.2 Graduate Course Numbering System .....	22
6.3 Application for Advanced Degree .....	22
6.4 Time Limits for Completion of Degree Requirements .....	22

6.5	Extension of the Time Limit .....	22
6.6	Sustaining Status for Candidates Pursuing Thesis/Dissertation Degree Option	23
6.7	Transfer Credit Earned as Continuing Edu. Student at University of Delaware	23
6.8	Transfer Credit from Another Institution .....	23
6.9	Transfer Credit from Undergraduate Division of University of Delaware .....	23
6.10	Credit for “Special Problem” Course Taken as a Graduate Student .....	24
6.11	Expiration of Credit.....	24
7.0	Program Administrative Structure .....	24

## **Program History**

The increased frequency and cost of natural, technological and human-induced disasters has demonstrated the importance of social systems to prepare for, respond to, and restore functions after emergent disaster events. The many dimensions of these objectives point to an urgent need for well-rounded, interdisciplinary professionals and scholars in this field.

### ***1.1 Mission Statement***

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The Disaster Science & Management (DISA) program is an interdisciplinary course of study that teaches the theories, research methodologies, and policies informing efforts focused on emergency preparedness, mitigation, management, and response, and recovery.

The program builds on the unique strengths and international reputation of the Disaster Research Center (DRC) and related programs and research at the University of Delaware.

The mission of the program is to educate and promote interdisciplinary scholarship in Disaster Science & Management. This program offers a thesis and non-thesis Master of Science and a PhD degree and includes a core curriculum, electives, internships and where applicable, research.

The program involves faculty from all Colleges at the University of Delaware and fosters sustained partnerships with federal, state, and regional agencies, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) to support student research and internships. The program also creates and fosters opportunities to secure new grants and fellowships for Disaster Science & Management.

### ***1.2 Origin of the Program***

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The Disaster Research Center at the University of Delaware is a leading center in the study of the social science of disasters. Originally grounded in sociology, DRC's research became increasingly multi- and inter-disciplinary. At the same time, faculty in other units on campus were also conducting related research, and overall there was increasing awareness of the importance of the both short- and long-term impacts of disasters. This graduate program in "Disaster Science & Management" complemented ongoing and new research, leveraged existing programs, and was both timely and relevant.

In the summer of 2006, Provost Rich established the Committee for a Graduate Program in Disaster Science & Management. The purpose of the committee was to explore program options, building on the existing programs and research in the Disaster Research Center (DRC).

### ***1.3 Description of the Planning Process***

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The proposal was formed by the Committee for a Graduate Program in Disaster Science & Management, a group of thirteen faculty representing all Colleges at the University of Delaware. The committee was chaired by Sue McNeil (Civil and Environmental Engineering and Director of the Disaster Research Center) and the members were: Burt Abrams (Economics), Benigno Aguirre (Sociology and DRC), James Corbett (Marine and Earth Studies), Tracy DeLiberty (Geography), Russell Dynes (DRC), Debra Hess Norris (Art Conservation), Joanne Nigg (Sociology and DRC), Havidan Rodriguez (Provost's Office and DRC), Rick Sylves (Political Science), Jeff Raffel (CHEP), Eric Rise (Criminal Justice), Tom Sims (Agriculture and Natural Resources), and Jim Richards (Health Sciences). The committee met regularly over nine months to develop an outline for a new program. Meetings included an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) related to disaster studies and a careful review of relevant existing courses and alternate administrative structures. Committee members examined existing graduate programs in disaster studies nationally, met with potential employers and

prospective students and conducted a full-day work session to develop the draft program policy statement.

The committee considered program structure, opportunities for recruiting students, other related programs and the potential employers of graduates.

Draft copies of the proposal were circulated to interested faculty, administrators, and external experts and two lunch-time meetings were held with faculty and administrators from possible cooperating departments and centers in April 2007. Comments and suggestions were gathered and incorporated into the final proposal. The committee also met with graduate students at the Disaster Research Center, the 2007 NSF REU at DRC, the Sociology and Criminal Justice faculty, and the School of Public Policy and Administration faculty. The committee also presented a poster at the Annual Natural Hazards Workshop in Boulder Colorado.

The MS and PhD programs in Biomechanics and Movement Science served as an interdepartmental prototype. This program placed emphasis on the plan of study, and selecting an advisor at the application stage. The committee also placed emphasis on the plan of study and the need to have an advisor to be admitted to the program.

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#### ***1.4 Current Status***

The program was approved in April, 2010. The first cohort of students were admitted for Fall 2010. Both the MS and PhD programs conducted internal reviews and submitted proposals for permanent status in 2016. The Faculty senate voted to award the degree programs permanent status in the spring of 2017.

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#### ***1.5 Degrees Offered***

The degrees awarded to those who complete this program are either a Master of Science in Disaster Science & Management (both thesis and non-thesis options), or a Doctor of Philosophy in Disaster Science & Management.

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#### ***1.6 Program Administration***

The program is administered by the Biden School of Public Policy and Administration in conjunction with the Interdisciplinary Disaster Science & Management Program Committee and its Program Director.

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## **2 Admission**

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### ***2.1 University Policy on Admission***

Admission to the graduate program is competitive. Those who meet stated minimum requirements are not guaranteed admission, nor are those who fail to meet all of those requirements necessarily precluded from admission if they offer appropriate strengths.

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### ***2.2 University Admission Procedures***

Applicants must submit all of the following items directly to the Office of Graduate Studies using the [online admissions process](#) before admission can be considered:

1. A completed application must be submitted no later than January 15 for the fall semester. Applications are not accepted for spring semester.
2. A \$75 nonrefundable application fee must be submitted with the application. Credit card payment is accepted with the online application. Checks must be made payable to the

University of Delaware. Applications received without the application fee will not be processed. Foreign students must use a check drawn on a U.S. bank or an International Postal Money Order.

3. Applicants must submit essays to specific questions asked on the application; a statement of professional goals and objectives; and a scholarly writing sample.
4. Applicants must submit at least three letters of recommendation. All letters of recommendation should be submitted through the online application process to the Office of Graduate Studies.
5. Transcripts from all U.S. colleges attended must be included with the online application. The transcripts may be unofficial but official transcripts will be required on matriculation.
6. Transcripts of all non-U.S. based college records are required. The transcript must list all classes taken and grades earned. If the transcript does not state that the degree has been awarded, send a degree certificate that states that the degree has been awarded. If the degree has not been awarded or the degree certificate has not been issued, evidence of the awarded degree must be provided prior to the first day of classes in the term of admission. For institutions that issue documents only in English, send the English transcripts. For institutions that issue documents both in English and a foreign language, send both the English language and the foreign language transcripts. For institutions that issue documents only in a foreign language, send the foreign language transcript and a translation in English. The transcripts may be unofficial but official transcripts, and certified translations will be required on matriculation.
7. International student applicants must demonstrate a satisfactory level of proficiency in the English language if English is not the first language. The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is offered by the Educational Testing Service in test centers throughout the world. The DISA program has adopted the minimum scores adopted by the Office of Graduate and Professional Education. In addition, the department may elect to require that the applicant provide a score from the TSE (Test of Spoken English). TOEFL scores and TSE/SPEAK scores more than two years old cannot be validated or considered official.

International students must be offered admission to the University and provide evidence of adequate financial resources before a student visa will be issued. The University has been authorized under federal law to enroll nonimmigrant alien students. The University has more than 1000 international graduate students enrolled from more than 96 countries. International students are required to purchase the University-sponsored insurance plan or its equivalent.

All first-time international students are required to attend the Orientation Day for new international students, which takes place on the Friday before classes begin.

8. It is a Delaware State Board of Health regulation and a University of Delaware mandate that all graduate students with a birth date after January 1, 1957, be immunized for measles, mumps and rubella (MMR). Also, students may be required to provide evidence

of PPD (Mantoux) Tuberculosis Screening Test within 6 months prior to beginning classes. Students who are admitted beginning January 2002 are required to show proof of vaccination against meningococcal disease unless granted a waiver. Students should refer to and complete the Student Health Service Immunization Documentation form upon admission.

9. A supplemental application form indicating interest in financial support through research centers.

### ***2.3 Expected Minimum Requirements for Admission into the Disaster Science & Management Program***

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Admissions decisions are made by the Program Committee or a designated subcommittee of the Disaster Science & Management Program. Students are admitted to the program based on enrollment availability and their ability to meet the following minimum recommended entrance requirements.

Applicants to the MS program must have:

- Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university.
- An undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Written statement of goals and objectives (the personal statement) that clearly identifies the applicant's research and curriculum interests and explains how admission to the program will facilitate his or her professional objectives.
- A scholarly writing sample that represents the applicant's best work.

Applicants to the PhD Program must have:

- MS or equivalent degree from an accredited college or university
- A graduate GPA of 3.5 or higher.
- Written statement of goals and objectives (the personal statement) that clearly identifies the applicant's research and curriculum interests and explains how admission to the program will facilitate his or her professional objectives.
- A scholarly writing sample that represents the applicant's best work.

All students are also expected to demonstrate competence in oral and written communication. Knowledge of mathematics and statistics is strongly encouraged. All admitted students must have a willing academic advisor appointed by the DISA Program Committee.

### ***2.4 Admission Application Processing***

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The admission process is completed as follows. First, completed applications consisting of the application form, undergraduate/graduate transcripts, letters of recommendations, resume, statement of purpose, written statement of goals and objectives, and scholarly writing sample are reviewed by the Disaster Science & Management Program Committee or a designated subcommittee. Pending a successful review of the initial application materials, the application is circulated to all the Disaster Science & Management faculty in an effort to match the student with an advisor. Faculty members advise students whose background, goals and objectives are compatible with their own research and funding. The Program Committee or a designated subcommittee arrives at an admission decision after reviewing the completed application. To be admitted a student must have an advisor.

The Program Committee or a designated subcommittee of the Disaster Science & Management Program will begin reviewing applications in January and may require a period of two to three months to process completed applications.

## **2.5 Admission Status**

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Students admitted to the Disaster Science & Management Program may be admitted into one of three categories:

1. **Regular.** Regular status is offered to students who meet all of the established entrance requirements, who have a record of high scholarship in their fields of specialization, and who have the ability, interest, and maturity necessary for successful study at the graduate level in a degree program.
2. **Provisional.** Provisional status is offered to students who are seeking admission to the degree program but lack one or more of the specified prerequisites. All provisional requirements must be met within the deadline given before regular status can be granted. Students admitted with provisional status are generally not eligible for assistantships or fellowships. Students who file an application during the final year of undergraduate or current graduate work and are unable to supply complete official transcripts showing the conferral of the degree will be admitted pending conferral of the degree if their records are otherwise satisfactory and complete.
3. **Visiting Student Scholars.** Visiting scholar admission is offered to students who wish to transfer graduate credits to another institution. Visiting students must submit a letter from their graduate dean or registrar certifying that they are graduate students in good standing at another institution. Such letters will be accepted in lieu of the transcripts and GRE scores which are required of all other applicants. Visiting scholar status is generally limited to a period of two years and is a non-degree status. If visiting students desire to transfer to regular status at the University of Delaware, they must meet the stated admissions standards. Admission as a visiting student implies no commitment about later admission as a regular student or about transferability of courses from the student's original institution.

## **3 Degree Requirements for the Master of Science in Disaster Science & Management.**

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### **3.1 Overview**

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The Disaster Science & Management Program offers a Non-Thesis and a Thesis Option. Each is described below. Students enrolled in the DISA MS program must take the prescribed sequence of courses outlined by the Graduate Program Committee at the time of admittance, or secure Program Committee approval prior to any changes or substitutions

### **3.2 Course Requirements Non-Thesis Option**

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The Master of Science in Disaster Science & Management (Non-Thesis Option) requires 30 credits including 24 credits of graduate level coursework, 2 semesters of seminar at 1 credit per semester, 1 credit of practicum, and a 3 credit internship. The 24 credits of coursework are specified in the student's plan of study and must include:

Three Core Courses (9 credits):

- DISA 650 – Overview of Disaster Science & Management
- DISA 652 – Issues in Disaster Recovery
- DISA 670 – Issues in Disaster Response

Research Methods/Analysis Courses (3 credits):

- EDUC 665 – Elementary Statistics, or
- SPPA 808 – Qualitative Methods for Program Evaluation, or
- SOCI 605 – Data Collection and Analysis, or
- UAPP 691 – Quantitative Analysis in Public and Nonprofit Sector, or
- UAPP 702 – Research Methods in Urban and Public Policy, or
- EDUC 850 – Qualitative Research in Education, or
- EPID 605 – Methods in Epidemiology, or
- EPID 621 – Methods in Field Epidemiology, or
- EPID 622 – Disaster Epidemiology Methods, or
- GEOG 670 – Geographic Information Systems and Science,
- or other suitable research methods course.

Public Policy and Organizational Decision Making (3 credits):

- UAPP 698 – Management Decision Making for Public and Non-Profit Sectors, or
- MAST 663 – Decision Tools for Policy Analysis, or
- UAPP 613 – Planning Theory and Urban Policy, or
- MAST 663 (or UAPP 663) – Decision Tools for Policy Analysis, or
- UAPP 698 – Management Decision-making for Public or Nonprofit Sectors, or
- UAPP 707 – Public Policy Analysis,
- or a suitable related course

Other Requirements:

- Other disaster-oriented courses (9 credits)
- SPPA661 – Masters Level Professional Development (1 credit) Taken two semesters for credit.
- DISA 857 – Practicum (1 credit)  
DISA 858 – Internship (3 credits) Completed in any semester (including summer and winter sessions). This can take the form of a traditional internship, or other applied experience commensurate with the student’s interests and experience, and with approval of internship coordinator. The 120-hour internship, however fulfilled, requires a report. Potential internship placements include DEMA, FEMA, other DHS Offices, United Nations, and USAID.
- Study abroad is also strongly encouraged.

### ***3.3 Course Requirement Thesis Option***

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The Master of Science in Disaster Science & Management (Thesis Option) requires 33 credits including 24 credits of graduate level coursework, 2 professional development courses (1 credit per semester), 1 credit of practicum, and 6 credits of thesis. The 24 credits of coursework are specified in the



Three Core Courses (9 credits):

- DISA 650 – Overview of Disaster Science & Management
- DISA 652 – Issues in Disaster Recovery
- DISA 670 – Issues in Disaster Response

Research Methods/Analysis Courses (3 credits):

- EDUC 665 – Elementary Statistics, or
- SPPA 808 – Qualitative Methods for Program Evaluation, or
- UAPP 691 – Quantitative Analysis in Public and Nonprofit Sector, or
- UAPP 702 – Research Methods in Urban and Public Policy, or
- EDUC 850 – Qualitative Research in Education, or
- EPID 605 – Methods in Epidemiology, or
- EPID 621 – Methods in Field Epidemiology, or
- EPID 622 – Disaster Epidemiology Methods, or
- GEOG 670 – Geographic Information Systems and Science, or
- or other suitable research methods course.

Public Policy and Organizational Decision Making (3 credits):

- UAPP 698 – Management Decision Making for Public and Non-Profit Sectors, or
- MAST 663 (or UAPP 663) – Decision Tools for Policy Analysis, or
- UAPP 698 – Management Decision-making for Public or Nonprofit Sectors, or
- UAPP 707 – Public Policy Analysis, or
- or other suitable related course

Other Requirements:

- Other disaster-oriented courses (9 credits)
- SPPA661 – Masters Level Professional Development (1 credit) Taken two semesters for credit.
- DISA 857 Practicum (1 credit)
- Thesis (6 credits)
- Study abroad also strongly encouraged

### ***3.4 Planned Program of Study and Revisions***

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Students are required to work with their advisor during their first semester of study and develop a plan of study. The plan of study must first be approved by the advisor and then by the Program Committee or the designated subcommittee by the end of the first semester of study for the MS. Students may need to alter approved programs of study once they have entered the program due to reasons that can include scheduling conflicts or the creation of new courses directly related to the student's goals. Students who wish to make changes to their program of study should first obtain permission from their advisor. The student must then make a written request to the Program Committee or the designated subcommittee for a revision to the program of study. The student may submit a request, to the Program Director, for a change of advisers (for example if their research better aligns with another Disaster Science & Management faculty member or if another Disaster Science & Management faculty member will be serving as a thesis committee chair).

### 3.5 Regulations Governing Theses

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1. **Establishment of Thesis Committee:** The student and his/her advisor will create a thesis committee at the time the student begins to develop the thesis proposal. The thesis committee shall include three University faculty from within the Disaster Science & Management Program, and may have no more than six members. The thesis chair must be a member of the Disaster Science & Management faculty and at least one of the Disaster Science & Management committee members must be from a different department than that of the advisor. With the approval of the Disaster Science & Management Program Committee or a designated subcommittee, a professional staff member who holds a secondary faculty appointment within an academic department may serve as a committee member. Faculty who have retired or resigned from the University may maintain committee membership or continue to chair committees of students whose work began under their direction prior to their retirement or departure from the University. Disaster Science & Management faculty who do not have regular faculty status may co-chair the thesis committee provided that the other co-chair meets the definition for regular faculty status. It is the responsibility of the thesis chair to replace members who withdraw from the committee during the thesis process.
2. **Defense of the Thesis Proposal:** The format of the thesis must adhere to guidelines specified in the University's Thesis and Dissertation Manual. The manual is available electronically on the Web at <http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/forms/thesismanual.pdf> . A copy of the thesis proposal must be delivered to the members of the thesis committee at least two weeks in advance of the proposal defense. Prior to the presentation, proposals that involve the use of human subjects must receive approval from the University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Details for creating consent forms and submitting studies for review by the IRB can be obtained from the Office of Research.

The thesis proposal defense will be scheduled only after a majority of members of the thesis committee have determined that a defense is appropriate. It is expected that the proposal shall be presented early in the third semester. The thesis proposal defense will be open to the public, and invitations will be sent to all Disaster Science & Management faculty and students at least one week prior to the date of the defense. The candidate will present a summary of the proposed research, and will then field questions from the committee, attending faculty, and invited guests. After all questions have been fielded, the thesis committee will meet to decide whether the proposal is accepted, rejected, or accepted with stipulations. Results of the meeting will then be presented to the student. The student receives a passing grade if the majority of the committee members vote in favor of a passing grade.

Thesis committee members will sign the final copy of the approved proposal. A signed copy of the approved thesis proposal will be forwarded to the program director. Students who fail the thesis proposal defense will receive one additional opportunity to repeat the process and defend a new or modified thesis proposal.

3. **Defense of the Thesis:** The format of the thesis must adhere to the University's Thesis and Dissertation Manual. This document is available on the University's website. A copy of the thesis must be delivered to each of the members of the thesis committee at least two weeks prior to the thesis defense. The thesis defense will be scheduled only after the chair of the thesis committee has determined that a defense is appropriate.

The thesis defense will be open to the public, and invitations will be sent to all Disaster Science & Management faculty and students at least one week prior to the defense. The candidate will present a summary of the completed research, and will then field questions from the committee, attending faculty, and invited guests. After all questions have been fielded, the thesis committee will meet privately to decide whether the thesis is accepted, rejected, or accepted pending revisions. Results of the meeting will then be presented to the student. The student receives a passing grade if the majority of the committee members vote in favor of a passing grade.

Master's theses are due in the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies approximately six weeks prior to the date of degree conferral. Actual dates are posted on the website <http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/polproc/#steps>.

4. **Processing the Final Document:** Instructions for preparing the final document are posted on the website of the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies <http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/polproc/#steps>

### ***3.6 Articulation between Master's and Doctoral Degrees***

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The non-thesis option Master's degree is considered to be a terminal degree in Disaster Science & Management at the University of Delaware. The thesis option Master's degree in Disaster Science & Management is also considered terminal unless the student plans to continue in a doctoral program. Students receiving their Master's degree at the University of Delaware are not eligible to remain classified as graduate students and are automatically reclassified CEND (Continuing Education Nondegree) in any subsequent semester that they register following degree clearance unless the department, with the approval of the Graduate Office, has already admitted them to a doctoral program. The procedures for changing status after earning a Master's degree are as follows:

If a Master's degree candidate is continuing toward a doctoral degree in the same major as the Master's degree, the student should request that the department submit a Change of Classification Form at the same time or before the student submits an application for the Master's degree. If the department is unable to determine the student's eligibility to pursue a doctoral degree until after the Master's degree is awarded, the department should notify the Office of Graduate Studies by writing such a statement on the student's Master's degree application. A student's classification changes from regular status in a Master's degree program to precandidacy when admitted to a doctoral program.

If a Master's degree candidate desires to continue toward a doctoral degree in a different major than the Master's degree, the student should submit a completed admission application form to the Office of Graduate Studies and follow the same procedure for admission as any other applicant.

## Sample Plan of Study, Non-Thesis Option

### Fall Semester 2021

DISA650 – Overview of Disaster Science & Management (3)	(2) Required Weekends*
DISA652 – Issues in Disaster Recovery (3)	(2) Required Weekends*
SPPA661 – Professional Development (1)	Online, synchronous & asynchronous

### Winter Session 2022

Elective I – Special Topic (3)	(2) Required Weekends*
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### Spring Semester 2022

Required: Public Policy & Organizational Decision Making (3)	(2) Required Weekends*
Elective II – Special Topic (3)	(2) Required Weekends*
SPPA661 – Professional Development (1)	Online, synchronous & asynchronous

### Summer Session I 2022

Elective III – Special Topic (3)	(2) Required Weekends*
DISA847 – Practicum (1)	Online, synchronous & asynchronous
DISA858 – Internship (3)	120 hours, traditional or applied experience with approval of internship coordinator and requires a report.

### Fall Semester 2022

Required: Methods Course (3)	(2) Required Weekends*
DISA670 – Issues in Disaster Response (3)	(2) Required Weekends*

\*All three (3) credit courses will have two (2) required weekends with in-person instruction on Saturdays and Sundays. Dates of required weekends will be determined pending University calendar.

## Sample Plan of Study, Thesis Option

<b>Fall Semester 2021</b>	
DISA650 – Overview of Disaster Science & Management (3)	(2) Required Weekends*
DISA652 – Issues in Disaster Recovery (3)	(2) Required Weekends*
SPPA661 – Professional Development (1)	Online, synchronous & asynchronous
<b>Winter Session 2022</b>	
Elective I – Special Topic (3)	(2) Required Weekends*
<b>Spring Semester 2022</b>	
Required: Public Policy & Organizational Decision Making (3)	(2) Required Weekends*
Elective II – Special Topic (3)	(2) Required Weekends*
SPPA661 – Professional Development (1)	Online, synchronous & asynchronous
<b>Summer Session I 2022</b>	
Elective III – Special Topic (3)	(2) Required Weekends*
DISA847 – Practicum (1)	Online, synchronous & asynchronous
Thesis (3)	In coordination with faculty advisor: establish thesis committee & defense thesis proposal.
<b>Fall Semester 2022</b>	
Required: Methods Course (3)	(2) Required Weekends*
DISA670 – Issues in Disaster Response (3)	(2) Required Weekends*
<b>Winter Session 2023</b>	
Thesis (3)	In coordination with faculty advisor: defend thesis & process final documents.

\*All three (3) credit courses will have two (2) required weekends with in-person instruction on Saturdays and Sundays. Dates of required weekends will be determined pending University calendar.

## **4 Degree Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Disaster Science & Management**

### **4.1 Course Requirements**

The Doctor of Philosophy in Disaster Science & Management requires 47 credits of graduate-level coursework beyond the Master's degree including 9 credits of dissertation. Students are expected to demonstrate interdisciplinary strength across both social disaster sciences and

engineering or natural disaster sciences, as well as advanced methodological skills. The 47 credits of coursework are specified in the individual planned program of study, and must include:

Core Courses:

- SOCI 672 – Disaster & Society (3 credits)
- One disaster-focused graduate course that includes significant attention to issues of equity, justice, disparities, or vulnerability. (3 credits) These may include:
  - SOCI 671 – Disaster, Vulnerability, and Development, or
  - SPPA 667 – Environmental Justice in Disasters, or another course as approved by the Disaster Science & Management Program committee or a designated sub-committee.
- One disaster-focused graduate course in the social/public health sciences. (3 credits)
- Two graduate courses in engineering. (6 credits) These may include:
  - CIEG 641 – Risk Analysis, or
  - CIEG 655 – Civil Infrastructure Systems, or another course approved by the Disaster Science & Management Program committee or a designated sub-committee.

Students may petition the Disaster Science & Management Program committee or a designated sub-committee to substitute the engineering area with a natural sciences area, requesting to take a two-course sequence in another non-social science area in place of the engineering sequence. Students may be required to take additional courses beyond the degree requirements prior to enrolling in these classes or sequence their elective courses to ensure they are prepared for success in these classes.

Other Requirements:

- DISA 880 – Qualifer Preparation (3 credits)
- Research Methods/Analysis Courses (9 credits, 6 credits at advanced level) Must be pre-approved by the Disaster Science & Management Program committee or a designated sub-committee.

Examples of pre-approved advanced classes:

- SOCI 614 – Advanced Data Analysis
- SOCI 625 – Advanced Social Statistics
- SOCI 676 – Advanced Qualitative Methods
- CIEG 667 – Advanced Data Analysis – Advanced Quantitative Methods
- SPPA 800 – Research Design and Data Analysis
- EDUC 812 – Regression and Structural Equation Modeling
- EDUC 874 – Multivariate Analysis
- EDUC 867 – Bayesian Analysis and Monte Carlo Simulation
- EDUC 867 – Educational Data Mining
- EDUC 873 – Multilevel Modeling
- EDUC 867 – Advanced Structural Equation Modelling
- Elective (3 credits) Must be pre-approved by the Disaster Science & Management Program committee or a designated sub-committee.

Examples of other pre-approved classes:

- SOCI 605 – Data Collection and Analysis

- SOCI 606 – Qualitative Methodology
- SPPA 808 – Qualitative Research Methods
- EPID 621 – Methods in Field Epidemiology
- EPID 622 – Disaster Epidemiology Methods
- HLPR 632 – Health Science Data Analysis
- Additional substantive graduate coursework (9 credits) These credits can be used to ensure the student has foundational knowledge to succeed in required coursework. For students entering their program without the need for foundational courses, they may take either disaster-related courses not already completed as part of their requirements or non-disaster courses that focus on such topics central to the student’s research, such as those related to health disparities, sustainability, natural hazards, stratification, race theory, among others. These courses should have the approval of the student’s advisor and the Program Committee or designated subcommittee throughout the plan of study process. Examples of courses are listed below, but given that student’s interests and the availability of courses vary, students should feel free to propose other classes. Non-foundational electives are typically taken in the student’s second year once they have a clearer understanding of their dissertation topic.

Examples of other pre-approved classes:

- EPID 621 – Methods in Field Epidemiology
- EPID 622 – Disaster Epidemiology Methods
- SOCI 671 – Disaster, Vulnerability, and Development
- SPPA 667 – Environmental Justice in Disasters
- CIEG 641 – Risk Analysis
- CIEG 655 – Civil Infrastructure Systems
- ANTH 640 – Disaster Anthropology
- ANTH 605 – Introduction to Environment and Human Health
- SPPA 619 – Climate Change Adaptation Policy & Practice
- UAPP – Climate Change: Policy, Equity, and Mitigation
- UAPP 610 – Political Economy of the Environment
- UAPP 648 – Environmental Ethics
- DISA 670 – Issues in Response
- DISA 652 – Issues in Recovery
- SOCI 667 – Disparities in Health and Healthcare
- SOCI 661 – Racial Stratification
- DISA 969 – PhD Dissertation (9 credits)
- SPPA 861 – Doctoral Professional Development (1 credit during first two semesters)

Students are strongly encouraged to take at least two short courses offered by the Delaware Emergency Management Agency or other equivalent organization over the course of their degree program.

Students who have completed the MS in Disaster Science & Management at University of Delaware or have come from other programs where similar material has been covered can waive requirements and take additional electives after discussion with their advisor and subject to approval from the Disaster Science & Management Program Committee or a designated sub-committee.

Students in the Doctoral degree program are allowed to take a maximum of 6 credits of independent study (DISA 866) and a maximum of 9 credits of research (DISA 868). However, the combined number of credits from research and independent study courses may not exceed 12 credits.

#### ***4.2 Planned Program of Study and Revisions***

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Students are required to work with their advisor during their first semester of study and develop a plan of study. The plan of study must first be approved by the advisor and then by the Disaster Science & Management Program committee or a designated sub-committee by the start of the second semester of study for the PhD.

Students may need to alter a previously approved program of study due to scheduling conflicts, creation of new courses, or change of research focus. Students who wish to make changes to their program of study should first obtain permission from their advisor followed followed by the Disaster Science & Management Program committee or a designated sub-committee.. Students are expected to arrange a meeting with their advisors on an annual basis to review the plan of study. The student may submit a request, to the Program Director, for a change of advisers (for example if their research better aligns with another Disaster Science & Management faculty member or if another Disaster Science & Management faculty member will be serving as a dissertation committee chair).

**Regulations Governing the Qualifying Examination:** The objective of the Disaster Science & Management Qualifying Examination is to assess the student's ability to consider research using an interdisciplinary approach, based on sound knowledge of core themes, good analytical methods, and the ability to structure and analyze disaster problems in a way that appropriately integrates the required knowledge, methods, and judgment. The levels of synthesis and evaluation to be demonstrated in these examinations go beyond those expected in most courses, although each student's plan of study is aimed at developing and exercising this level of expertise. After the fourth semester of equivalent full-time course work, the student must complete a written qualifying examination prepared by the Qualifier Exam Committee for the cohort of students seeking PhD student candidacy. The qualifying examination must be passed before the student proceeds to candidacy.

Several outcomes of the Qualifying Examinations are possible. These are:

1. The student passes the examinations at the PhD level.
2. The student passes at the M.S. level, but ability related to some core themes are not demonstrated at the PhD level. In this case, the student can take an M.S. degree. However, the option is also open to retake the examination(s) one more time when next offered. Students receive individual guidance on whether they should plan to retake the examination or leave the program with an M.S.
3. The student is given a conditional pass and is asked by the committee to provide a written revision to their initial document with a fixed period of time for further evaluation.
4. The student fails the examinations. Such students are almost always advised to withdraw from graduate studies in DISA. They may, however, elect to retake the failed examination(s) one more time when next offered.

Students who retake the Qualifiers must complete their retake within three months of receiving their results. Students who have failed one or more parts of the Qualifying Examination may be at risk for losing graduate assistantship support.



DISA 880 – Qualifier Preparation, a 33 credit seminar, is taken the semester prior to taking the Qualifier Examination. The course focuses on key aspects of thinking, problematizing, and writing that are similar in scope and difficulty to those presented in the qualifier.

### **Sample Plan of Study, PhD**

#### **Fall Semester 2021**

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SOCI 672 Disaster & Society (3)

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SPPA 808 Qualitative Research Methods (3)

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SPPA 704 Advanced Quantitative Method (3)

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SPPA 861: Doctoral Professional Development (1)

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#### **Spring Semester 2022**

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SPPA 800 Research Design and Data Analysis (3)

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ANTH 640 Disaster Anthropology (3)

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SOCI 667 Disparities in Health and Healthcare (3)

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SPPA 861: Doctoral Professional Development (1)

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#### **Fall Semester 2022**

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CIEG 607 Risk Analysis (3)

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SPPA 667 Environmental Justice in Disasters (3)

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EPID 622 Disaster Epidemiology Methods (3)

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#### **Spring Semester 2023**

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CIEG 655 Civil Infrastructure Systems (3)

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SOCI 671 Disaster, Vulnerability and Development (3)

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DISA 880 Qualifier Preparation (3)

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#### **Summer Session**

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Work on Qualifier Exam

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#### **Fall Semester 2023**

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Submit Qualifier Exam Prior to Start of Semester

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DISA 969 PhD Dissertation (9)

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Defend Dissertation Proposal at End of Semester

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### **4.3 Regulations Governing Dissertations**

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1. **Establishment of Dissertation Committee:** The student approaches a Disaster Science & Management faculty member to serve as the dissertation committee chair. Often this will be the student’s advisor, but the chair’s research should closely align with the subject matter of the dissertation topic. The student and the chair will create a dissertation committee at the time the student begins to develop the dissertation proposal. The dissertation committee shall include three University faculty from within the Disaster Science & Management Program, and one member from outside of the program. The dissertation chair must be a member of the Disaster Science & Management faculty, and at least one of the Disaster Science & Management committee members must be from a different department than that of the chair. With the approval of Disaster Science &

Management Program committee or a designated sub-committee, one professional staff member who holds a secondary faculty appointment within an academic department may serve as a committee member. However, all three within-program committee members must hold a doctoral degree. Faculty who have retired or resigned from the University may maintain committee membership or continue to chair committees of students whose work began under their direction prior to their retirement or departure from the University. Disaster Science & Management faculty who do not have regular faculty status may co-chair the dissertation committee provided that the other co-chair meets the definition for regular faculty status. Outside committee members must hold a doctoral degree, and shall include individuals not affiliated with the Disaster Science & Management Program. These may be individuals from outside of the University who are nationally recognized for their expertise in the area of study specified by the dissertation. Once the committee is established, and prior to a proposal defense, the student must notify the Disaster Science & Management Program committee or a designated sub-committee the composition of the dissertation committee for approval. It is the responsibility of the dissertation chair to replace members who withdraw from the committee during the dissertation process.

2. **Defense of the Dissertation Proposal:** A copy of the dissertation proposal must be available to Disaster Science & Management faculty at least one week prior to the proposal defense. A copy of the dissertation proposal must be delivered to the members of the dissertation committee at least two weeks in advance of the proposal defense. Prior to the presentation, proposals that involve the use of human subjects must receive approval from the University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Details for creating consent forms and submitting studies for review by the IRB can be obtained from the Office of Research.

The dissertation proposal defense will be scheduled only after a majority of members of the dissertation committee have determined that a defense is appropriate. The dissertation proposal defense will be open to the public, and invitations will be sent to all Disaster Science & Management faculty and students at least one week prior to the defense date. The candidate will present a summary of the proposed research, and will then field questions from the committee, attending faculty, and invited guests. After all questions have been fielded, the dissertation committee will meet to decide whether the proposal is accepted, rejected, or accepted with stipulations. Results of the meeting will then be presented to the student. The student may not receive more than one dissenting vote from members of the committee to receive a passing grade.

Dissertation committee members should sign the final copy of the approved proposal. A signed copy of the approved dissertation proposal should be forwarded to the program director. Students who fail the dissertation proposal defense will receive one additional opportunity to repeat the process and defend a new or modified dissertation proposal. The program director signs the candidacy form.

3. **Defense of the Dissertation:** The format of the dissertation must adhere to guidelines specified in the University's Thesis and Dissertation Manual. The manual is available electronically on the Web at <http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/current/thesismanual.html> or

it may be purchased at the University Bookstore. A copy of the dissertation must be made available to Disaster Science & Management faculty at least two weeks prior to the proposal defense. The dissertation defense will be scheduled only after the chair of the dissertation committee has determined that a defense is appropriate.

The dissertation defense will be open to the public, and invitations will be sent to all Disaster Science & Management faculty and students at least two weeks prior to the defense date. The candidate will present a summary of the completed research, and will then field questions from the committee, attending faculty, and invited guests. After all questions have been fielded, the dissertation committee will meet to decide whether the dissertation is accepted, rejected, or accepted pending revisions. Results of the meeting will then be presented to the student. The student may not receive more than one dissenting vote from members of the committee to receive a passing grade.

4. **Processing the Final Document:** Three copies of the dissertation must be approved by the chair of the student's dissertation committee, the Program Director of the Disaster Science & Management Program, the Dean of the Biden School, and the Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education. Students must consult the most recent Biden School procedures, which are subject to periodic revision. The dissertation is to be signed by the professor in charge of the dissertation and all members of the dissertation committee. A separate abstract and abstract approval page must be submitted with the dissertation. The dissertation must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval not later than seven weeks prior to the degree conferral date. The dissertation defense must be completed prior to the submission date and the certification of a successful defense must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies. Doctoral dissertations and the extra abstract are sent to University Microfilms Inc., to be microfilmed and thereby made available to libraries and scholars. To accomplish this, each candidate must submit a signed University Microfilms Inc. Doctoral Dissertation Agreement Form to the Graduate Office at the time the dissertation copies are submitted.

The University reserves the right to duplicate a dissertation for distribution to other libraries or for the use of individual scholars. However, the University will not publish a dissertation for general distribution without the written consent of the author. If copyrighting of a dissertation is desired, it may be arranged when the dissertation is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies. Published works are eligible for copyright protection in the United States if the work is first published in the United States.

#### ***4.4 Residency Requirements***

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At least three academic years of graduate work are normally required for the PhD degree. At least one continuous academic year must be devoted exclusively to full-time study (9 credit hours per semester) in the major field in residence at the University of Delaware. This residency requirement may be fulfilled using a fall and spring semester combination or a spring and fall semester combination, but summer or winter sessions do not meet the qualification. Course credit earned in a Master's program at the University of Delaware may be applied toward the doctoral degree residency requirement if the candidate is receiving both degrees from the University in the same major field.

#### ***4.5 University Requirements and Deadlines for Admission to Doctoral Candidacy***

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Upon the recommendation of the doctoral student's advisory committee and the chair of the student's major department, students may be admitted to candidacy for the PhD degree. The stipulations for admission to doctoral candidacy are that the student has (1) had a program of study approved, (2) completed one academic year of full-time graduate study in residence at the University, (3) passed the qualifying examination, (4) satisfactorily completed all course work, and (5) had a dissertation proposal accepted by the dissertation committee.

The deadline for admission to candidacy for the fall semester is August 31. The deadline for admission to candidacy for the spring semester is January 31. The deadline for admission to candidacy for the summer is April 30. Responsibility for seeing that admission to candidacy is secured at the proper time rests with the student.

#### ***4.6 Registration Requirements Prior to Doctoral Candidacy***

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Course registration requirements are determined by the student's approved program of study. Once the student has registered for all course requirements in a program of study but has not yet met all of the stipulations for passing into candidacy, the student must maintain registration during the fall and spring semesters in course(s) or in three to twelve credits of Pre-Candidacy Study (DISA 964). Pre-Candidacy Study (DISA 964) is graded pass/fail. If the student registered in Pre-Candidacy Study is admitted to candidacy before the end of the free drop/add period of the next semester, the registration in Pre-Candidacy Study (DISA 964) for the preceding semester may be changed to the course, Doctoral Dissertation (DISA 969). (Students who are classified G1 and are holding a graduate assistantship or tuition scholarship must be registered for a minimum of six graduate credits, and those holding a fellowship must be registered for a minimum of nine graduate credits.)

#### ***4.7 Registration Requirements after Admission to Candidacy***

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Once a student has met all of the stipulations for candidacy and becomes classified with G2 status (candidacy), the student is required to register in nine credits of Doctoral Dissertation (DISA 969). Students may not register for Doctoral Dissertation (DISA 969) until admitted to candidacy (G2 status). Registration in Doctoral Dissertation (DISA 969) and Doctoral Sustaining (UNIV 999) is restricted to students with G2 status. Once the student has registered in nine credits of Doctoral Dissertation, the student is required to maintain matriculation in the doctoral program by registering in Doctoral Sustaining (UNIV 999) in subsequent semesters until the degree is awarded. All students must be registered in the term in which the degree is officially awarded. Sustaining registration is required in summer session if the degree is awarded at the conclusion of the summer session. (Sustaining registration is never required for winter session because graduate degrees are not awarded at the conclusion of winter session.)

### **5 Assessment**

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#### ***5.1 Purpose and Goals***

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The purpose of graduate education in Disaster Science & Management is to provide students with the intellectual ability to understand, create, integrate, and apply sophisticated discipline-specific interdisciplinary knowledge to the disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. Recognizing that the discipline itself is inherently interdisciplinary and continues to evolve, students are expected to acquire the vocabulary and critical thinking skills to acquire and evaluate future knowledge. Toward these ends, the following goals for graduate student learning are presented.

*Demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge in the discipline*

Graduate students should understand the current and historical theories, concepts, and models of the discipline. They should possess the ability to access and evaluate the literature of the discipline and understand the major issues in the current state of knowledge. In addition to knowing the specific content of the discipline, students should be able to understand and appropriately use the methods and techniques of advancing knowledge in the field of study.

*Effectively communicate knowledge in the discipline*

Graduate students should possess the ability to write and speak about the current issues of the discipline to peers, practitioners, and the public. They should be able to articulate and demonstrate knowledge of the discipline and write and present scholarship to professionals.

*Demonstrate the ability for critical and analytical thinking in the discipline*

Graduate students should be able to identify and understand critical issues in the discipline. They should possess the ability to challenge and evaluate information, as well as synthesize and integrate knowledge in the discipline.

*Exhibit the best practices, values, and ethics of the profession*

Graduate students should understand and exhibit the professional standards for responsible conduct of research in the discipline and understand the values and ethics of practicing the profession in society.

*Apply knowledge of the discipline*

Graduate students should possess the ability to apply knowledge in the discipline to solve sophisticated problems and to interpret technical issues.

**5.2 Measurements of Learning Objectives**

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These learning goals are manifest in the requirements for the M.S. and PhD. They are measured directly in the courses through various mechanisms that include: course papers, oral presentations; project reports and final examinations. In the non-thesis MS degree, the internship requires the student to put their classroom learning in context and is evaluated through a report. In the MS degree with thesis, the thesis is evaluated by a committee. In the PhD degree, the student is required to complete a qualifying exam and a dissertation, both of which involve a rigorous evaluation by a committee. In addition to these direct measures of the program, every year graduating students complete an exit survey that asks them to rate their attainment of the desired goals as well as various aspects of the program. The results of this survey, class evaluations, performance in qualifying exams, and committee evaluations of theses and dissertations are used to modify the program.

**6 General Information Relevant to Both Master's and Doctoral Degree Candidates**

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**6.1 Financial Assistance**

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Financial assistance for research students in the DISA program is obtained from a variety of external sources and will therefore vary in form and availability. Assistance will be awarded on a competitive basis to applicants' best fitting the needs of the granting agencies and sponsoring faculty. Students receiving full stipends will be expected to work up to 20 hours per week on faculty projects and students are expected to maintain full-time status. A limited number of scholarships are available for partial support of students in the professional non-thesis option master's degree. These scholarships are awarded on a competitive basis.

## ***6.2 Graduate Course Numbering System***

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Graduate credit may be earned for courses numbered 600 to 699, 800 to 898, and 900 to 998. (Courses numbered 600 to 699 are graduate-level courses open to qualified, advanced undergraduates by permission of the instructor.) Courses numbered 500 to 599 are graduate courses for the non-specialist and may not be counted for graduate credit in the student's major. With the approval of Disaster Science & Management Program Committee or a designated subcommittee, 500-level courses taken outside the student's major department may be applied toward a graduate degree.

## ***6.3 Application for Advanced Degree***

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To initiate the process for degree conferral, candidates must submit an "Application for Advanced Degree" to the Office of Graduate Studies. The application deadlines usually are February 15 for Spring candidates, May 15 for Summer candidates, and September 15 for Winter candidates. Students should be aware of most recent posted deadlines. The application must be signed by the candidate's adviser and by the director of Disaster Science & Management Program. Graduate Grade Point Average

Students must have a minimum overall cumulative grade point average of 3.0 to be eligible for the degree. In addition, the grades in courses applied toward the degree program must equal at least 3.0. All graduate-numbered courses taken with graduate student classification at the University of Delaware are applied to the cumulative index. Credit hours and courses for which the grade is below "C-" do not count toward the degree even though the grade is applied to the overall index. Candidates should see that all final grades have been submitted by their instructors. Temporary grades of "S" (Satisfactory) are assigned for 868 (Research) and 869 (Master's Thesis) and 969 (Doctoral Dissertation) until a final letter grade is submitted upon the completion of the thesis or dissertation.

## ***6.4 Time Limits for Completion of Degree Requirements***

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Time limits for the completion of degree requirements begin with the date of matriculation and are specifically expressed in the student's letter of admission. The University policy for students entering a Master's degree program is ten consecutive semesters to complete the degree requirements. Students completing the requirements for the Master's degree who are subsequently granted permission to continue toward the doctoral degree are given an additional ten consecutive semesters. Students entering a doctoral program with a Master's degree are given ten consecutive semesters to complete the requirements. Students who change their degree plan and have transferred from one degree program to another degree program are given ten consecutive semesters from the beginning of the first year in the latest program.

## ***6.5 Extension of the Time Limit***

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An extension of time limit may be granted for circumstances beyond the student's control. Requests for time extensions must be made in writing and approved by the student's thesis/dissertation committee, the Disaster Science & Management Program Committee or a designated sub-committee, and the program director of the Disaster Science & Management Program. The program director will forward the request to the Office of Graduate Studies. The Office of Graduate Studies will determine the student's eligibility for a time extension and will notify the student in writing of its decision to grant an extension of time.

### ***6.6 Sustaining Status for Candidates Pursuing Thesis/Dissertation Degree Option***

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Once a graduate student has completed all required course credits needed for the degree (including three credits of Master's thesis [869] or nine credits of PhD thesis [969]) and all other degree requirements except the submission of thesis or dissertation, the student is required to maintain his/her matriculation in the degree program during the fall and spring semesters by registering for either Master's Sustaining: Thesis (UNIV 899) or Doctoral Sustaining (UNIV 999). All students, including sustaining students, are required to be registered in the semester in which the degree is officially awarded. Sustaining registration is required for summer session if the student completes the degree in summer session. (Sustaining registration is never required for winter session as graduate degrees are not awarded at the conclusion of winter session.)

### ***6.7 Transfer of Credit Earned as a Continuing Education Student at the University of Delaware***

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Students who complete graduate credits with the classification of CEND (Continuing Education Non-degree) at the University of Delaware may use a maximum of 9 graduate credits earned with this classification toward their graduate degree. The CEND credits, grades, and quality points become a part of the student's academic record and grade point average. CEND credit can be transferred provided that: (a) the course was at the 600-800 level, (b) the course was taken within the time limit appropriate for the degree, (c) the course was approved by the student's adviser and the director of the Disaster Science & Management Program, and (d) the course was in accord with the student's approved plan of study.

### ***6.8 Transfer of Credit from Another Institution***

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Graduate credit earned at another institution will be evaluated at the written request of the student. Such a request should be submitted to the program director of the Disaster Science & Management Program using a Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit form, and it will be reviewed by the Disaster Science & Management Program Committee or a designated sub-committee. A maximum of 9 credits required for the degree will be accepted provided that such credits: (a) were earned with a grade of no less than B-, (b) are approved by the student's adviser and the Disaster Science & Management Program Committee or a designated sub-committee, (c) are in accord with the student's approved plan of study, (d) are not older than five years, and (e) were completed at an accredited college or university. The credits, but not the grades or quality points, are transferable to University of Delaware graduate records. Graduate courses counted toward a degree received elsewhere may not be used. Credits earned at another institution while the student was classified as a continuing education student at that institution are not eligible to be transferred to one's graduate degree at the University of Delaware. Credits from institutions outside of the United States are generally not transferable to the University of Delaware.

### ***6.9 Transfer of Credit from the Undergraduate Division of the University of Delaware***

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Students who wish to transfer credits from their undergraduate record to their graduate record may transfer a limited number by arranging with the department to have these courses approved by their instructors before the courses are taken. These courses must be at the 600-level, and the student must perform at the graduate level. They must be in excess of the total required for the baccalaureate degree, must have grades of no less than B-, and must not be older than five years, receive approval from the Disaster Science & Management Program Committee or a designated

sub-committee, and are in accord with the student's approved plan of study. . The credits, grades, and quality points will transfer.

#### ***6.10 Credit for "Special Problem" Course Taken as a Graduate Student***

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Some 400-level courses may be completed for graduate credit if the graduate student does additional work. Students must register for the course at the graduate level using the departmental number of 666. The student may process a titling form for the 666 numbered course.

#### ***6.11 Expiration of Credit***

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Course credits for the program expire five years after the course has been completed.

### **7 Program Administrative Structure**

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The program administrative structure is described in the Faculty Bylaws.