

DOMESTIC APPLICATION

Department of
Community Sustainability
Michigan State University

U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students

STEP A: Items 1-7 are outlined below. Items 1-7 are required of all domestic applicants and should be worked on simultaneously. Scroll down to follow detailed application instructions for each item.

S T E P A	<input type="checkbox"/> ITEMS 1-4 Submit 1-4 using applicant portal. http://bit.ly/1N0y5I0	<input type="checkbox"/> ITEM 5 Request 5 using applicant portal. http://bit.ly/1N0y5I0	<input type="checkbox"/> ITEM 6 Request 6 from testing agency. https://www.ets.org/	<input type="checkbox"/> ITEM 7 Request 7 from former institutions.	<input type="checkbox"/> CONTACT Notify Graduate Secretary when all 7 items are complete: http://csus.msu.edu/graduate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSU GRADUATE APPLICATION (Item 1) \$65 application fee; scroll for instructions. • PERSONAL STATEMENT (Item 2) Scroll down for instructions. • ACADEMIC STATEMENT (Item 3) Scroll down for instructions. • RESUMÉ (Item 4) Scroll down for instructions. <p>(Upload Items 2-4 separately on student application portal)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION (Item 5) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify your 3 recommenders on the portal. Specify whether or not you waive your right of access. 2. Recommenders will receive an email from MSU's Office of Admissions to complete online LOR. 3. Applicants should follow up directly with recommenders, reminding them to complete LOR forms and letters before the application deadline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRE (Item 6) MSU General Code: 1465 (scores no older than 5 years) <p>Order official scores through ETS; ask ETS to send scores electronically directly to the MSU Office of Admissions.</p> <p>Michigan State University Office of Admissions Hannah Administration Building 426 Auditorium Road, Room 250 East Lansing, MI 48824 517-355-8332 Write via email link at Contact: https://admissions.msu.edu/email </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS (Item 7) <p>Ask all former institutions to send official transcripts by postal mail in a sealed, official university envelope to the address below:</p> <p>CSUS Graduate Admissions Michigan State University Dept. of Community Sustainability 480 Wilson Road, Room 131 East Lansing, MI 48824</p>	<p>Completed applications will be sent to the CSUS Graduate Admissions Committee 1-3 days after all items are received from the applicant, former institutions, ETS, and recommenders.</p> <p>All application items must be received by the application deadline.</p> <p>Applications with missing or incomplete items will not be processed or reviewed.</p>

STEP B: The 4 components of STEP B occur in the order listed below. STEP B occurs after STEP A is completed satisfactorily, based on the detailed application instructions found in following pages.

S T E P B	APPLICATION REVIEW	DEPARTMENT DECISION	UNIVERSITY DECISION	APPLICANT DECISION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed applications are reviewed by the CSUS Graduate Admissions Committee, a committee of CSUS Department faculty. • Applications that pass Admissions Committee review are made available to all faculty in the Department for review. Faculty indicate their interest and ability to accept an applicant, and if they are able to provide any funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically, applicants can expect a Department admissions decision by email 8-10 weeks after their application is complete (all items received by the Department), depending on when in the review cycle it is completed. • If you are accepted, initial advisor assignment and funding information are provided in your Department offer letter. Assistantship details, if applicable, will follow in a separate letter. • If you are accepted, the CSUS Dept's decision is preliminary to MSU's review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MSU Office of Admissions reviews application items of applicants who are admitted by the Department. • If an applicant is accepted by MSU, an official letter of acceptance will appear in the student's portal. • Notify the Department Graduate Secretary and Graduate Program Coordinator if and when you receive correspondence from the MSU Office of Admissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are admitted by the Department and the University, send an email notification to the CSUS Department Graduate Secretary and Graduate Program Coordinator that you accept or decline the offer. Please CC your assigned advisor. • Send this decision by email no later than two weeks after you receive the official University acceptance letter.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

Department of
Community Sustainability
Michigan State University

DOMESTIC APPLICATION – U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students

Applicants should apply for fall admission, consistent with the CSUS cohort program structure, as it allows students to:

- attend the formal once-yearly CSUS orientation held a few days before fall semester begins;
- enroll in required foundations courses, offered only during the fall semester; and
- become part of a CSUS graduate student cohort (this group provides mutual support throughout your degree program, based on shared experiences early in your CSUS career).

I want to start my graduate program **FALL 2017**

Applications for **FALL 2017** admissions are accepted on a rolling basis (as completed) from September 1, 2016 through March 1, 2017.

Rolling admissions means the applicant can submit application materials to the Department of Community Sustainability (CSUS) at any time between September 1, 2016 and March 1, 2017. Rolling admissions enables the CSUS Graduate Admissions Committee to review applications as they are completed, and to make admissions decisions typically within 8-10 weeks after the applicant submits all of the required application items. The Department does not hold all applications until the deadline.

If Fall 2017 applicants submit all application items by **November 15, 2016**, they have an improved chance of consideration for:

- university-wide fellowships, if applicant is deemed eligible and competitive <https://grad.msu.edu/fellowships>
- research assistantships offered by individual faculty, or other campus opportunities <https://grad.msu.edu/assistantships/>

If fall applicants submit all application items by **March 1, 2017**, they can be considered for:

- research assistantships offered by individual faculty, or other campus opportunities <https://grad.msu.edu/assistantships/>

PROGRAMS AND DEGREES

Department of
Community Sustainability
Michigan State University

DOMESTIC APPLICATION – U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students

COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

The Department of Community Sustainability offers three degree types within the Community Sustainability (CSUS) graduate program:

CSUS GRADUATE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: <http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/programs/csus>

MS-A, MS-B, PhD DEGREE DESCRIPTIONS: http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/programs_degrees

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM & PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT

The Department of Community Sustainability offers three degree types within the Sustainable Tourism & Protected Area Management (STPAM) graduate program:

STPAM GRADUATE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: <http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/programs/stpam>

MS-A, MS-B, PhD DEGREE DESCRIPTIONS: http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/programs_degrees

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

DOMESTIC APPLICATION – U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students

ITEM 1 – MSU ONLINE GRADUATE APPLICATION

Submit Item 1 using the applicant portal.

Submit Item 1 using the MSU Office of Admissions Graduate Education Student Portal (applicant portal) available at: <https://admissions.msu.edu/gradportal/>. If you forget your applicant ID and/or your password, contact the MSU Office of Admissions for assistance. Use the same name that appears on legal documents, such as a passport or identification card, to complete your application. No paper or email applications can be accepted. The online portal allows you to request letters of recommendation (LORs), request LOR cover forms from your recommenders, view and send e-messages from/to the CSUS Department, submit your application, and check the status of your application.

Select the major code for your desired program on the applicant portal. Major codes are:

MS CODES – Plan A and Plan B

- 5389: CSUS (Community Sustainability)
- 5376: STPAM (Sustainable Tourism & Protected Area Management)

PhD CODES

- 5390: CSUS (Community Sustainability)
- 5377: STPAM (Sustainable Tourism & Protected Area Management)

Applicants must answer the supplementary questions on the MSU online graduate application before submitting the \$65 application fee.

ITEM 2 – PERSONAL STATEMENT

Submit Item 2 using the applicant portal.

A typed personal statement is required of all applicants. The personal statement gives the applicant an opportunity to share personal experiences with the Admissions Committee. Prospective faculty advisors and other faculty members also read personal statements during the review and advisor selection process. Upload the statement to the applicant portal. The content below should be addressed in your personal statement, using format guidelines:

CONTENT: BACKGROUND AND LIFE EXPERIENCES

- How have your background and life experiences (social, economic, cultural, familial, educational, and/or other opportunities or challenges) motivated your decision to pursue a graduate degree from the Department of Community Sustainability?
- Describe how these experiences have prepared you or led you to your proposed degree work. You can choose to focus on a single aspect of your background or write about multiple experiences.
- Applicants who have overcome economic barriers or extreme personal, social, or cultural obstacles to seek a graduate degree are encouraged to include this information in the personal statement.

FORMAT: Follow the format guidelines below in preparing your personal statement:

- Essay format
- Single-spaced, using 12-point font
- Maximum length: 500 words
- 8.5" X 11" white paper (use only white paper)
- Use the title **Personal Statement** at the top of each page.
- Include your first and last names (as appear on your application) at the top of each page.
- Include the program and degree type to which you are applying (CSUS or STPAM; MS-A, MS-B, or PhD) at the top of each page.
- Include page numbers at the bottom of each page.
- Do not include any of the following anywhere on your personal statement:
 - MSU PID
 - Phone number, address, email
 - Photo

Leave blank the sections on the MSU online graduation application for PERSONAL STATEMENT and ACADEMIC STATEMENT. The CSUS Graduate Admissions Committee requires both statements be uploaded as individual PDF files on the applicant portal - this allows the applicant to follow the required formatting guidelines (and statements are easier to read).

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

DOMESTIC APPLICATION – U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students

ITEM 3 – ACADEMIC STATEMENT

Submit Item 3 using the applicant portal.

A typed academic statement is required of all applicants. The academic statement gives the applicant an opportunity to share proposed academic and career goals with the Graduate Admissions Committee. Prospective faculty advisors and other faculty members also read personal statements during the review and advisor selection process. Upload the statement to the applicant portal. The content below should be addressed in your personal statement, using the format guidelines provided:

CONTENT: PLANS FOR GRADUATE STUDY

- Identify the program option to which you are applying (CSUS or STPAM).
- Identify the degree option for which you are applying (MS-A, MS-B, or PhD).
- Discuss with specificity what you want to study during your degree work.
- Identify faculty members you believe most closely match your interests (review faculty bios from <http://www.csus.msu.edu/people/faculty> ; click names for links to information).
- Include a summary of discussions you have had with potential faculty advisors.

CONTENT: ACADEMIC INTERESTS, PASSIONS, AND CAREER GOALS

- Discuss why you want to earn the degree specified above.
- Describe what motivates your interest in this program.
- Describe what experiences have led to this choice.
- Explain why this interdisciplinary, systems-based program is a good fit with your goals.
- Explain how the CSUS or STPAM graduate program will help you meet your educational and career goals.

CONTENT: CONTRIBUTIONS

- Discuss what you will contribute to the Department of Community Sustainability graduate program, to Michigan State University, and to fellow students (especially in your cohort).

CONTENT: WEAKNESSES

- If you have apparent weaknesses in your application materials, explain them in your academic statement and describe strategies for addressing them in the future.

FORMAT:

Follow the format guidelines below in preparing your academic statement:

- Essay format
- Single-spaced, using 12-point font
- Maximum length: 750 words
- 8.5" X 11" white paper (use only white paper)
- Use the title **Academic Statement** at the top of each page.
- Include your first and last names (as they appear on your application) at the top of each page.
- Include the program and degree type to which you are applying (CSUS or STPAM; MS-A, MS-B, or PhD) at the top of each page.
- Include page numbers at the bottom of each page.
- Do not include any of the following anywhere on your academic statement:
 - MSU PID
 - Phone number, address, email
 - Photo

Leave blank the sections on the MSU online graduation application for PERSONAL STATEMENT and ACADEMIC STATEMENT. The CSUS Graduate Admissions Committee requires both statements be uploaded as individual PDF files on the applicant portal - this allows the applicant to follow the required formatting guidelines (and statements are easier to read).

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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ITEM 4 – RESUMÉ

Submit Item 4 using the applicant portal.

A typed resumé is required of all applicants. The resumé must be two pages in length and formatted on 8.5" X 11" white paper. Do not include a photo. Upload your resumé to the applicant portal.

The following content should be included in your resumé:

- Education
- Professional experiences (paid and/or unpaid)
- Other relevant experiences (if any)
- Certifications, honors, awards
- Professional organization memberships and/or involvement
- Publications and professional presentations (as relevant)

ITEM 5 – LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Request Item 5 using the applicant portal.

Three letters of recommendation are required of all applicants. Applicants must request letters from 3 different recommenders via the portal. Be sure to indicate whether or not you waive your right of access to the recommendations.

- MS applicants, at least 1 (preferably 2) of your LORs should be academic; PhD applicants, at least 2 (preferably 3) of your LORs should be academic. Be sure they speak to your match with CSUS programs.
- After the applicant identifies a recommender on the portal, a recommendation request is sent (by email) to the recommender.
- Applicants cannot submit the recommendation materials on behalf of the recommenders.
- Applicants can view their recommendation status in the portal.
- Applicants must follow up with their recommenders to ensure letters of recommendation are submitted before the CSUS application deadline.

ITEM 6 – GRE SCORES

Request Item 6 from testing agency.

GRE scores are required of all applicants. Applicants must contact ETS (<https://www.ets.org>) and request GRE reports be sent directly to the MSU Office of Admissions, identifying one of the codes below. The MSU general code is **1465**. The general code identifies to ETS to which university you want your GRE scores sent. Select only ONE of the ETS codes below to identify your degree program interest. It does not matter which code below you select.

- 0110 – Resource Management
- 0111 – Parks and Recreation Management
- 0113 – Renewable Natural Resources
- 5101 – Interdisciplinary Programs

REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR GRE SCORES

- GRE scores must be no more than 5 years old at the time of application.
- Contact the Graduate Secretary via email if the name on your GRE report is different than the name on your MSU online application. The Graduate Secretary must notify the MSU Office of Admissions of the name discrepancy to prevent a delay in the processing of your scores.
- Copies of scores sent by the applicant to MSU or CSUS via email and/or postal mail are deemed unofficial by the University and will not be considered.
- Scores must be accessible to CSUS by the application deadline. Thus, the applicant must order a GRE report from ETS long before the application deadline (and take the exam long before that, to allow time for ETS scoring and reporting). GRE reports can take 1-3 weeks to arrive at MSU and an additional 2-4 weeks to be processed after they are received by the MSU Office of Admissions. Thus, it could take as long as 7 weeks for your report to become available to the Department. The scores are not accessible by the Department until processed by the Office of Admissions. Plan accordingly.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

DOMESTIC APPLICATION – U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students

ITEM 7 - OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS

Request Item 7 from former institutions.

Official transcripts are required of all applicants for each previous academic institution. Applicants must arrange for one OFFICIAL transcript to be sent directly to the Department of Community Sustainability from EACH university or college listed on the online graduate application. Colleges and universities attended (even if no degree was granted) must be listed on the online application.

REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR TRANSCRIPTS

- Transcripts are deemed official if they are sent in a sealed envelope via postal mail directly to the Department from the respective institutions.
- Photocopies or scanned copies of transcripts are considered unofficial and will not be accepted or reviewed.
- Any transcript received by the Department from an applicant or from an entity other than the institution is considered unofficial and will not be accepted or reviewed.
- Official English translations of transcripts in a language other than English must be submitted with the original official transcript. A translation is deemed official if it is sent with the official transcript in a sealed envelope via postal mail directly to the Department from the institution. (All must arrive by the application deadline.)
- Official transcripts of coursework completed at MSU should not be submitted because the Graduate Program Office is able to access transcripts of MSU coursework and granting of MSU degrees.
- Applicant must order each official transcript (and translation, if applicable) long before the application deadline and ensure that each institution sends the transcript directly to the Department of Community Sustainability. Transcripts can take 2-8 weeks to arrive at the Department; international transcripts may take longer. Plan accordingly.

TRANSCRIPT MAILING INSTRUCTIONS

DO NOT SEND OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS TO THE MSU OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS because the Department cannot access official transcripts if they are sent there.

The applicant must contact each institution, pay the required transcript and translation fee(s), if applicable, and request official transcripts be sent to:

CSUS Graduate Admissions
Michigan State University
Department of Community Sustainability
Natural Resources Building
480 Wilson Road, room 131
East Lansing, MI 48824

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DOMESTIC APPLICATION – U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students

I am a fall applicant. When should I submit the required application items - by November 15 or by the March 1 deadline?

Opportunities for funding are greater, though not guaranteed, at the beginning of the application cycle. Fall applicants are highly encouraged to submit all of the required items before November 15 for potential fellowship consideration. Applications will be accepted through March 1 and considered for research assistantships, as available through individual faculty, but applications are likely not to be considered for university-wide fellowships if received after November 15.

What fellowship opportunities are available?

Fall applicants may be considered for university-wide fellowships if all application items are received by November 15 and applicants are deemed competitive for them. University-wide fellowship descriptions and criteria can be found on the MSU Graduate School website: <https://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/> The Department of Community Sustainability does not have full-funding fellowships, but early admitted students may be considered for 2 of the endowed scholarships offered by the Department, as relevant (these provide supplemental funding only; they do not provide substantial or full funding support for degree work).

What other funding opportunities are available?

Funding opportunities provided by MSU are available on the MSU Graduate School website: <https://grad.msu.edu/funding/> The MSU Office of Financial Aid describes additional funding opportunities: <https://finaid.msu.edu> Funding from the Department of Community Sustainability is in the form of hourly work pay or research assistantships for qualified students, as available, through individual faculty.

What is an assistantship?

Research assistantships at MSU include a stipend (bi-weekly paycheck) + tuition & fees for 9 credits per semester (fall and spring) + health insurance + fees. Assistantship amounts vary, based on many factors. Admitted students who are offered an assistantship will receive a separate assistantship offer letter having details about the faculty supervisor, assistantship level, hours per week, and stipend.

Because assistantships in CSUS are offered only by individual faculty members, applicants are encouraged to talk with faculty about potential assistantship opportunities. View faculty biographies and faculty contact information at: <http://www.csus.msu.edu/people/faculty>

Does the CSUS Department offer teaching assistantships?

No. Only research assistantships are available via individual faculty members. Department-funded teaching and research assistantships are not available.

Are all CSUS graduate students funded by assistantships?

No, not all admitted applicants are offered assistantships, as they are based on funded project and research grants of individual faculty (typically the student's advisor). Students fund their education in many ways: full or part-time jobs on or off campus, hourly project work, assistantships, home government or other agency funding (international students), scholarships, and/or personal savings and loans.

For more information about assistantships, explore these websites:

MSU Graduate School website: <https://grad.msu.edu/assistantships>

Assistantship FAQ: <https://www.hr.msu.edu/hiring/studentemployment/gradasst/GradAsstFAQ.htm>

Assistantship Stipend Ranges: <https://hr.msu.edu/hiring/studentemployment/gradasst/stipendRanges.htm>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DOMESTIC APPLICATION – U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students

How are applications evaluated?

Completed graduate applications are reviewed by the CSUS Graduate Admissions Committee, comprising three CSUS faculty members. Applications that pass this review then are made available for review by the CSUS faculty at large, for identification of potential advisors. An applicant is admitted only if a faculty member commits to advising a specific applicant. The multi-stage review cycle does not begin until all application items are received (including official test scores, official transcripts, and letters of recommendation). All items are reviewed as a package, representing the applicant *in toto*; no individual item automatically disqualifies an applicant.

How soon is an admissions decision made after all required application items are submitted?

Applicants typically receive an admissions decision letter from the Department by email no later than 8-10 weeks after all the required application items are received. The Graduate Admissions Committee will not review an application until an application is complete. The review process has several steps and takes time. Please be patient.

An applicant can view an official letter from the MSU Office of Admissions on the applicant portal – granting or denying admission – soon after receiving the admission decision email from the Department. The amount of time depends on the university-wide applicant load in the system at the time of decision. An applicant is accepted officially to MSU only by the MSU Office of Admissions.

Does the Department accept summer applications?

No, the CSUS Department does not accept summer applications. Applicants may apply only for fall semester starts. Applying for fall admission gives admitted students the best opportunity to 1) attend the formal once-yearly CSUS orientation, 2) enroll in fall-offered required foundations courses, and 3) become part of a full student cohort.

Can I apply if I have not taken GRE or scores are older than 5 years?

No. GRE scores are required and must be no older than 5 years at the time of application.

What is the minimum GRE score accepted by the Department?

The CSUS Department does not specify a minimum GRE score for any section of the exam, as GRE scores are not a singular admissions criterion. We assess the entire application as a whole. That is not to say that GRE scores are irrelevant. In making admissions decisions, the Graduate Admissions Committee considers 1) the degree program for which an applicant is applying, 2) the age of the GRE scores, which must be no older than 5 years at the time of application, 3) experiences between GRE test-taking and application dates that might have enhanced abilities in low-scoring areas, 4) transcripts, and 5) comments in letters of recommendation. Applicants having a low GRE score (low percentile) should address the low score in the academic statement.

May I send my transcripts by email?

No, because transcripts sent by email are not considered official and will not be considered. Contact your former institutions and ask them to send an official transcript in a sealed, official envelope to the Department of Community Sustainability. *Anything sent by the applicant – by email or postal mail – is considered unofficial and will not be accepted.*

May I send my GRE scores by email?

No, because GRE scores sent by email are not considered official and will not be considered. Contact ETS and ask them to send your official scores to the MSU Office of Admissions. *Anything sent by the applicant – by email or postal mail – is considered unofficial and will not be accepted.*

May I send any application materials by email?

No, applicants should follow the detailed application instructions (found in this document) and submit items as instructed.