

Applying to MSU and Earning a Degree or Certificate in Agriculture

When students consider earning a degree in agriculture in Michigan, they think of MSU. As a professor and advisor in the Dept. of Crop and Soil Sciences (Dept. of Plant, Soil, and Microbial Sciences as of July 1, 2012), I receive many phone calls from high school students and their parents asking about opportunities at MSU. This document contains the information I usually discuss with students and their parents. The information is based on my experience as an advisor, as a parent of two college-age students, and as an instructor of two of the courses many agriculture students take their first year at MSU.

Options Available to Students

Students interested in agriculture may either (a) complete a certificate program in the Institute of Agriculture Technology or (b) complete a four year bachelor's degree program. Students usually contact me because of an interest in agronomy. If students are interested in animal science as a major, horticulture, or teaching agriscience in high school, students speak with advisers from other departments. Students interested in crops are often not sure if their interest in agriculture is in the 'science' part of agronomy, the 'business' aspects, or both. The advisor in Agribusiness Management, Ruthi Bloomfield, and I work together to help students figure out their goals and what they want to major, minor, or specialize in once they arrive at MSU.

Seeking Admission to a Bachelor's Program

High school students take the ACT exam in the spring of their junior year. The ACT score and a student's high school GPA have a large influence in determining the educational path students will follow after high school. For admission to MSU in a bachelor's program, students need to have a good ACT score and good high school GPA. For example, the middle 50 percent of incoming MSU freshmen for Fall 2012 have the profile listed below, so 25% of students score lower than indicated and 25% score higher (http://admissions.msu.edu/admission/freshmen_profile.asp):

High school GPA: 3.4 - 3.9

Composite ACT: 23 - 28

Composite SAT (Critical Reading and Math): 1020-1220

Students should apply to MSU in the fall of their senior year – (prior to November 1 is best) for admission to a four year program and should be diligent about completing all aspects of the application. Students should make sure they take their time and give thought to the required essay question. Students who are the first in their family to attend college should make sure they inform the university by checking the appropriate box on the application. Although, there are no set 'rules' on what ACT score and GPA are needed for admission to MSU for a four year degree program, a 2.5 GPA and an ACT score ≤ 20 probably will be a challenge to admission. However, all students interested in a bachelor's degree are encouraged to apply and should know there are other pathways to a bachelor's degree in an

agricultural program should a student be denied direct admission to MSU . Two optional pathways are (1) attending the Institute of Agricultural Technology or (2) attending a community college and then transferring to MSU. Both pathways permit a student to transfer into a bachelor's program if the transfer criteria are met.

Seeking Admission to the Institute of Agricultural Technology (also called Ag Tech or IAT) at MSU

Some students are not interested in a four-year degree and prefer the Institute of Agricultural Technology ('Ag Tech') certificate program. Admission to Ag Tech is through a separate application and fee and students apply directly to the Ag Tech Office which is part of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The web site for the Institute of Agricultural Technology is <http://iat.msu.edu/>. Students should apply in the fall of their senior year. Ag Tech has career-ready programs that have high employment rates after completion of the Certificate and the opportunity to transfer to a bachelor's program for those who want to transfer. Ag Tech offers nine on-campus programs, including dairy and landscape and nursery, and seven off-campus programs in conjunction with community colleges. Erin Bosch is the advisor of the Agricultural Industries Certificate Program, an on-campus program in which students take classes in crop and soil sciences, horticulture, and agribusiness management. Erin Bosch's email address is boscher2@msu.edu. Students who are interested in other Ag Tech programs should contact the Ag Tech Office (517-355-0190 or 1-888-247-4832 for in-state long distance calls).

Students in the Ag Industries certificate program usually attend MSU for three semesters (fall, spring, and the following fall) and complete an internship in the summer after their first year. Students are accepted into the Ag Industries program throughout the year. Although there is no set date for submission of an application, students are encouraged to apply early in their senior year of high school since the program only accepts a certain number of students and closes when that number is reached. Interested students and/or their parents should contact Erin Bosch, and possibly meet with her in the fall of their senior year. Students take many of the same first year classes as students enrolled in a crop and soil sciences or agribusiness management bachelor's program at MSU, including CSS 101 Introduction to Crop Science and ABM 130 Farm Management I. Students live in the residence halls (or at home or with a relative if it is near the MSU campus) and have the same rights and privileges as other MSU students.

Transferring from Ag Tech to a Bachelor's Program at MSU

Some students come to MSU in the Ag Tech Program and decide they want to continue their education and complete a bachelor's degree at MSU. Ag Tech students who complete the IAT program with a 3.0 GPA or higher and complete the MSU English requirement of WRA 110 or its equivalent through Lansing Community College or another community college and the equivalent of MSU's MTH 103 at a community college will be accepted into a bachelor's program at MSU. Students also must meet any additional requirements if they are applying to a bachelor's level limited enrollment program (Crop and Soil Sciences and Agribusiness Management are not limited enrollment programs). Students must earn at least a 2.0 grade in the WRA 110 and MTH 103 equivalent courses and should strive to maintain as high a GPA as possible (at least a 3.0) in any other community college courses they take prior to

transferring. The detailed Ag Tech transfer guidelines may be found at <http://www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.asp?Section=114#s1441>. All non-MSU courses required for transfer "must be completed at least one full semester before the desired term of enrollment at MSU."

Transferring from a Community College to a Bachelor's Program at MSU

Students who attend a community college or another college or university after high school must apply to transfer to MSU and must complete the transfer requirements and have a GPA at the community college (or other college or university) of 3.0 or higher. There are two web sites that are very useful to students, parents, and community college advisors if a student is thinking of following this pathway. If a student goes to the www.msu.edu web site and clicks on Admissions and then clicks on Prospective Students and then clicks on Transfer Students, the web site explains the transfer process and provides students with Transfer Guides. These guides are very important because they tell the student what courses they need to take at the various community colleges or other universities in Michigan prior to transferring to MSU. For example, a student going to community college needs to take: 1) the equivalent of WRA 110- 150 (English writing), 2) MTH 103 (college algebra), 3) a course in Integrated Social Sciences, and 4) a course in Integrated Arts and Humanities. For these last two requirements, there are many courses at community colleges to choose from. Lastly, students must take a course in the physical sciences and the biological sciences. Again, there are many courses to choose from in the transfer guides.

There is another web site, www.transfer.msu.edu that is accessible by anyone and lists the courses offered at MSU (or the community college or other college or university) and how they transfer and what courses they 'replace' at MSU. This web site should be consulted to determine what courses to take prior to applying to MSU.

Students who want to transfer to MSU should apply in December for Admission to MSU the following fall. Students will receive information from MSU stating that their transfer file will not be reviewed until all of their transfer courses have been completed. Students should send their transcripts in December. Students should then send a transcript in May immediately after spring semester grades are completed. Students are usually notified by MSU Admissions in June if they are accepted to MSU or not. Students should not delay applying to MSU because of this; students should still apply in the fall for admission the following fall. All courses required for transfer "must be completed at least one full semester before the desired term of enrollment at MSU." For example, if applying for fall 2013 admission, all transfer courses must be completed by spring 2013.

For students considering majoring in either Crop and Soil Sciences or Agribusiness Management, the basic course requirements are very similar with the exception of the sciences. Agribusiness Management majors take integrated science courses (ISB for biology and ISP for physical sciences) because this is a *business*-based major; Crop and Soil Sciences majors take science courses (plant biology or cell biology and chemistry) because this is a *science*-based major. Once students are at MSU they take crop and soil science courses and agribusiness courses but understanding the difference in the

general science requirement of the two majors is important. When viewing the transfer guides, Crop and Soil Science majors should take a chemistry course that transfers as CEM 141 and a biology course that transfers as BS 161 OR PLB 105, whereas Agribusiness Management majors can usually choose from various courses that give transfer credit in ISB and ISP.

When a student enrolls at a community college or another college or university, they usually take math and English placement tests. Students may place into an English course to prepare them for the WRA 110 equivalent or place into a Math course to prepare them for the MTH 103 equivalent. Also at many other schools there are two English courses required to = WRA 110. See the Transfer Guides and the www.transfer.msu.edu

A typical community college schedule would look like:

FALL

WRA 110-150 equivalent or another WRA course to prepare for WRA 110 equivalent.

MTH 103 equivalent or another MTH course to prepare for MTH 103

ISS equivalent

BS 161 or ISB equivalent

SPRING

IAH equivalent

CEM 141 or ISP equivalent

WRA if needed

MTH if needed

Many community college students take three courses each semester instead of four. It is important to do well at community college. A minimum GPA close to 3.0 is required to transfer to MSU; although, it does not guarantee acceptance. Other courses that students take include an economics course or a computer science course. Students who plan to transfer to MSU should contact the advisor in the desired major after viewing the transfer guides.

Transferring from Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) to Michigan State University

SVSU and Michigan State University have prepared a Pre-Agriculture transfer guide leading to the MSU Bachelor of Science degree. The guide outlines SVSU courses students may complete during the first two years of college at SVSU before transferring to MSU to apply for an opportunity in MSU's College of Agriculture & Natural Resources. For more information see the SVSU web site.

<http://www.svsu.edu/academicprograms/introductions/undergraduateprograms/>

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