



Department of Forestry

Graduate Student Handbook

2015–2016

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

MSU FORESTRY 

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GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

FOREWORD

This handbook provides a summary of University, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Department of Forestry policies and academic regulations affecting Forestry graduate students. More complete statements about University and College level policies and regulations are published in the Academic Programs Handbook and the University Formatting Guide for Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations. It is the responsibility of the graduate student to understand these regulations.

The Forestry faculty offers numerous programs of study. For the most part these programs are flexible and a program of study can be developed to meet individual student needs and interests. This handbook provides you with most of the information you will require to insure that your program fits the policies of the various academic units you will interact with as a graduate student in the Forestry Department at Michigan State University.

All of us on the Forestry faculty are anxious to and interested in working with you to assure a rewarding intellectual experience. We wish you the best as you pursue graduate studies in Forestry.

Dr. Richard K. Kobe, Chairperson
Department of Forestry

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Forestry offers several graduate programs leading to the Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees. In addition to standard forestry degrees, the following interdepartmental programs are available:

Specialization in Resource Economics jointly administered by faculty from the Departments of Agricultural Economics; Economics; Fisheries and Wildlife; Forestry; Community Agriculture and Recreation, Resource Studies

Specialization in Plant Breeding and Genetics jointly administered by faculty from the Departments of Crop and Soil Sciences, Forestry, and Horticulture

Joint program in Forestry-Urban Studies administered by faculty from the Department of Forestry and the Urban Affairs Program

Dual major in Ecology, Evolutionary Biology and Behavior

Detroit College of Law

Students may develop other dual degrees by making special arrangements with the appropriate academic units. For doctoral students, visit page 16 for more information regarding dual doctoral degree programs.

Qualified students with undergraduate degrees in forestry can usually complete the requirements for the Master of Science degree in one academic year. Two to three additional years beyond the M.S. degree are usually required for the doctoral degree.

The Department of Forestry prides itself on matriculating graduate students from a wide range of academic backgrounds who share an intellectual interest in forestry. The time needed to complete graduate programs varies widely by sub discipline, but typically has ranged from 1 to 3 years for the MS and 3 to 6 years for the PhD.

Academic Advising

If you have questions about the graduate program in the Department of Forestry, please contact the Director of Graduate Studies in Forestry, Dr. David Rothstein, Associate Professor of Forest Ecology/Biogeochemistry.

Dr. David Rothstein
126 Natural Resources Building
Michigan State University
480 Wilson Road
East Lansing, MI 48824
517.432.3353
rothste2@msu.edu

WELCOME TO MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

As a student of Michigan State University you will utilize various electronic resources and electronic mail. Students should activate their MSU NetID and e-mail account as soon as possible when they are admitted. It is very important to do this even if you already have another e-mail account.

By setting up your MSU NetID as soon as you receive your PAN, you will be able to use your e-mail account to:

- Reserve a space in an Academic Orientation Program (AOP) via the web
- Access information about your financial aid package (if this applies to you)
- Receive information and complete required forms regarding immunization
- Receive official communications from MSU that are sent to you via e-mail only
- Access your schedule/enrollment, grades, academic, student accounts, holds, address, and financial assistance data from <http://stuinfo.msu.edu>
- Publish a personal web page
- Access dial-up services
- Access public computer labs

When you arrive on campus, many professors will communicate with you regarding class assignments, examinations, papers, etc. via your MSU e-mail account. Should you choose to do so, you may forward e-mail sent to your MSU e-mail account to your personal e-mail account.

Click here <http://netid.msu.edu/> to activate your MSU NetID and email account.

ADMISSION, REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT

Regular and Provisional Status

Successful applicants for admission to a degree program will be admitted to **regular** status when they are fully qualified to undertake graduate study in their field of interest. Those with subject-matter deficiencies will be admitted to **provisional** status, and will be transferred to regular status when collateral courses are successfully completed. You will be notified promptly of the decision taken by the Department.

Registration Procedure

The Registrar's Office will be sending you enrollment information, which will contain an assigned PID number (Personal Identification Number) and PAN number (Personal Access Number).

For international students, clearance from the International Student Office (109 International Center) is needed. Foreign or international students must have health insurance prior to registration. They should also be sure that course credit load is consistent with the terms of their visa. Information on visa regulations is available from the International Student Office.

MSU Web Help Line

If you have general computing questions you may contact the MSU IT Services Help Desk at (517) 432-6200 or online at tech.msu.edu.

Additional information is available at <http://help.msu.edu>.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND SERVICES

Credits and Grades

Graduate students are required to maintain a 3.0 grade point average. University regulations also require that a student must register for a minimum of one credit hour each semester.

Mandatory Training:

All TAs and RAs must complete the on-line training about the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy. To access the training, login to the ORA training website at <https://train.ora.msu.edu/Saba/Web/Main>. Click “Register,” “Complete Registration” and then “Launch” to begin the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct (RVSM) Policy – Faculty, Staff Training.

If it indicates that you have already registered, use “In Progress Training,” then “Launch.”

You will want to reserve approximately 30 minutes to complete all assignments. If you need assistance, contact the Helpdesk at 517-884-4600 or train@ora.msu.edu.

Transportation

Motor Vehicle Registration

Required student registration of motor vehicles can be done through the Michigan State University Police Department online at <https://permits.police.msu.edu/>. Fellowship recipients who receive an MSU Fellowship of \$1,000 or more per semester qualify for a graduate assistant parking permit. To receive this permit, graduate students must go to the Parking Office with a letter from their Department Administrator stating the validity of their fellowship along with a MSU Spartan ID card and current vehicle registration.

COGS (Council of Graduate Students) also offers discounted graduate student parking permits in the Downtown East Lansing Division Street Ramp (Lot 10 – Colorful Parking Garage at division & Albert Streets). These can be purchased at the COGS office, 466 W. Circle Drive, Room 120. Come prepared with your vehicle registration, student ID, and tuition statement indicating that you have paid the current semester’s COGS tax. Permits are available for \$150. For more information, visit <http://www.cogs.msu.edu/services.html>.

Buses

CATA buses serve all parts of the campus and connect with routes serving the Lansing and East Lansing area. Discounted fares are available to individuals with a valid student ID. Passes can be purchased online at <http://www.cata.org/Fares/BuyPassesOnline/tabid/212/Default.aspx>. Passes are available on a fixed use, route-based, or duration of use basis.

Bikes

The University maintains bicycle racks throughout the campus. Bikes should be locked to these racks when parked. Bikes are not permitted in campus buildings. Improperly parked bikes are subject to impoundment by the Department of Public Safety. Bicycle registration through the MSU Department of Public Safety or the cities of East Lansing or Lansing is required. A four-year MSU bike or moped registration may be purchased from the Department of Public Safety. For more information, visit <http://police.msu.edu/management-services-bureau/parking-office/student-permits/>.

Services

Health Services

Student health services are located in Olin Health Center on East Circle Drive between Berkey Hall and the Grand River Parking Ramp. Medical appointments are available during Fall and Spring Semesters: Monday through Friday, 8am – 6pm; and Saturday, 10am – 1pm.

Summer and break hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. To make an appointment or for more information, visit olin.msu.edu, call 4-OLIN (884-6546), or email at olin@msu.edu.

MSU offers a student health insurance plan through Aetna Student Health. The MSU Graduate Assistant health Insurance Plan is an illness and injury insurance plan that covers a variety of health care services including office visits at MSU Student Health Services at Olin. All Graduate Assistants with ¼, ½, ¾ appointments (eligible for tuition waiver) are automatically enrolled in this plan, unless the waiver has been completed by the specified enrollment deadline dates. Students that are enrolled in the student health insurance plan must actively attend classes for at least the first 31 days, after the date when coverage becomes effective. Visit <http://www.hr.msu.edu/benefits/studenthealth/studentplan.htm> for more information.

Financial Aid

A variety of financial aid awards are available to forestry graduate students. New students can apply for scholarships, fellowships and loans through the Office of Admissions and Scholarships. Continuing students may apply for aid at the Office of Financial Aids, 259 Student Services Building.

CIC

MSU is a member of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation. Through CIC's traveling scholar program a doctoral student can take a limited amount of course work at any Big Ten University or the University of Chicago. MSU tuition rates are normally paid to MSU for courses taken at other participating institutions. A doctoral student interested in this program should contact the Office of the Graduate School or visit <http://grad.msu.edu/cic/> for instructions.

MSU Computer Services

How to Access Your AFS File-Space

AFS is a centralized place to store data safely and securely or optionally share it with others. AFS can be accessed from on-campus computer labs, in offices at MSU, or remotely from home. AFS can also store personal and course web pages, which are then made available via www.msu.edu. Every MSU NetID comes with free space on the AFS system, typically 1GB.

Using FTP

Although not as convenient as mapping your AFS space, FTP is the most reliable method of connection when off campus, when behind a firewall or when you are using a machine that utilizes something other than a Windows or Macintosh Operating system, such as Linux. Using a FTP client such as CuteFTP or WS_FTP, log in to the host afs.msu.edu with your MSU NetID and password. When logged in you will be in the root directory of your AFS space. We highly recommend that you do not attempt to delete any of the default folders you find in your AFS space including your mail, web, snapshot.afs and public folders. You may also find a win2k folder and/or AppleDouble and AppleDesktop folders in your AFS space if you use the public MSU Microlabs.

Accessing your AFS space from an MSU Microlab

When you log into an MSU Microlab, your AFS space is mapped for you and will appear in "My Computer" as your P: drive. You may access it as you would a floppy, a CD or your hard drive. Your personal AFS space is backed up in the event of a full system crash; however, individual files or folders that you may delete cannot be restored.

Course AFS Space

See <http://techbase.msu.edu/article.asp?id=149> for information and frequently asked questions regarding course AFS space.

DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Grief Absence Policy:

For master's (Plan A), master's (Plan B) with research responsibilities, and doctoral students, it is the responsibility of the student to:

1. Notify their advisor/major professor and faculty of the courses in which they are enrolled of the need for a grief absence in a timely manner, but no later than one week from the student's initial knowledge of the situation
2. Provide appropriate verification of the grief absence as specified by the advisor/major professor and faculty
3. Complete all missed work as determined in consultation with the advisor/major professor and faculty

It is the responsibility of the advisor/major professor to:

1. Determine with the student the expected period of absence – it is expected that some bereavement processes may be more extensive than others depending on individual circumstances
2. Receive verification of the authenticity of a grief absence request upon the student's return
3. Make reasonable accommodations so that the student is not penalized due to a verified grief absence.
4. If employed as a RA or TE, the graduate student must also notify their employer. Both responsibilities will be covered during their absence. Graduate teaching assistant (TAs) should refer to the bereavement policy in the MSU GEU CBU Article 18.

Students in the graduate professional colleges (CHM, COM, CVM, and LAW) with their own grief absence policies are excluded from the above and should follow their own policies. Students who believe their rights under this policy have been violated should contact the University Ombudsperson.

Credit-sharing Policy:

The University Committee for Grad Studies revised the credit sharing policy for Master's programs: if your program includes more than 30 credits, then you may share up to 30% of the total with another Master's program.

Hearing Procedures

Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities can be found here: <http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/graduate-student-rights-and-responsibilities>

The Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University (AFR) and the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR) documents establish rights and responsibilities of MSU students and prescribe procedures for resolving allegations of violations of those rights through formal grievance hearings. In accordance with the AFR and the GSRR, the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources has established College Hearing Board procedures for adjudicating academic grievances and complaints that can be found in the Governance section of the CANR website: <http://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/files/Hearing%20Procedures%20CANR%202010%20approved.pdf>.

International Travel:

Graduate students traveling internationally for MSU-related work (research data collection, international professional conferences, courses, or other academic business, are strongly encouraged to sign up using the International Travelers Database (even if they are not being reimbursed for travel). This is the best way for MSU to stay in touch with our students if there is an emergency.

Visit http://www.isp.msu.edu/travel/travelers_database.htm for more information.

Assistantships

Assistantship support is determined on an individual basis depending upon recommendations, availability of funds, fellowship and scholarship support, and grade record. Generally, when funding is limited, nationals will be given preference for funding. Assistantships are reviewed annually by the Department Chairperson and may be renewed if satisfactory progress is being made and funds are available. Students shall be informed by March 31 regarding the status of their assistantship for the ensuing academic year. Assistantships are not generally available to M.S. students on Plan B (non-thesis) programs.

Graduate assistants must be registered each semester in which they hold assistantships.

Assistantship Course Load Limits

Doctoral students with $\frac{1}{4}$ time or $\frac{1}{2}$ time assistantships must carry at least 3 credits. They may carry a maximum of 16 course credits, excluding 899/999 credits.

Master's students with $\frac{1}{4}$ time or $\frac{1}{2}$ time assistantships must carry at least 6 credits. They may carry a maximum of 16 course credits, excluding 899/999 credits.

Doctoral and Master's students with $\frac{3}{4}$ time assistantships must carry at least 3 credits. They may carry a maximum of 8 course credits, excluding 899/999 credits.

During the summer session, Doctoral and Master's graduate assistants must carry a minimum of 3 credits.

Visitor credits may count as part of a student's credit load if approved in writing by the student's department chair or unit director, college and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Deviations from the minimum enrollment requirements listed above are permitted only during the semester in which the degree is granted, when students must enroll for at least the number of credits required to complete the degree or meet the University minimum registration requirement of one credit.

Appointments and Responsibilities

Graduate assistants are appointed on a quarter-time, half-time, or three-quarter-time basis for 18 weeks each for Fall and Spring semesters and 12 weeks for Summer semester. The approximate expectation of normal workload, averaged over the entire period of the appointment, is:

- A. 10 hours per week for a quarter-time stipend;
- B. 20 hours per week for a half-time stipend; or
- C. 30 hours per week for a three-quarter-time stipend.

Graduate assistants are responsible for understanding the weekly workload expectations during the entire period of their appointments. This includes work assigned and the time frame within which the work must be completed, essential duties and responsibilities, work conditions and vacation opportunities, if any.

Graduate assistants are appointed at one of three levels:

Level I: Students with less than one year of experience as a graduate assistant or a full support fellow. They teach, conduct research, perform administrative tasks or other supervised duties such as reading and grading papers.

Level II: Students with a Master's degree or equivalent and/or one year of experience as a graduate assistant or a full support fellow in the appointing department/unit or in a department/unit considered relevant by the chairperson of the appointing department. They teach, conduct research, grade papers, or perform administrative tasks with moderate supervision. Advancement from Level I to Level II is usually routine. The advancement is accompanied by an increase in stipend at least to the minimum of the Level II range established by the University.

Level III: Students with a Master's degree or equivalent and at least two years of experience as a graduate assistant (or equivalent experience at the faculty level) in the appointing department or in a department considered relevant by the chairperson of the appointing department. They teach, conduct research, or perform administrative tasks with minimum supervision. Advancement to the rank of Level III, or senior graduate assistant, is on a merit basis with the above prerequisites being considered minimal. Within the range established for the University, the stipend depends upon the qualifications of the individual and the availability of funds in the department.

Stipends

Within the ranges established by the University, stipends vary by level (see above) and by department.

Taxes

Graduate assistantship stipends are not subject to Social Security (FICA) taxes.

Stipends subject to income taxes with few exceptions. The taxability of stipends is subject to review by the Internal Revenue Service.

Tuition Waiver

A tuition waiver will be provided during the period of the assistantship. The tuition waiver is in the amount of nine credits for Fall semester, nine credits for Spring semester and four credits for Summer semester. Visitor credits may count as part of a graduate assistant's credit load and be covered by the waiver.

If a graduate assistant resigns an assistantship during a semester, such that the appointment does not meet minimum duration standards (53 calendar days in Fall and Spring; 46 calendar days in Summer) he/she will be assessed tuition for all credits carried, and those who are not Michigan (in-state) residents will be assessed out-of-state tuition.

For any changes in courses made after the "End of 100% Refund Period", no refund will be made for credits dropped, nor may courses be exchanged, even when such courses are covered by tuition waiver. Courses added after the 100% refund period are not covered by the tuition waiver.

Exemption from Out-of-State Tuition

This exemption also applies to Summer semester preceding or following a full academic year appointment (consecutive Fall and Spring appointments).

Fees

Matriculation and infrastructure/technology support fees are waived.

Health Insurance

Graduate assistants (domestic and international) are automatically enrolled in a GA health insurance plan, the premium of which is paid by the University. The plan provides the following coverage:

- a. Fall appointment only: coverage from August 15 to February 14 of the following year.
- b. Fall and Spring appointments - coverage from August 15 to August 14 of the following year.

- c. Spring appointment only - coverage from January 1 to August 14.
- d. Summer appointment only - coverage from May 15 to August 14.

Enrolled students may also insure their eligible spouse and/or dependent children (residing with the insured). MSU will contribute \$2500 annually toward the cost of a spouse* or child and \$2200 annually toward the cost of a spouse* and/or multiple dependents.

* Reference to spouse includes MSU recognized same-sex domestic partners of graduate assistants.

Financial Aid

Most graduate assistants qualify for additional financial assistance, usually in the form of student loans. The Office of Financial Aid should be consulted for further details at finaid.msu.edu, 517-353-5940 or via email at finaid@msu.edu. Additionally, there are a variety of fellowships available at <http://grad.msu.edu/fellowships>.

Assistantship Time Limits

Normally, graduate assistantship support is limited to the equivalent of two years, ½ time for Master's students and five years, ½ time for Doctoral students.

Maintaining Assistantship

Assistantships will be terminated if GPA is below 3.0. All courses, including collateral, will be used to compute GPA.

Other Benefits

Additional benefits to graduate students on assistantship include the following:

1. Eligibility for student discounts on football, basketball, and/or hockey season tickets for themselves and their spouses
2. Eligibility for free admission to other regularly scheduled MSU athletic events.
3. Eligibility for student discounts on series tickets Wharton Center for Performing Arts.
4. Library privileges.
5. Eligibility for treatment at Olin Health Center.
6. Eligibility to enroll for the optional student accident coverage.
7. Priority in University Apartments Family Housing for newly admitted assistants.
8. Eligibility to join the Michigan State University Federal Credit Union.

Teaching Requirements

All Ph.D. students in the Department of Forestry are required to assist in teaching at least one course during one semester of their program of study. (Exceptions to this policy are permitted only to the extent necessary to maintain quality of teaching.)

All graduate students supported by Departmental funds may be required to teach at least once a year and may be required to teach more than once a year when necessary.

Final authority for the assignment of graduate student teaching assistants is the responsibility of the Chairperson who must protect the teaching mission of the Department.

Vacations for Students

Students on graduate assistantships are given two weeks vacation per year plus those scheduled legal holidays given to faculty and staff. When classes are not in session, graduate assistants are expected to work unless they schedule vacation days. There is no stated policy for graduate students who are not on assistantships. Graduate assistants must coordinate their vacation schedule with their Major Professor.

The Research Project

The graduate assistant research project for a thesis or a special problem is normally selected by the student in conference with their Major Professor. It is usually a project that contributes to a research area for which the Department and Major Professor have funds available to support the research project.

Workspace and Use of Facilities

The Major Professor will arrange space for the project and use of research laboratory facilities, when necessary.

If a student's proposed research project will require pesticide applications, the student must become a certified or registered pesticide applicator with the State of Michigan. Students not certified or registered will not be allowed to apply pesticides. Certified or registered pesticide applicators in the Forestry Department are not obliged to apply pesticides for uncertified students. Contact the Extension Bulletin Office in Agriculture Hall for a copy of the Pesticide Applicators Training Manual.

The State of Michigan has a Right-to-Know law for all individuals in the workplace. All students are required to complete a basic safety course on handling hazardous substances found in the workplace. Graduate students conducting procedures in faculty labs must undergo additional training and complete related safety forms for each workplace.

Supplies for Research Projects

Students must have an appropriate account number prior to ordering supplies for research projects. Supplies from off-campus require a requisition from the Major Professor.

Certain items can be obtained directly from MSU Stores and Biochemistry Stores while others must be requisitioned. Stores items are listed in the MSU Stores Catalog. In some cases MSU Stores has an open account with off-campus sources for items not carried in stock. It is necessary to check with MSU Stores before obtaining items from such sources. Supplies from MSU Stores and Biochem Stores must have the approval of the Major Professor who will indicate the account, which is to be charged. Supplies from off-campus, which require a requisition, must be obtained by filling out a requisition request, which the Major Professor can furnish, and which he must sign before it can be processed.

Reimbursement by Direct Pay Voucher

For small items (under \$50) a direct purchase may be most feasible. A direct pay voucher will be issued to reimburse the purchase upon request of the Major Professor.

Scientific Instruments and Microcomputers

A large amount of scientific equipment is available in the Department. Such equipment is assigned to specific staff members for supervision and maintenance. The graduate student with the approval of their Major Professor should initiate approval for its use. Students using scientific equipment should be sure they know how to operate instruments before attempting to use them.

Statistical Consultation Service

The Statistical Consultation Service is a free service provided by MSU through the Department of Statistics and Probability and the Computer Center. Consulting activities are designed to work together to support statistics from the inception of research to the final analysis of research results. Assistance is provided in all phases of research projects including planning, analysis, and reporting. CSTAT offers two levels of consulting, basic and enhanced which are detailed on CSTAT's website: https://cstat.msu.edu/consulting/service_levels.aspx.

Equipment Use

Requests for the use of University vehicles and equipment require permission of the student's Major Professor. In some cases appropriate forms and/or a sign out sheet must be filled out prior to obtaining permission. University facilities are never to be applied to personal use.

Use of University Vehicles

University vehicles are only available to graduate students for authorized use and permission for use is contingent upon the approval of a properly completed travel request. Travel over 500 miles one way in University vehicles must be approved in advance by the Office of Planning and Budgets. The student must note that University's Travel Accident Insurance Policy does not apply to graduate students. Also, University general funds may not be used to travel to collect data primarily for theses and/or dissertations.

Travel Requests

Prior to all travel, a travel authorization form must be completed by the graduate student and signed by the Department Chairperson and the Major Professor. With the exception of local travel, each travel must have a separate travel authorization form processed.

Copy Machine

Copy machine use is restricted. The copy machine is for Department business only.

Telephones

Telephones are provided in graduate student rooms and laboratories. No personal long distance calls may be made from these phones. Local personal calls should be kept to a minimum. A pay telephone is available on the first floor.

Departmental Keys – see Juli Mack at 129 Natural Resources

Doors in the building are locked after hours and on weekends. Access to the building, the lounge, the graduate offices and the research laboratories will require keys. Keys for the building and the assigned graduate offices can be checked out from the Chairperson's Office by the graduate student. There is a \$10.00 per key deposit required by the Department. Keys to other areas can also be obtained with approval.

DEPARTMENTAL COURSES

A series of courses will be designated by the student's guidance committee to introduce graduate students without an undergraduate degree in Forestry to core areas of study within Forestry. A minimum of three, regularly scheduled graduate or undergraduate courses in the Department of Forestry are required in areas outside of the student's proposed specialty area. The level at which undergraduate courses are taken is at the discretion of the class instructor. Although not required, the following courses are recommended: Forest Biometry, Forest and Agricultural Ecology, Silviculture, Forest Management, Wood Science, Natural Resources Economics and Social Science.

Initial Course Selection

Entering graduate students are responsible for contacting their Major Professor and for developing a program of study acceptable to the Major Professor. The student in consultation with the Major Professor will select specific courses. Courses offered by the Department of Forestry are listed on the web (www.for.msu.edu) and in the Academic Programs book.

Forestry Courses:

FOR 802	Forest Science Research
FOR 804	Forest Ecology
FOR 810	Forest Hydrology
FOR 819	Advanced Plant Breeding
FOR 820	Plant Reproductive Biology and Polyploidy
FOR 821	Crop Evolution
FOR 822	Historical Geography of Crop Plants
FOR 824	Forest Soils
FOR 827	Techniques of Cytogenetics
FOR 829	The Economics of Environmental Resources
FOR 830	Wetlands Law and Policy
FOR 832	Environmental and Natural Resource Law
FOR 835	Silviculture
FOR 838	Land Use Law
FOR 842	Population Genetics, Genealogy and Genomics
FOR 845	Forest Resource Policy
FOR 852	Systems Modeling and Simulation
FOR 853	Applied Systems Modeling and Simulation for Natural Resource Management
FOR 858	Gender, Justice and Environmental Change: Issues and Concepts
FOR 859	Gender, Justice and Environmental Change: Methods and Application
FOR 866	Economics of Renewable Resources
FOR 870	Techniques of Analyzing Unbalanced Research Data
FOR 881	Building and Implementing Watershed Management Plans
FOR 885	Leadership in Natural Resources and Environmental Management
FOR 890	Forestry Special Problems
FOR 891B	Selected Topics in Plant Breeding and Genetics
FOR 892	Plant Breeding and Genetics Seminar
FOR 899	Master's Thesis Research
FOR 923	Advanced Environmental and Resource Economics
FOR 925	Environmental and Resource Economics Research
FOR 941	Quant Gen Plant Breeding
FOR 999	Doctoral Dissertation Research

DEPARTMENTAL ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

This section of the Graduate Student Handbook summarizes University, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Department of Forestry academic requirements. More complete and up-to-date statements about University and College level regulations may be found in the current Academic Programs Catalog, reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/, and the University Formatting Guide for Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertation which can be obtained from the Graduate School located in Linton Hall on campus or at <http://grad.msu.edu/>. Please refer any unresolved questions regarding academic regulations to your Major Professor.

Students in non-degree status also must contact their Major Professor and plan an acceptable program of study.

The program of study for all graduate students must be planned and have approval by their committee by the end of the student's third semester of residence.

Graduate students are expected to make reasonable progress toward successful completion of their programs. All graduate students must have attained a 3.0 or higher grade point average in course work, exclusive of collateral courses, by the end of their third semester of residence and may have grading postponed on no more than one-third of the attempted credits. They must maintain at least a 3.0 overall grade point average thereafter. Students not meeting this requirement normally will not be allowed to continue in their programs. Time limits on completion of degree requirements are the single most important reason for failure to achieve advanced degrees in this Department.

Students who do not enroll for one or more semester, other than summer session, must apply for readmission to the University.

Application for Graduation -All students must complete an application for graduation when registering for the final semester of their graduate program at MSU. Forms are available in the Department Office. If a student fails to complete the work within the deadlines published in the Schedule of Courses for that semester, but does complete the requirements before the first day of registration for the next semester, no additional registration is required. The student must fill out another application, however, so that final certification forms are sent to the Department during the following semester.

Preparation of M.S. Theses and Ph.D. Dissertations -The expense of preparing a thesis (paper, printing, binding, photo copying, photographic and art work, etc.) is the responsibility of the graduate student, regardless of whether or not the project is supported by Departmental funds.

Thesis Distribution -An abstract of a M.S. thesis or Ph.D. dissertation must be prepared. The abstract of a M.S. thesis must not exceed 150 words. Two copies of the abstract and one copy of the thesis must be delivered unbound to the Graduate School, who will send it to University Microfilms to be microfilmed and bound. ***In addition, one bound copy of the thesis shall be presented to the Department and to each of the committee members.***

999 Credits – 24 credits are required for graduation, student can enroll for a maximum of 36. Requests for overrides to exceed the maximum of 36 credits of 999 must be directed to the Office of the Registrar. To do so, access the "Request for RNR Override" at the Registrar's Online Forms Menu at <https://www.reg.msu.edu/Forms/FormsMenu.aspx>. Select the RNR override and fill in the requested information. Should the total number of credits go above 45 the RO will confer with the Graduate School before considering the request for an override.

MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM

Master's degree candidates may select from two plans of study: Master's degree candidates may, with the agreement of their Major Professor, elect to concentrate their entire program within their major field of Forestry, or they may divide their effort between Forestry and a minor field outside but related to Forestry.

Plan A, consisting of prescribed course work, research, thesis, and a final oral examination; and Plan B, consisting of prescribed course work, without a thesis, and with a final examination or evaluation.

A Master's program examining committee consists of at least three Michigan State University regular faculty; with at least one of whom is a faculty member of another Department. The student's Major Professor who must be a faculty member in the Department of Forestry chairs the committee. The examining committee is responsible for certifying to the Department Chairperson that the program of study is designed to assist the student in achieving their educational goals and meets the standards of the Department. The program of study should contain:

At least 30-graduate course and research credits beyond the bachelor's degree.

At least 16 course credits at the 800 level or higher including research credits.

At least 6 course credits earned while in residence.

No more than 9 course credits by transfer.

Important regulations governing Master's graduate study programs are listed below.

Course credits earned while in non-degree status, in collateral courses or in courses with grades of less than 2.0 do not count toward minimum credit requirements.

Graduate students other than graduate assistants must have the approval of the Dean's Office if they wish to enroll for more than 16 course credits per semester.

Plan A: A Master's thesis containing 6-10 research credits. These credits count toward the 30 credit minimum requirement. Candidates must follow the guidelines contained in "University Formatting Guide for Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations."

Plan B: Evidence of ability to prepare a scholarly paper. Normally such a paper will be prepared in FOR 890, Special Problems, 2 to 5 credits.

The Major Professor schedules a final oral examination before the tenth Friday of the semester in which degree requirements are to be completed. The examining committee is selected by the Major Professor and approved by the Department Chairperson. It is made up of the Major Professor and two members of the faculty, at least one of whom is from another Department. The examination on the M.S. Plan A thesis and related areas will be oral and of approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours in length. A comparable examination will be held for students working on a Plan B degree. In case of failure, one re-examination may be scheduled at the discretion of the examining committee. The final oral examination must be passed within five years of first enrollment for the Master's degree. A student must be registered during the semester the final oral examination is given.

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DOCTORAL PROGRAM

The guidance committee shall be formed no later than the third semester of doctoral study, or within two semesters beyond the master's degree or its equivalent. Within one semester after the committee has met, the chairperson of the guidance committee shall file a guidance committee report with the dean of the college, listing all degree requirements. This committee consists of at least four Michigan State University regular faculty at least three of whom, including the committee chairperson, possess an earned doctoral degree (preferably of the same type that the student is seeking (for example Ph.D.); and one of whom is a faculty member of another Department. This committee, in consultation with the student, will plan the course program, research and examinations. Normally, a major field of study, and one or more related fields of study are identified in the program.

A comprehensive examination is administered after at least 80 percent of the course work is completed. It will consist of a written exam or exams covering each of the fields of study designated by the guidance committee, and an oral exam that will be attended by the full guidance committee or designated representatives. In case of failure, the committee may allow one examination after at least one semester of additional study. This examination must be completed within five years of enrollment for the Ph.D. degree. Both the written and oral components of the comprehensive examination must be completed during the same semester. Upon passing the comprehensive examination, a student will be classified as a Ph.D. candidate.

The candidate must complete original research upon which a dissertation acceptable to his guidance committee and the Graduate Office is prepared and published. A member of the guidance committee will act as dissertation director and will supervise the candidate's research efforts.

The chairperson of the guidance committee schedules a final oral exam before the ninth Friday of the semester in which degree requirements are to be completed. The guidance committee constitutes the examining committee, and the examination is a public seminar on the dissertation followed by a closed defense of the dissertation by the PhD candidate. In case of failure, one re-examination may be scheduled at the discretion of the examining committee. The final oral examination must be passed within eight years of first enrollment for the Ph.D. degree. A student must be registered during the semester his final oral examination is administered.

Important regulations governing Doctoral graduate study programs are listed below.

At least two consecutive semesters in residence, each with at least six graduate credits.

A year of resident will be made up of two consecutive semesters, involving the completion of credits at the level of full-time status of graduate work each semester.

No more than one-fourth of the course program by transfer.

Course credits earned while in non-degree status, in collateral courses or in courses with grades of less than 2.0 do not count toward minimum credit requirements.

Graduate students other than graduate assistants must have the approval of the Dean's Office if they wish to enroll for more than 16 course credits per semester.

A doctoral student must register for a minimum of 24 research credits (FOR 999). Candidates must follow the format and final procedures contained in "University Formatting Guide for Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations."

Dual Degrees

All dual major doctoral degrees must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. A request for the dual major degree must be submitted within one semester following its developing and within the first two years of the student's enrollment at Michigan State University. For more information, visit the Academic Program Catalog at <https://www.reg.msu.edu/academicprograms/Text.aspx?Section=111#s407>.

Time Limitations

All comprehensive examinations must be passed within five years and all remaining requirements for the degree must be completed within eight years from the time when a student begins the first class at MSU that appears on his or her doctoral program of study. Application for extensions for the eight-year period of time toward degree must be submitted by the department for approval by the dean of the college and the Dean of The Graduate School. Upon approval of the extension, doctoral comprehensive examinations must be passed again.

Work in Absentia

Candidates for the doctoral degree may, with the approval of the guidance committee, carry on some of the work in absentia. Arrangements for registration may be made by applying at the office of the dean of the appropriate college.

Summer Only Option

This option is only for Ph.D. students after passing comps and being appointed as RAs. This summer appointment option does not cover tuition.

For details visit: http://www.hr.msu.edu/hiring/studentemployment/gradasst/grad_nofringe/index.htm

GRADPLAN

All Ph.D. students will be required to use GRADPLAN by the end of Spring semester of 2017. Starting in Summer of 2017, GRADPLAN will be the only way to process final degree certification. Until then, both paper and GRADPLAN can be used.

<<<<<<<<Link Doctoral Forms>>>>>>>>>

RESPONSIBILITIES

Certain duties and responsibilities are spelled out in this section for quick reference.

The Department Chairperson's Responsibilities Include:

1. General supervision, counseling and coordination of graduate student programs.
2. Maintains graduate student file containing an up-to-date collection of all official papers.
3. Assigning office space and desks for graduate students.
4. Allocation of assistantships.
5. Authorizing the processing of official forms.

The Chairperson's Secretaries Responsibilities Include:

1. Scheduling appointments with the Chairperson.
2. Issuing departmental keys.

The Accounting Clerk's Responsibilities Include:

1. Compiling required information and processes assistantship paperwork.

The Graduate Secretary's Responsibilities Include:

1. Typing required program forms.
2. Assisting with course overrides.
3. Distributing a Graduate Student Handbook to each incoming student.

The Major Professor's Responsibilities Include:

1. Responsibility for program, guidance, training and supervision of graduate student.
2. The conduct of regularly scheduled conferences with the student.
3. Acquainting the student with departmental policies.
4. Arranging space for graduate student research projects.
5. Checking and approving all necessary graduate forms and requests for materials, travel and services.
6. Arranging for guidance committees and examining committees.
7. Checking academic standing of the student at the end of each semester excluding collateral courses. If the student's GPA falls below 3.0 or a grade lower than 2.0 is obtained, a critical re-evaluation of the program should be made immediately with the Department Chairperson.
8. Making the initial acceptance of the thesis, deciding when it is satisfactory for committee action, and scheduling the meeting of the guidance committee for the final oral examination.
9. Confirmation of completed paperwork before graduating student leaves campus.
10. Verifying submission of bound copy of the thesis or dissertation to the chairperson.

The Graduate Student's Responsibilities Include:

1. Formulating the objectives of the program of study and providing the initiative for the accomplishment of these objectives.
2. Preparing a program proposal for courses to be taken.
3. Completing all courses satisfactorily, which have been approved as part of your program by your Guidance Committee.
4. Developing a research proposal for the Ph.D. or M.S. Plan A in consultation with your Major Professor and completing the project satisfactorily.
5. Preparing and submitting an acceptable bound thesis or dissertation.
6. Submitting bound and unbound copies of the thesis or dissertation and abstract to the appropriate offices.
7. Initiating the following forms:
 - a. Master's Degree Program in consultation with Major Professor.
 - or-
 - b. Doctoral Degree Program in consultation with Major Professor.
 - c. Change of Program in consultation with Major Professor.
 - d. Initiating the application for graduation.
 - e. Checkout sheet upon graduation.
8. Initiating the following forms for the M.S. student:
 - a. Proposed Academic Program
 - b. Program Adjustment
 - c. Announcement of Examination
 - d. Report of Examination
 - e. Change of Status
 - f. Final Certification for Degree
9. Initiating the following forms for the Ph.D. student:
 - a. Appointment of Guidance Committee
 - b. Report of Guidance Committee
 - c. Program Adjustment
 - d. Record of Comprehensive Examination
 - e. Change of Status
 - f. Announcement of Dissertation Examination
 - g. Record of Completion of Dissertation and Oral Examination Requirements
 - h. Final Certification for Degree

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

Financial Aid, Assistantships, and Fellowship Resources:

Sources of Financial Assistance

Financial aid is available through a wide variety of sources. Research assistantships may be supported by funds from the University, the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, or national and international research projects. Students on assistantships receive a tuition waiver equivalent to nine credits in Fall and Spring semesters and five credits in Summer semester, and are entitled to pay tuition at resident rates for any additional credits.

College and University fellowships are available (see the Graduate School's Funding Opportunities website: <http://grad.msu.edu/funding/>). The MSU Distinguished Fellowship Program is a University-wide, competitive Ph.D. fellowship program open to entering graduate students with bachelor's or master's degrees who plan to pursue a Ph.D. The competition is open to U.S. citizens or permanent U.S. residents.

Fellows receive up to five years of guaranteed funding. For additional fellowship and scholarship opportunities, see the Financial Aid search engine on the MSU website (<https://scholendow2.ais.msu.edu/Student/ScholSearch.asp>) and/or the Horticulture Graduate Program's Financial Aid website <http://www.hrt.msu.edu/assistantships-scholarships-2/>.

Several national agencies, such as the National Science Foundation, also award fellowships for graduate studies.

Graduate Research Assistantships

Depending on the availability of funds in the department and in individual research projects, research assistantships may be available on a quarter-time or half-time (rarely three-quarter-time) basis.

Besides a monthly stipend, assistantship recipients receive many other benefits including tuition waivers and health benefits. More information is available on pages

Graduate Research Fellowships and Grants

Links for Further Assistance:

Academic Programs Catalog	http://www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/
Department of Forestry	http://www.for.msu.edu/
Graduate Student Health Insurance	http://www.hr.msu.edu/benefits/studenthealth/index.htm
Michigan State University	www.msu.edu
MSU Conflict Resolution	http://grad.msu.edu/conflictresolution/
MSU Council of Graduate Students (COGS)	http://www.cogs.msu.edu
MSU Counseling Service	http://counseling.msu.edu
MSU Graduate Employee Union (GEU)	http://www.geuatmsu.org
MSU Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities	http://grad.msu.edu/gsrr/
MSU Graduate Student Travel	http://grad.msu.edu/travel/
MSU Grievances/Ombudsman	http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/
MSU Guidelines for Graduate Student Advising and Research Mentoring	http://grad.msu.edu/publications/docs/studentadvising.pdf
MSU Institutional Review Boards (IRBs)	http://hrpp.msu.edu/
MSU Research and Scholarly Integrity	http://grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/
MSU Research Integrity Office	http://www.rio.msu.edu
MSU Scholarship Search	https://scholendow2.ais.msu.edu/Student/ScholSearch.asp
MSU Scholarships and Grants	http://finaid.msu.edu/sships.asp
MSU Writing Center	http://writing.msu.edu
The Graduate School	http://grad.msu.edu/