**Program History**

Since the 1970s, mainstream research has undergone a shift from a field dominated by measurement, deduction, and prediction to one that accommodates a perspective that emphasizes description, induction, and understanding from the perspective of those being studied—a qualitative approach. With many disciplines embracing this movement as a means to widen the conceptual lenses for their work, the enthusiasm for qualitative research has never been higher and the field of qualitative research has moved from a position of marginality to one of influence. Traditionally qualitative approaches were taught in the disciplines of anthropology and sociology. Since the 1980s, the disciplines of education, journalism, speech communications, child and family development, counseling, and social work began to embrace these more interpretivist approaches to research. Consequently courses were developed and are being taught in numerous departments across the University of Georgia.

The University of Georgia has established itself as an international leader in the field of qualitative research. From 1988 to 2007 the University hosted the Qualitative Interest Group (QUIG) Interdisciplinary Qualitative Studies Conference (formerly known as the QUIG Qualitative Research in Education Conference), a widely respected annual conference that attracted both established and emerging scholars from the U.S. and abroad. In 2001, the Interdisciplinary Qualitative Studies Graduate Certificate Program was developed to provide a systematic, coordinated structure to institutionalize the study of qualitative research at the University of Georgia. The program is supported by a multidisciplinary faculty of scholars dedicated to improve professional practice and scholarship through active collaboration and critical self-reflection in the use of a broad range of qualitative methods. The community is guided by a set of values that honors diversity through the active inclusion of members who are broadly representative of the disciplines that comprise the modern university and the cultures to be found in today’s democratic society. Because of its interdisciplinary nature, the program allows students to tailor the focus of their certificate programs to individual interests.