



# IUPS Student Handbook

## 2025

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## »» Introduction

We recognize that pursuing a University degree can be one of the most rewarding, interesting and worthwhile projects that a person can undertake. We are pleased that you have chosen International University of Professional Studies (IUPS), and we will do all that we can to make your experience relevant and rewarding. We rely upon you, as a mature self-directed adult, to fulfill the academic responsibilities within an agreed-upon time frame, to maintain communications with the faculty and the university administration, and to participate fully in one of the most exciting, innovative educational processes available today: individualized mentor-based distance education. This handbook is intended to facilitate that process and answer many of the questions you may have about the way our model of education works.

### **Individualized Distance Education**

Through electronic and print media, students have the opportunity to pursue a variety of studies that may not be available otherwise. With distance learning, educational institutions are able to broadcast instructional programs to thousands, making specialized programs accessible to a wide audience. However, distance education programs designed for mass audiences, by their very nature, present a narrow educational focus, lose the ability to personalize a student's program, and have inadequate feedback mechanisms to answer student questions on important issues. IUPS specializes in developing a program that is just right for your unique path.

As an IUPS graduate student, you enjoy considerable flexibility in scheduling academic work around your personal and professional obligations. Your highly qualified faculty mentor will assist in guiding your studies, affording you the communication and support necessary for your instruction and participation. You have the unique opportunity to participate in the design and organization of your course of study, and to address your specific career goals and interests in that design.

You have elected to participate in the IUPS student-centered method, a system that allows you to integrate your daily experiences and achievements with your degree program. We encourage you to utilize your home, community, and work site as learning laboratories that contribute to earning your degree.

### **The Student Maturity Factor**

Our version of distance education is most successful with mature students who are motivated self-starters, capable of pursuing their studies in a self-paced, unsupervised manner. Our instructional methods are designed for students who already have some measure of knowledge and experience in their chosen field of study. Our academic style requires that the burden fall strongly upon the student to maintain communication and make the necessary academic progress.

As an IUPS student, it is important that you collaborate with your faculty mentor in arranging a reasonable timetable for completion. Our methods require that you maintain your engagement with the process, establish and keep your own study schedules, set aside time for reflection and integration of new information, and keep your mentor and the University apprised of your progress on a regular basis.

Of course you are not expected to learn in a vacuum. The necessity for feedback requires you to discuss new learning with your mentor, prepare academic papers for review, and integrate your learning into daily activities, allowing your environment to challenge your new understandings.

### **Student ID**

We can supply you with a student ID card that may qualify you for discounted student rates on events, workshops, books and more. In addition, some university libraries have provisions for visiting student privileges, which are available to holders of a valid student card. Please email us to request one.

## **»» You and Your Mentor**

### **The Mentor Selection Process**

When you have been formally enrolled, the first step in your program will be the selection of a faculty mentor. There are two distinct routes to mentor selection. The first option is for the Admissions Committee to select from among the mentors on our established faculty. The second option is for you to identify a qualified potential mentor who is not yet on our faculty. We welcome your full participation in these activities.

Often, students choose to recruit their own mentor. Guidelines as to who can and cannot be your mentor appear below. You should advise the administration as early as possible that you wish to recommend a mentor of your own choosing. The University will contact that individual, providing all necessary materials to submit an application to be considered for our faculty.

The prospective mentor will be asked to furnish a resume and a brief biographical sketch so that the necessary academic credentials and professional background may be verified. He or she must sign an Adjunct Faculty Agreement. If your proposed mentor meets all of the requirements, and agrees to work within the IUPS system, a letter of acceptance will be issued, and the new mentor will become a member of the adjunct faculty.

When you or our Admissions Committee chooses a mentor from our faculty we will supply the potential mentor with key documents from your application file to help in making a decision to accept the mentorship. We also recommend that you set up a call or Zoom meeting with your potential mentor to make sure that you are a good fit together.

If the mentor agrees to accept you and you do likewise, the mentor-student relationship is considered formally established.

### **Presenting Yourself to Your Mentor**

Your mentor needs to know as much as possible about you as a student in order to properly guide your studies. Your mentor should become very familiar with your particular areas of academic strength and weakness to assure your success in your degree program. We will furnish your mentor with all the background material which you provided when you applied for admission.

Your mentor will look through your file carefully and may ask for further details to help assist you in formulating your plan of study. During the course of your program, your mentor will be responsible for verifying that all degree requirements have been met and for recommending approval of your thesis or dissertation.

### **How Much Contact**

In your initial discussions, you and your mentor will determine how much interaction is to be generally expected. It is important to be reasonable with response expectations, as our mentors are active professionals in their fields. It is better to spend the time at the beginning of the process to establish exactly what is being asked of you and to be certain that you know how to proceed. To that end, written communication via email often serves both parties as a strong support to occasionally scheduled telephone calls or Zoom/Skype meetings. You can even explore the use of other methods of communication (audio and/or video recordings) with your mentor at the beginning of your studies.

### **Communication with Your Mentor**

Please note that even though your program is self-paced, which is one of our important innovations and is highly appreciated by our students, it is important that you stay on track to complete your program within the given amount of years. It is essential to be in regular contact with your mentor and display progress (written and oral work) relatively consistently in order to maintain the mentor/student relationship.

All mentors are required to send in progress reports for their students bi-annually in March and September. Please note that if you have not demonstrated progress within a 5-month period, your mentor would be allowed to withdraw from their mentorship role, if so desired. You will then be required to pay a change of mentor fee when you are ready to complete work again (this fee will vary based upon multiple factors). We do understand that life circumstances can arise that may create challenges, but we please ask that you simply be in communication with your mentor (and IUPS administration) about any extenuating issues. We are always willing to work with you!

## **What if We Don't Get Along?**

It is important to know that in unusual circumstances you can appeal to the University for re-assignment. This rarely happens since you are a part of the mentor selection process. We encourage you to consider seriously the disruption that would inevitably occur if you were to switch mentors mid-stream. All of our faculty have sought participation in this model of distance education and are eager to help you achieve your goals. Should you decide to change your mentor during the course of your program, we will be grateful for as much insight as you can provide us about the nature of your dissatisfaction with your mentor. We will use that information, along with your original application file, to initiate a second mentor search. *(Please note that the standard University mentor change fee is \$500.)*

If a mentor withdraws because the student fails to cooperate, communicate, complete assignments, or comply with University requirements, the student will also be required to pay the mentor change fee to replace the mentor who withdrew. Mediation is available.

## **»» Planning Your Program**

The Academic Study Plan is the centerpiece of your educational program at IUPS. It documents credits that you have earned by virtue of prior academic work and relevant life experiences, and the required and elective courses that you will need to complete in order to obtain your degree.

As a guideline for determining the credit allowance for courses, the University has derived a standard from the Carnegie System, adapting a "total time commitment" aspect to our independent study model. However, while these guidelines are to be adhered to, it is not expected that either the instructor or the student maintain an exact calculation of time.

IUPS courses are designed in such a way to permit them to be interchangeable with all other semester credit systems worldwide, as well as to be easily translatable into other credit systems.

Approximately one IUPS credit may be awarded for each 15 hours of total time in independent study, including time spent in library research, reading and reflection, construction of course papers or other written materials, completion of assignments, projects and field placement activities, research and other academic investigations, professional enhancement activities, attendance at lectures, classes, seminars and conferences, or any other form, study or investigation that is included as a planned, allowed or required element of the course.

It is important to note that IUPS is more interested in the quality of the work done, rather than in a rigid quantitative approach. It is therefore the joint decision of the mentor and the student as to when the time involved is sufficient to warrant the appropriate credits.

While there are a wide variety of external study styles, you and your mentor should attempt to identify the most appropriate learning activities for each course. You will want to determine, for instance, whether the course will be conducted as a reading course, a research investigation, a

field experience, or another method for acquiring new information.

All courses and methods of completing the coursework must be approved by your mentor.

### **Digital Research Resources**

- Academia (<https://www.academia.edu/>)
- Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/>)
- ResearchGate (<https://www.researchgate.net/>)
- Core (<https://core.ac.uk/>)
- Directory of Open Access Journals (<https://doaj.org/>)
- Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/>)

### **IUPS Policy on the Ethical and Responsible Use of AI Tools in Academic Work**

This policy outlines the ethical and responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools by IUPS students. AI can enhance learning and research but must be used in ways that preserve academic integrity, originality, and intellectual growth.

#### **1. Guiding Principles**

- **Integrity:** Student work must reflect independent thought and understanding.
- **Equity:** AI should support (not replace) active student engagement.
- **Accountability:** Students are responsible for verifying and ensuring the accuracy of AI-assisted content.

#### **2. Appropriate Uses**

Permitted uses include:

- Brainstorming and generating ideas
- Editing and grammar or clarity improvements
- Research support (e.g., summarizing or locating sources, with verification)
- Formatting or style guidance (e.g., APA support)

#### **3. Prohibited Uses**

AI tools may not be used to:

- Write entire papers
- Generate unverified citations or data
- Fabricate or falsify research findings
- Submit AI-generated content as original work

#### **4. Student Responsibilities**

- Verify any AI-generated material for accuracy and credibility.
- Use AI as a support tool, not a substitute for critical thinking.

- Maintain drafts and documentation showing original engagement.
- Consult advisors about AI use early in the research process.

## **5. Consequences of Misuse**

Improper use of AI will be handled under IUPS academic integrity policies and may result in required resubmission of work or academic misconduct proceedings.

IUPS recognizes that AI is a powerful tool that, when used responsibly, can enhance knowledge and discovery. We trust our students to uphold the highest standards of honesty and intellectual integrity as they integrate new technologies into their academic journey.

## **Sample Ways to Investigate Academic Literature**

- Carry out special advanced reading assignments under your mentor's direction and prepare a course paper in that area of specialization.
- Conduct an exhaustive review of the literature in a specialized field of investigation. Such a course would include library research, reading, anecdotal notation, and the structuring of a course paper, which addresses an important issue within the discipline.
- Pursue advanced readings under an academic author important to your field of specialization. You should make prior arrangements with the author to allow contact and discussion of the written material. A reflective course paper should follow.
- Conduct extensive reading in support of the thesis or dissertation focusing in the areas of research methodology or bibliography development.
- Utilize audio, video, library research, internet resources, etc, that are particularly relevant to the subject matter and discuss it with your mentor or write a paper.
- Conduct a self-designed research project that investigates aspects of your field of study in considerable detail. You would develop a brief research plan, discuss the hypothesis with your mentor, conduct a review of the literature, develop the data-gathering instrument, and present the study and the findings in a formal manner.
- Assist another researcher with a collaborative research effort. You should present a paper that describes your role in the project and how the research has better informed your understanding of the academic field.
- Produce a book, journal articles, an original work of art, or other final product related to professional practice.
- Participate in an on-the-job training or career shadowing activity leading to actual or potential job advancement. This activity can be coupled with maintenance of a daily journal followed by a course paper.
- Organize a professional development activity that culminates in acquisition of new knowledge in your discipline.
- Structure a course that integrates new learning with experiences obtained through professional activities. Such a course would require a moderate level of reading and an activity that permits you to demonstrate the ability to use the new material in a creative manner in the work place.
- Structure a course to demonstrate the skills of a reflective practitioner, using problem solving and critical thinking to address real world issues in an innovative manner.

- Attend conferences, seminars and workshops focusing upon your field of study and following-up that participation with a written or oral examination or a course paper.
- Participate as a volunteer (or paid employee) in a supervised community setting that will allow you to practice in considerable depth some aspect of our professional in a real world setting.
- Structure a supervised field activity that allows for research or professional development activities.
- Conduct structured on-site investigations as an observer within practical professional settings, collecting information useful to your academic development.
- Complete courses at other colleges, including class-based, technology-based, and correspondence courses.

Again, please note that all of these activities need to be approved by your mentor.

*(Please refer to the IUPS Dissertation Manual for information about the proposal and the writing of the dissertation.)*

### **Academic Study Plan Adjustments**

Changes to any aspect of the Academic Study Plan may be negotiated between you and your mentor and submitted for approval to the Academic Dean during the conduct of the program through the process of a formal addendum. These changes can be accomplished with the approval of the University so long as the overall program retains its integrity and the studies normally expected of degree holders are maintained.

Please note that any desired additions to you program can be addressed within the “To Be Determined with Mentor” section of your elective credits.

## **»» Grievance Process**

Should you become dissatisfied with the actions of the faculty or administration related to University policies, procedures or standards, you will be expected to abide by the following process in pursuing a formal grievance:

### **1. Informal Dialogue and Negotiation**

You are expected to first attempt to work out minor problems or disagreements through communication and informal negotiation directly with the individuals involved. You should send a letter to the appropriate individuals clearly outlining the nature of the disagreement, giving the full history. Keep copies of all communications and essential documents in case University intervention becomes necessary.

### **2. Administrative Intervention**

After having first made every effort to negotiate in earnest, if you continue to be dissatisfied with the ways things are progressing, you are asked to address a formal letter to the Student Dean clearly presenting the facts as you know them, requesting administrative intervention to resolve the situation. Send copies of this letter to all parties directly involved in the dispute. The Student Dean will assess the situation to determine the applicable policies and whether the policies have been rightfully and fairly applied. Every endeavor will be made to resolve the conflict to the satisfaction of all parties.

### 3. Formal Mediation

Should you remain unhappy with the situation following the process of administrative intervention, the unresolved dispute or disagreement should be dealt with through formal mediation by one or more administrators of IUPS, or by other person or persons acceptable by both parties.

### 4. Cost of Mediation

The student and the University administration shall share equally any costs of the processes of mediation.

### **Keeping Track**

We encourage you to maintain a file and keep copies of anything you send or receive. It is easier when both parties have a copy of a letter or a paper to refer to during critical processes.

## »» Student Withdrawal

### **Education Leave of Absence**

Even with the best intentions and the most reasonable planning, unusual circumstances do sometimes occur in the form of accidents, physical problems, and radical changes in employment that may interrupt your degree program. Should this happen, educational leave can be granted. The maximum period is one calendar year. We ask that as early as possible, you communicate your situation to your mentor and the University.

### **Failure to Meet Tuition Payments**

When you enrolled, you received a Tuition Agreement (TA) describing the schedule of payments. University policy is as follows (as outlined in your TA):

Any monthly payment made later than ten (10) calendar days after the due date in this agreement is considered late. Every ten (10) days that a payment is late shall result in an additional fee of \$25.00. Credit card payments that are declined for authorization of payment by student's credit card company or bank will be subject to an additional administrative fee of \$25.00. The administrative fee for returned checks is \$50.00.

Default on payments or fees beyond a sixty (60) day calendar period from the date a payment or fee is due will result in student's suspension. Should student petition to re-enroll, all payments and fees due from the time non-payment began shall be due and payable in full before re-enrollment can take place. Other fees, including but not limited to late payment fees and a \$100 re-enrollment fee for students returning from suspension will apply as per university policy at the time student petitions for re-enrollment.

### **Termination Due To Failure to Reactivate**

Should a student fail to reactivate enrollment within one year from the date of suspension or leave of absence, the file will be closed and the student will be listed as inactive. This is also applicable if a student fails to submit work or be in contact with the university for a one-year period. At that point, students wishing to continue their studies at IUPS will be required to reapply for re-admission at the then current tuition rate.

## **»» Communicating With Us**

Should you have further questions or concerns, please email us at [university@iups.edu](mailto:university@iups.edu) or call (808) 573-7722.

*We look forward to assisting you in reaching your academic goals!*