The Materials Science Ph. D. Program of the University of Alabama System (UAS) is an interdisciplinary, interdepartmental, and intercampus doctoral program linking the three universities that make up the UAS: The University of Alabama (UA), in Tuscaloosa, the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), and the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH).

Narrative and Philosophy
The program was started in 1987 to promote research and teaching in materials-related fields, and awarded its first PhD degree in June 1990. The program was deliberately constructed to build on the strengths of existing departments rather than siphoning resources for a new Materials Science department on each of the three campuses. Following a national trend, several traditional engineering departments that participate in this program have appended "--Materials Science" to the names of their programs. In the period June 1990 to April 1999, 33 PhD. degrees were awarded (8 from UA, 8 from UAB, and 17 from UAH). The graduates have mostly found industrial and governmental laboratory positions. Some graduates have chosen a teaching and research career.

Statistical Data
There are approximately 23 UA faculty, 24 UAB faculty, and 22 UAH faculty participating in the program through various departments; these faculty typically advise about 5 students at UA, 5 at UAB, and 23 at UAH enrolled in the program.

How It Works
Each student applies to a "home campus," either UA, UAB, or UAH. If admitted, he or she chooses a "home department" within that campus; and a research advisor to direct his/her research program. The course offerings cross departmental boundaries, and also campus boundaries:

- Two examinations (called Program Exam I and II, similar to what are sometimes called qualifying and preliminary exams) are required for the PhD and are administered jointly by all three campuses.
- The student's doctoral committee must contain at least one faculty member from a sister campus.

The flavor of the student's research program crucially depends upon the research advisor. While the student's life integrates very well with the activities of the other students in the home departments, the course and degree requirements are subtly different, as befits a materials science mission.

For further information
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