



The Graduate Certificate in Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies

Introduction

The University of New Mexico Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies (WGSS) Program offers a transcribed Graduate Certificate in WGSS to graduate students who are already enrolled in a graduate-level program at UNM in another department, school, or college. WGSS does not offer a stand-alone graduate degree. The Graduate Certificate in Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies is designed as an area of specialization for students pursuing a master's degree or a doctorate in disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, fine arts, or the professional schools at the University of New Mexico. The Graduate Certificate provides graduate students the opportunity to complete an education program that addresses feminist, queer and transgender studies. Graduate courses in feminist, queer and transgender studies offered through WGSS are also available to graduate students not pursuing the graduate certificate.

Program Goals

The Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program is committed to educating students about the relationships among identity, power, and knowledge toward the ends of social justice and empowerment. We are an interdisciplinary program that focuses on how feminist, queer, and transgender studies intersect with race, gender, sexuality, class, and nation. We support the development and application of new theories of feminist, queer, and transgender studies throughout the university and the application of feminist, queer, and transgender methods in order to evaluate critically scholarship and research in the disciplines. In addition, the program seeks to educate students in ways that enable them to respond to issues that affect the lives of all people locally, regionally, and globally.

We Value:

- Excellence in teaching, research, service, and activism
- Support for student growth and success
- Critical thinking in and outside of the classroom
- Diversity in our curriculum, faculty, students, and staff
- Partnership and community throughout the university and beyond

Our Goals:

- Excellence in Research and Teaching
- Student Growth and Support

- Faculty Development
- Interdisciplinary and Creative Partnerships

Graduate Certificate Program Goals:

- Enhance critical thinking about methods, traditions, and approaches to feminist, trans, and queer studies that students will apply to their scholarship and creative output in their home disciplines and departments, allowing them to refine their own research questions, methodologies, creative approaches, etc. in various fields
- Foster and encourage community-engaged research
- Emphasize the material conditions and power structures in which each of us work and practice, encouraging us to address our individual situatedness within hierarchies of power
- Provide experience, materials, and bibliographies that can be applied to work and training in other areas
- Provide proficiency in content and method in a demonstrable form that appears on the graduate transcript

Program Requirements

The WGSS Graduate Certificate is earned through 15 total credit hours of graduate coursework, composed of a combination of foundational methodology seminars offered in WGSS and electives that may be taken in either WGSS or other programs across campus.

The 15 hours of required coursework will be composed of the following:

- 3 credit hours of required courses:
 - WGSS 510, Feminist Theory & Methodology
 OR
 - WGSS 512, Feminist Queer & Trans Methods
- 12 credit hours of electives, as approved by the WGSS Graduate Director.
 - Elective courses may be taken within the WGSS program or another Program/Department. In order for an elective course to count toward the Certificate requirements, it must include at least 50% of content in feminist, queer, and/or transgender studies. This may be defined as readings, methods, projects, or final course product.
 - Independent study courses can, with approval, count toward the 12 credit hours of electives.

Students must receive at least a 3.0 GPA in all courses used to count toward the Certificate requirements.

By special agreement with Graduate Studies, WGSS certificate students may earn up to 60% of the required credit hours prior to formal admission to the program. All other Graduate School policies remain in place.

No milestone exams or capstone projects are required. We encourage you to share your work with each other at the graduate student colloquium event held in the Spring semester.

Application Process

The Graduate Certificate is designed to be completed in conjunction with an M.A., M.F.A., or Ph.D. program in another department at UNM. Acceptance into a graduate degree program is required in order to be eligible to pursue the Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies Graduate Certificate. The certificate will be awarded at the same time as the primary degree.

Applications are received and processed on a rolling basis. There is no deadline to apply.

Applications should include:

- Application [cover sheet](#).
- Proof of admission into a graduate program at UNM, such as a letter of acceptance into a UNM graduate program or current unofficial transcript.
- A letter of intent addressing the applicant's research and interest in feminist, queer, and transgender studies. Please include discussion of any completed or in-progress coursework (undergrad or grad) that is relevant to WGSS.
- The cover sheet asks for the name of one faculty reference. No letters of recommendation are required at this time.
- Please send these materials in one file to the program director and Mercedes.
- After the program director approves your application, you will also need to complete the Graduate Studies form: [Transcripted Graduate Certificate form](#).
- You will return this form to the program director and Mercedes Nysus, who will send the form to the Graduate School. The Graduate School will email the student when the process is complete, providing important information about graduation procedures.

Graduation Procedures

In order to be awarded the WGSS Graduate Certificate, you must follow the graduation procedures of the Graduate School and your home department. The Certificate is only awarded at the time of graduation with your primary degree.

You must have a completed and approved POS (Program of Study, for M.A./M.F.A. students) and/or AC (Application for Candidacy, for Ph.D. students) with the Graduate Certificate and all the required classes listed and approved by the WGSS program director. Because of the Graduate School procedures related to Graduate Certificates, these are paper forms, not digital. The POS/AC form must be approved and signed by the director of the WGSS program (and your home department) before submission to Graduate Studies for final approval.

Please note: your home department will not do this for you. The POS/AC must be approved before your name can be added to the graduation list. You must notify your home department that you are intending to graduate with the WGSS certificate so that it can be noted on the graduation list. You must have your name on the graduation list in the semester **PRIOR** to the one in which you intend to graduate.

- Please familiarize yourself with the GS requirements for graduation: <https://grad.unm.edu/degree-completion/index.html>

Petition Procedures

Students who miss the deadlines for graduation due to circumstances beyond their control may petition the Graduate School. Graduate Studies has updated the petition process:

- All petitions will now be submitted online. The online [petition](#) form is live on the Graduate School website. Either students or staff/faculty may submit petitions. A complete petition requires information about the student, a statement of justification (usually from the student), and a letter of support from the department or program. Incomplete petitions will be returned with information concerning necessary changes.
- Graduate Studies will issue a decision within 10 days.
- As stated in the UNM Catalog, petitions are intended for students experiencing "unusual or extraordinary events, particularly circumstances beyond their control that would penalize them unfairly." Please reserve petition requests for situations that meet this standard, keeping in mind the catalog's reminder that "a hallmark of fairness is the uniform application of the same standards and deadlines to all students." Policies will not be waived on the basis of convenience or ignorance. If you are in doubt about how to deal with a complicated student situation, please reach out to Graduate Studies for guidance.

Professionalization and Community Engagement

WGSS is a community. We hope and expect that you will participate in program events, talks, workshops, etc. and view them as opportunities for professional growth and collaboration. As an interdisciplinary program, we all come from different backgrounds and training expectations. When we come together in workshops, events, talks, classes, and more, we hope that everyone will participate in a spirit of generosity, learning, and professional development.

- In all WGSS classes, we expect students to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. What this looks like will depend on the specific course's policies.
 - All students are expected to adhere to the UNM student code of conduct: <https://pathfinder.unm.edu/campus-policies/student-code-of-conduct.html>
 - UNM Handbook policy D100 addresses academic dishonesty: <https://handbook.unm.edu/d100/>
 - Graduate School resource page about academic integrity: <https://grad.unm.edu/resources/graduate-students/academic-integrity-and-research-ethics/index.html>
- **AI:** Instructors and committees will create their own AI policies and expectations which students should comply with. All academic work, written or otherwise, is expected to be the result of your own thought, research, or self-expression. Using AI-generated content and representing as your own work is a type of academic dishonesty.
- WGSS supports a student's right to opt out of AI use in courses taken toward the WGSS Certificate. If a student does not want to be required to use generative AI in assignments for any personal, ethical, environmental grounds, they should submit their reasoning in writing to the instructor within the first month of the semester.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

The Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program at UNM offers up to two graduate assistantships per academic year. WGSS assistants are typically responsible for TA'ing or teaching one course each semester, usually a section of GNDR 2110, either online or in person.

WGSS teaching assistants carry a .25 appointment, which includes a stipend, a tuition waiver of up to 6 credits during the semester of appointment, and the standard health insurance coverage provided by UNM for graduate assistants. (Please visit <http://grad.unm.edu/funding/assistantships.html> for more details on health insurance benefits for GTAs).

To qualify as a GTA for WGSS, candidates must be students of good standing enrolled in a graduate degree program at UNM and have a demonstrable scholarly interest in feminist, gender, and/or sexuality studies. Though we welcome all applicants, we may prioritize applicants with the following qualifications:

- Those who have enrolled in the WGSS Graduate Certificate program, or who have a demonstrable intention of enrolling in the certificate program at the time of appointment.
- Completion of WMST 510 and/or WMST 512 with a minimum GPA of 3.5.
- Those who have not previously received assistantship funding from WGSS. Appointments typically will be capped at two years.
- Those who have enrolled in or will enroll in the Graduate Teaching Academy offered by the Center for Teaching Excellence <https://ctl.unm.edu/graduate-students/graduate-teaching-academy.html>

To Apply: Late in each Spring semester, an application form will be made available and distributed via the graduate student listserv, on the unit website, and via email by request.

Student Support Resources

- LoboWellness resources: <https://lobowellbeing.unm.edu/index.html>
- Student resources: <https://grad.unm.edu/resources/graduate-students/student-resources/overview.html>
- UNM Faculty Handbook Policy D176 about Graduate professional conduct and grievance procedures: <https://handbook.unm.edu/d176/>
- [Graduate school resources](#)

Contact Info and Communications

Questions about the program, application procedures, graduation process, and other advising questions should be addressed to the Director of Graduate Studies at wgss@unm.edu. Procedural questions may also be addressed to the unit administrator Mercedes Nysus at mnice@unm.edu.

The Program's Director of Graduate Studies for the 2026-27 year is Dr. Jessica Carey-Webb.