



FRESNO PACIFIC
UNIVERSITY



Fresno
Pacific University
School of Education

Individualized Master of Arts Program

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Introduction

The Individualized Master of Arts Program (IMAP) at Fresno Pacific University is intended to provide a structure for master's level study in areas where the university has significant strengths but does not offer a formal program. It also makes it possible for students to pursue interdisciplinary graduate degrees.

Individual programs are designed in consultation with one or more advisors who are experts in a chosen area of study. Students work closely with one or more faculty mentors to design and carry out the program of study. The IMAP is dependent on the availability of university faculty with expertise in student-proposed academic areas. A significant provision of the program is the possibility of drawing on expertise and resources outside of the university, such as MB Biblical Seminary, in pursuing proposed studies.

Applicants to the IMAP are expected to meet all of the requirements described in the FPU general admissions packet. Students are expected to have sufficient background in proposed areas of study in order to ensure success in the program.

Program Structure

The degree typically consists of a minimum of 36 units, or their equivalent, which constitute a coherent disciplinary or interdisciplinary focus. The course of study must include a core of at least 3 units in biblical/theological/ethics studies or a related area and 4 units of thesis or project work. The 3 units of biblical/theological/ethics study are required as part of the university's commitment to the Christian faith. At least 24 units must be taken at FPU. Nine units are to be taken in a setting that provides for interaction with others—in a classroom or online.

The content and structure of each course of study is negotiated with the program advisor and may combine taught courses, independent study or research, tutorials, seminars or supervised field experience. Each final study plan is subject to approval by the IMAP Council and the dean(s) of the school(s) in which the area of study resides.

A maximum of 12 units completed prior to admission may be considered for transfer from other accredited graduate programs and must be included in the proposed program. No course may be more than 10 years old at the time of completion of the IMAP.

IMAP Desired Student Outcomes:

1. Subject matter competence in a discipline-based or interdisciplinary academic field.
2. Understanding of basic principles of research methodology as related to the student's chosen field of study.

Tuition and Fees

Graduate tuition and fees are listed in the Fresno Pacific University Catalog. The university has a cooperative agreement with MB Biblical Seminary to equalize tuition for graduate courses and to facilitate cross-institutional enrollment.

Faculty

One of the distinctive features of the IMAP is the way students are encouraged to work closely with faculty who are experts in their areas of interest. Such experts may be drawn from university faculty as well as from highly qualified people from outside the university. An overview of the IMAP administrative structure and regulations is outlined below:

1. The program director and the IMAP Council (chaired by the program director and composed of one faculty member representing each of the university's four schools: the School of Business; the School of Education; the School of Natural Sciences; and the School of Humanities, Religion and Social Sciences) provide general oversight for the program. The IMAP Council oversees the core requirements of the program and reviews all final courses of study.
2. Program advisors are regular FPU faculty who teach in the school in which the IMAP course of study resides. People from outside the university with recognized experience and expertise in the student's area of study may be invited to serve as instructors.
3. Program advisors and other graduate faculty will typically hold terminal degrees in their field of instruction.

Application and Admission

To apply for admission to the IMAP program, follow these steps:

1. Preliminary interview: Schedule a meeting with the IMAP program director. At this meeting the program director will determine whether there is a good fit between the student's goals and the resources available through the university. Students should be prepared to discuss:
 - a. Objectives: Indicate the purpose(s) of the proposed study. To what use will the degree be put? What are the specific understandings or skills to be developed?
 - b. Area of concentration: Define the specific field of study within the broader objectives. Provide a tentative title that reflects the academic interests.
 - c. Key questions: What are some of the key questions to explore? Identify some of the major areas (or subjects) in which to read. Are there particular writers to study or specific courses to take?
 - d. Qualifications and background: Describe qualifications or skills brought to the study to aid success in the program; for example, previous studies, work experiences, etc.
 - e. Culminating experience: All IMAP students are expected to complete a thesis or similar final project. What are the student's ideas about the nature or content of a thesis or project?
2. Secure an application packet from the Graduate and Degree Completion Office and follow all instructions. The IMAP Council may recommend or require prerequisites.

3. Submit a preliminary program of study to the IMAP program director. If it appears the proposed program of study is possible the student will be contacted to arrange an interview with a faculty member who is knowledgeable in that field of interest. Together they will explore specific interests and possible ways of organizing studies. Following this interview and when the application file is complete, it will be reviewed by three members of the FPU faculty in related academic fields. The program director will then decide whether or not to recommend admission to the program.
4. After being admitted to the program, students will enroll in the 2-unit course, Introduction to Individualized Study (IMA 701). In this course they will, under the guidance of the program advisor, develop a detailed final study plan. The semester concludes with review of this plan by the IMAP Council. Approval by the council constitutes successful completion of the course. During this semester students may also enroll in other courses, but there is no guarantee that such courses, taken in advance of an approved final study plan, will be accepted and/or relevant.

Introduction to Individualized Study (IMA 701)

This course consists of a series of one-on-one meetings with the program advisor in which the student will research, reflect and write on a potential course of study. IMA 701 culminates with the presentation of a 10-15 page paper to the IMAP Council containing a proposal for the final study plan. Students must submit copies of this plan at least one week prior to making the presentation to the council.

Proposed Course of Study

The IMAP course of study must demonstrate internal coherence and should include a section that pays attention to the theoretical context of the proposed study. The proposed plan should provide evidence that specified outcomes are likely to be met. The proposed course of study should include at least these components:

1. Theoretical context for the field(s) in which the study will be undertaken.
2. Rationale and objectives for the program of study, including how they fit into professional and/or personal goals.
3. A title that reflects the field of study and a brief description of the content.
4. Key questions to be investigated and/or skills to be developed.
5. Lists of activities and experiences, including proposed courses, faculty and unit credit information. (Courses of study should typically involve at least five faculty members.) A proposed time frame for completing course work should be part of this exposition.
6. A tentative focus for the master's degree project or thesis.
7. The major resources to be accessed, including a preliminary overview of available bibliographic and human resources.

The proposed course of study, when approved, is considered to be a learning contract and students will be held accountable to it at the time the IMAP is completed. At the same time, the plan is not intended to be constraining. What students discover and learn during the early part of their study may lead to modifications later on. Any substantive changes in coursework must be put in writing and must be approved

by the program advisor and the IMAP program director, with a copy placed in the student's file.

Appointment and Role of Program Advisor

Individuals who serve as program advisors are identified by the IMAP program director in consultation with school deans, other faculty and the student. Program advisors are appointed by the IMAP program director.

The role of the program advisor is:

1. To serve as instructor of record for the course IMA 701.
2. To guide and counsel the student in preparing the final program of study.
3. To consult with the student, faculty colleagues in relevant subject areas and the program director in order to make appropriate recommendations to the IMAP Council.
4. To work with students in finding instructors for arranged courses indicated in the final study plan.
5. To be available as mentor and advisor throughout the student's program of study.
6. To often serve as advisor (although this is not always the case) for the master's degree project or thesis.

Registering for Courses


Because of the highly individualized nature of the IMAP, students typically need to obtain the signature of the program director in order to register for courses used toward degree requirements. Forms and instructions about procedures may be obtained from the Registrar's Office. Please refer to the graduate section of the FPU Catalog for more detailed information.

Projects and Theses

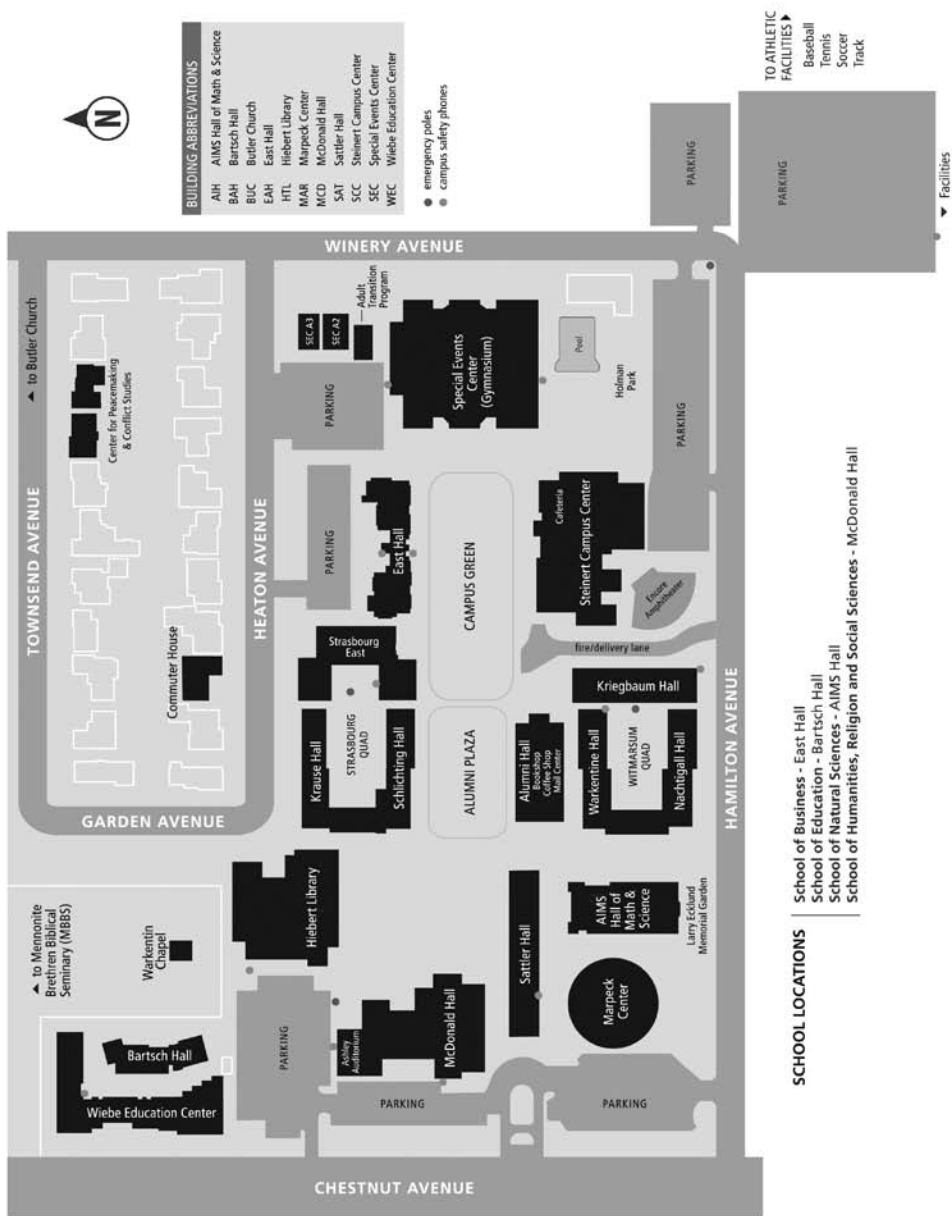
All IMAP students complete a project or thesis as the culmination of the program. When completed, the project/thesis is presented and defended with the program advisor, at least one IMAP Council member (or designee) and one additional faculty member from the student's field of study. The latter may not be a member of the thesis/project committee. If desired, students may select a faculty member from another institution.

Procedures to be followed for content expectations are guided by the Master of Arts Handbook available online at <http://www.fresno.edu/sharedmedia/graduate/mahandbook.pdf>. A summary of the handbook is outlined below:

1. **Thesis:** A thesis is a supervised, independent inquiry that aims to construct knowledge, provide enhanced understanding or in some way further illuminate the theory upon which it is built. While its primary focus is to expand knowledge or theory, a specific application may be a byproduct of the process. With the possible exception of performance theses (for example, in music, drama or visual arts), a thesis typically results in a bound volume that contains a complete report of the process and the conclusions of the investigation.
2. **Project:** A project is also a supervised independent inquiry built upon an explicitly theoretical foundation. It differs from a thesis in that it is aimed primarily at exploring or enhancing application of theory. Still, the theory upon which it is founded must be made clear and implications of the results should be explored. As with a thesis, it is expected that the procedures, standards and format for both carrying out and reporting on a project will conform to generally accepted practices within the domain or field in which the work is taking place. A project typically includes as one part of its outcome a product such as a videotape, curriculum unit or composition. Projects are also accompanied by a bound document describing the theoretical basis from which the project is derived.

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3. Registering for the project/thesis: Students near the end of their coursework should schedule an appointment with their program advisor to discuss ideas for possible theses or projects, as well as to select a faculty member (often the program advisor) to supervise the thesis/project creation process. The project/thesis advisor's role is to work with students throughout the entire process, including selecting the topic, determining procedures and preparing the final product.
 4. Project or thesis committee: A project/thesis committee composed of the project/thesis advisor and at least one additional faculty member is appointed by the program advisor for each student prior to beginning work. When the committee has indicated preliminary approval of the work the student will schedule a meeting to defend the project/thesis (as noted above). If defended successfully, the work will be forwarded to a university reader who determines whether the manuscript is ready for binding. If it is not, the student will be notified and requested to resubmit the manuscript when necessary corrections have been made. When it has been approved by the reader, members of the project/thesis committee and the dean of the appropriate school will sign off on the manuscript.

Campus Map



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