

**Research Methods Certificate
(for MSES students)**

University of Delaware

Program Policy Statement

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Research Methods Certificate University of Delaware Program Policy Statement

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Part I. Program History and Purpose

A. Program Purpose

The Research Methods Certificate is a 12-credit program for students in the Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Evaluation Science program only. It is intended to prepare students in advanced research methods, primarily for the purposes of program and policy evaluation, but also for research studies and projects.

The University of Delaware Strategic Plan incorporates as a key activity that programs “rigorously challenge students to be excellent scholars, promote interdisciplinary thinking and collaborations, and meet the needs of students and society.” The proposed certificate directly addresses this priority by training scholars to conduct research that provides credible evidence about the efficiency and effectiveness of interventions, evidence that is used to inform decisions in the public, non-profit, and for-profit sectors.

This certificate serves a need for education in research methods and skills within Delaware, across our region, and beyond. A student who earns the Research Methods Certificate will be able to:

1. Collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data;
2. Develop advanced knowledge in a quantitative and qualitative methodologies; and
3. Conduct a research study, including creating research questions, developing the research design, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting and reporting results, and disseminating and facilitating the use of findings.

B. Current Status

The certificate is in the proposal stage.

C. Degrees Offered

Certificate. The certificate awarded to those who complete the program of study will be a Research Methods Certificate from the University of Delaware Graduate College. All courses will be offered online. Only Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Evaluation Science students who have completed the four certificate courses, along with

MSES program course EVAL615, are eligible for this certificate.

D. Term when First Students May Enroll

We anticipate that students may be able to enroll in certificate courses approximately one year following approval. During the year between approval and enrollment, the program will work to (1) create the program's administrative structure, (2) develop online courses for the program, (3) market the program, and (4) recruit its first group of students.

E. Demand for the Program

This certificate is specifically intended to prepare students with the skills necessary to design and conduct research. The certificate is part of the program of study for the Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Evaluation Science. Programs, organizations, personnel, products, policies, and other entities can be evaluated. Some students may be employed and looking to gain program evaluation skills for their current position. Other students may be interested in securing jobs in program evaluation.

A market research study conducted in June 2021 by the UD Division of Professional and Continuing Studies found high demand for new jobs in evaluation in the Mid-Atlantic region, with the highest in Virginia and New York. Further, the median salary for graduates with master's degrees was \$80,893 in the Mid-Atlantic Region. The education market was found to be not crowded, with the average cost of competitors' tuition being \$1,180 per credit. Most competing programs are offered on-campus, either full- or part-time; very few had online options.

Audience for the Program. It is anticipated that many of the students in the program will already have some experience as service providers or managers. In their work environments, they may discover the importance of evaluation and research methods for accountability and program improvement. This discovery may lead to the desire for increased knowledge about evaluation and research methods so that they can pursue careers in the field. It is also anticipated that organizations may want to partner to offer the program to a group of their employees.

Unique Career Paths. There are three likely career paths for graduates. First, graduates who are already employed may continue with their organization, now equipped with skills in research methods. Second, graduates may be recruited by regional firms that hire individuals with research methods skills, including American Institutes for Research (AIR; offices in Rockville, MD), Urban Institute (located in Washington, DC), Mathematica (offices in Washington, DC and Princeton, NJ), Research for Action

(located in Philadelphia, PA), Westat (headquartered in Rockville, MD), and WestEd (offices in Washington, DC and New York, NY). A third path is finding researcher positions through sources such as the American Evaluation Association (AEA) or the American Educational Research Association (AERA).

F. College in which the Program will Reside

The program will reside in the Graduate College.

Part II. Admission

A. Admission Requirements

Only students who have already been admitted to the Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Evaluation Science program will be eligible to attain the certificate. No separate application is necessary.

Part III. Academic (present all information separately for each degree and each concentration, if applicable)

A. Certificate Requirements

The Research Methods Certificate requires 12 credits. These 12 credits include the following four 3-credit courses:

- EVAL 770: Quantitative methods and analysis
- EVAL 771: Qualitative methods and analysis
- EVAL 780: Survey Research
- EVAL 781: Mixed Methods Research

B. Mode of Delivery

- All 4 courses will be offered 100% virtually.

C. Inclusion in other programs

The Research Methods Certificate is included in the Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Evaluation Science, i.e., students take all 4 courses as part of the Masters program.

D. Variance in Degree Requirements

In rare circumstances, students may need to alter approved programs of study once they have entered the program for reasons such as scheduling conflicts or the

creation of new courses directly related to the students' 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 Faculty Governance Committee to revise the program of study.

If students are involved in research projects involving human subjects, even administration of a survey, approval must be obtained prior to beginning any study. Information about obtaining approval may be found on Human Subjects in Research (<http://www.udel.edu/OVPR/humans/humans.html>). If a project involves animal subjects, an Animal Use Proposal must be completed and submitted to the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (<http://www.udel.edu/OVPR/animals/animals.html>).

E. Committees for Exams, Thesis, or Dissertations

This certificate does not have a culminating exam, thesis, or dissertation.

F. Timetable and Definition of Satisfactory Progress towards the Degree

We anticipate most students will be part-time; time to completion will vary by student. The program can be completed in 1 year of part-time study (3-credit hours/semester for 1 semester, 6-credit hours/semester for 1 semester, and 3 credit hours during a winter or summer session). Though, students may take three to four years for program completion. There are no full-time residency requirements.

Table 3. *Course Sequencing (Part-Time)*

Session	Course	Format
Semester 1	EVAL 771: Qualitative methods and analysis	One 7 week course
Semester 2	EVAL 770: Quantitative methods and analysis EVAL 781: Mixed Methods Research	Two 7 week courses
Winter/ Summer 1	EVAL 780: Survey Research	4-5 weeks

Students will be assigned an advisor upon entering the program. At the midpoint in a student's program, the advisor will review the student's program of study to determine if he or she is making satisfactory progress through the program. Students who are not making satisfactory progress will be placed on academic probation for one semester. If performance has not improved by the end of the probation semester, the student may be terminated from the program. A minimum average of B (GPA of 3.0) is

required for successful completion of the program.

Students must have a minimum overall grade point average of 3.0 to be eligible for the certificate. Candidates should see that all final grades have been submitted by their instructors.

If a student should be recommended for termination for failure to make satisfactory progress, they may follow the grievance procedures for the Graduate College.

Part IV. Assessment Plan

The program will be assessed in two ways:

- Program-level outcomes; and
- Student-level outcomes.

Table 6. *Program-level Outcomes and How They Will Be Assessed*

Program-level Outcomes	Measure 1	Measure 2
Interdisciplinary faculty	Data on faculty involvement	Survey*
Recruitment of excellent, diverse students (excellence will be examined by admissions achievement indicators, essays, and recommendation information; diversity will be examined by gender, race, ethnicity, as well as other demographic variables)	Application and admissions data	Survey*
*Survey: at the end of each academic year, for the first 3 years of the program, we will survey faculty to ask about their experiences participating in the program and recruiting students to identify areas in need of additional supports.		

Table 7. *Student Outcomes and How They Will Be Assessed*

Student Outcomes	Measure 1	Measure 2
Research Design Skills	Final course paper, project or exam	Graduate Follow-Up Survey

Quantitative and Qualitative Analytic Skills	Final course paper, project or exam	Graduate Follow-Up Survey
Post-graduation professional success/career advancement	Exit Survey	Graduate Follow-Up Survey

Part V. Program Educational Goals

By the end of the program, graduates will have met the following program educational goals:

- Collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data;
- Develop advanced knowledge in a quantitative and qualitative methodologies; and
- Conduct a research study, including creating research questions, developing the research design, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting and reporting results, and disseminating and facilitating the use of findings.

Part VI. Financial Aid

A. Financial Awards

Financial assistance from the program is not provided for Certificate students, however students may find financial assistance from external sources. We intend this to be a revenue-generating program where students will pay the cost of tuition.

Part VII. Departmental Operations

A. General Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to notify program administrative staff of any change in address. Students will be expected to have access to a personal computer and the Internet for on-line coursework. There are no other required expenses beyond the traditional books and supplies.