

**MICHIGAN STATE**  
**UNIVERSITY**

**School of Planning, Design and Construction**  
**Master of Arts**  
**Environmental Design**  
**Graduate Student Handbook**

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## **Forward**

It is not expected that all answers will be found in this text. Unforeseen questions will arise and answers will be needed. Students should begin by addressing their questions to the graduate academic advisor and/or assigned major professor. In most cases, the academic advisor, student's major professor, the Associate Director, or the Graduate Secretary will be able to provide the required information. Complex issues may require the advice and action by the School's Graduate Affairs and Curriculum Committee, the SPDC Director or Associate Director and faculty.

Students have the option of following degree requirements set forth in the School of Planning Design and Construction which are in effect during their first semester of enrollment or degree requirements which are published subsequent to their enrollment.

Updates and corrections to this handbook will be posted on the School of Planning, Design and Construction website: [www.spdc.msu.edu](http://www.spdc.msu.edu)

## GENERAL GRADUATE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

### 1. INTRODUCTION TO SPDC

The School of Planning, Design and Construction (SPDC), jointly administered by the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the College of Social Science, is composed of four major disciplines:

- Construction Management
- Interior Design
- Landscape Architecture
- Urban and Regional Planning

Through the College of Agricultural and Natural Resources the School offers graduate programs leading to:

- Master of Science in Construction Management
- Master of Arts in Environmental Design
- Doctor of Philosophy in Planning, Design and Construction with transcriptable concentrations in”
  - Construction Management
  - Environmental Design
  - Urban and Regional Planning

Through the College of Social Science the School offers graduate programs leading to:

- Master in Urban and Regional Planning
- Master of International Planning Studies

The graduate student population of the School is characterized by diversity. There is a substantial representation of domestic and international students from a variety of countries in Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Many students, both domestic and international, have completed undergraduate degrees in construction management, interior design, landscape architecture, and urban planning or degrees in related disciplines such as architecture, engineering, social science, business, and environmental design fields. Students from natural science degrees, along with professional degrees in law, medicine, and other fields are encouraged to apply.

Graduates of the School of Planning, Design and Construction are sought by employers domestically and internationally. Graduates with advanced degrees are more likely to select education, research, or management positions than those with bachelor degrees, and less likely to be placed in entry-level positions.

Facilities for advanced study and research are located on the top three floors of the Human Ecology Building, which is immediately east of the MSU Student Union. These facilities include multiple studio and computer laboratories, state of the art lecture halls, faculty offices, workrooms, and dedicated graduate student research and office space. Galleries for temporary displays and critique-presentations are located on two floors of the building

*\* Please note: SPDC is no longer admitting students for the Master of Arts in Interior Design Facilities Management. To earn a masters degree under the guidance of Interior Design faculty, students are encouraged to apply to the Master of Arts in Environmental Design. Current students in the Master of Arts in Interior Design Facilities Management may complete their degree in Interior Design and Facilities Management.*

## 2. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

All on-campus graduate students are expected to attend the School of Planning, Design and Construction fall semester orientation. The orientation program includes an overview of the graduate degrees and of School policies and procedures. The major goal is to familiarize students with the School and provide an opportunity for them to meet their fellow graduate students. During orientation students will be introduced to the School's graduate faculty. An overview of faculty research interests and activities, as well as any special research opportunities that currently exist, will be presented. The orientation session helps students plan their courses and identify potential members of their guidance committee.

**For all degree programs it is strongly suggested that graduate students map out their coursework and requirements early as many courses are taught only one semester per year and others may have prerequisites.** During the second semester graduate students must file with the SPDC Graduate Academic Advisor or Graduate Secretary an Academic Program of Study, signed by their major professor or academic advisor. Once submitted, changes to the Academic Program of Study must be approved by the student's guidance committee. Students in degrees administered by the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources must also have approval of the Dean.

### MASTER DEGREE COMPONENTS AND OPTIONS

All graduate students engage in a combination of formal coursework as well as independent efforts that result in a thesis, Plan B paper, or final examination. SPDC graduate degree programs are structured around the following components:

1. Core courses
2. Elective courses
3. Research component, Plan A (Thesis) or Plan B (Non-Thesis)

For Plan A, students are required to prepare a thesis. The thesis, based on original research, is designed to demonstrate the student's familiarity with the tools of research and scholarship in the field, the ability to work independently, and the ability to present and defend the results of a significant research effort. The thesis must be acceptable to and approved by the student's guidance committee and the candidate must pass an oral thesis defense. The quality of the thesis is expected to be comparable to journal publications in the student's area of study.

Under Plan B, students have two options: The first option is to complete a Plan B paper designed to demonstrate the student's familiarity with the tools of research and scholarship in the field, and the ability to present and defend the results of a minor scholarly effort. The Plan B paper must be acceptable to and approved by the student's Plan B guidance committee and the candidate must pass an oral defense. The quality of the paper is expected to be comparable to conference presentations in the student's area of study. The second option, under Plan B is to take a set of approved courses plus a final examination. Options for Plan B differ by degree and not every degree offers both options.

**Specific degree requirements for each major are defined in the Program Overview area of this handbook.**

## Transfer Courses

Students may transfer no more than 9 approved semester credits of course work, excluding research and thesis credits. <http://www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.asp?Section=111#s383>

## Independent Study

At Michigan State University an independent study is a planned study that is highly individualized and not addressable through any other course format. In essence, a student must design a full course for him/herself with the help of a faculty member.

Students electing to undertake an independent study must select a faculty member to supervise the project. After the faculty member agrees to supervise the study, the student must submit an *Application for Independent Study* (<https://reg.msu.edu/read/pdf/indestudyapp.pdf>) to the faculty member/instructor for the study. After the instructor's approval, the application must be signed by the major professor or academic advisor. When the application is completed and approved, an override will be issued and the student must register for the appropriate course for the number of credits agreed upon.

The independent study must:

- consist of work not described in the MSU *Description of Courses* book in any other format;
- relate to a subject for which the student has adequate preparation;
- be directed by a faculty member with whom there is periodic contact and consultation throughout the study;
- not exceed a maximum of four credits of independent study per semester or eight semester credits in a single academic year, subject to School, College and Graduate School restrictions
- be applied for on the *Application for Independent Study* form;
  - be approved by the instructor and the School *before* the student enrolls for the course, and
  - be enrolled during the regular enrollment period.

Ideally a student should begin designing the independent study course with the prospective faculty member one semester before registering for the course.

## STUDY ABROAD/TRAVEL ABROAD

Study abroad programs are designed to be of benefit to students of all disciplines. In some SPDC programs students can fulfill certain course requirements with study abroad credits; this fosters completion of the degree program while gaining valuable, overseas experience. SPDC offers a variety of study abroad options.

For additional information contact:

*Office of Study Abroad*

427 N. Shaw Lane, Room 109

Michigan State University

East Lansing, MI 48824-1035

Phone: 517-353-8920

<http://studyabroad.msu.edu/>

## **Selection of Major Professor**

Students should refer to the degree specific section of this handbook for information on selection of a major professor. Until a major professor is selected, students may contact Ms. Robin Rennie, SPDC Graduate Academic Advisor for advising assistance.

## **Formation of Guidance Committee**

A guidance committee is selected by the student with advice from the major professor or graduate academic advisor. Members of the committee act as mentors, advisors, and evaluators for the student's program and research. They approve the Academic Program of Study and the thesis or final examination. In the rare case when the student needs to change his or her Guidance Committee, a written request must be addressed to the Associate Director explaining the reason for the change. All committee members are regular faculty of MSU or specialists that have been approved by The Graduate School to serve on guidance committees.

## **Thesis Proposal and Plan B Paper Proposal**

The student must provide to his or her major professor and guidance committee members a proposal for thesis research under Plan A or a Plan B report/project. After the proposed topic has been approved the student will begin writing the thesis or Plan B report/project.

## **Thesis Defense and Final Oral Examination for Plan A**

The final defense of the thesis constitutes the student's final oral examination. It consists of a presentation of the thesis work in an open forum to the guidance committee, students, faculty and other interested persons. The presentation is followed by a defense of the thesis which is held in a closed meeting with the student's major professor and guidance committee. The student's guidance committee functions as the examination committee for the final oral defense. In order to pass the exam, the student must receive a positive vote by the major professor and the committee members. The following policies apply:

- The student must be enrolled during the semester in which the exam is taken.
- The student must provide each of the guidance committee members a copy of the **thesis two weeks prior to the exam.**
- The student must schedule a time for the exam and a conference room and notify the Graduate Secretary of the exam date, time and location, at least two weeks prior to the exam so that an announcement may be posted to the public.

## **Submission of Master's Thesis - Plan-A**

The thesis should be finalized according to the rules and specifications of the MSU Graduate School (see "Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guide" at <http://grad.msu.edu/thesisdissertation/formattingguide.aspx>) and must conform to "Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities" which is available from the MSU Graduate School Office at <http://grad.msu.edu/publications/docs/integrityresearch.pdf>

The student must provide the Graduate School with a copy of the thesis via the process described at <http://www.grad.msu.edu/etd/> Students must submit a copy, either bound or electronic as the faculty

member prefers to their major professor and committee. A digital copy of the abstract and thesis must be submitted to the SPDC Graduate Secretary.

When submitting an electronic thesis or dissertation to ProQuest, a student has now the option to open the document to searches using Google, Google Scholar and Google Books. The option to block such searches continues to be available.

The policy for embargos of thesis and dissertations has been changed, **but continues to be restricted to requests involving potential patents**. What is different is that the period of the embargo is restricted to six months and the holding of the document is now done by ProQuest after the electronic thesis/dissertation is submitted after the approval of the Graduate School.

### **Submission of Master's Plan-B, Paper Option**

A Plan B Paper must be submitted and defended in a Final Oral Examination administered by the student's guidance committee. In order to pass the exam, the student must receive a positive vote from the major professor and all but one of the guidance committee members.

### **Final Examination for Plan B, Non-Paper Option**

Under this option students must complete a final examination or evaluation. The examination or evaluation is administered by a committee appointed by the School of Planning, Design and Construction. In order to pass the exam, the student must receive a positive vote from the majority of the committee members.

### **Certification for Graduation**

In order to be certified to graduate, students must verify their graduation status with the SPDC Graduate Academic Advisor and apply for graduation with the Office of The Registrar. The appropriate form is available online, <http://www.reg.msu.edu/StuForms/GradApp/GradApp.asp>. If the student does not graduate during the intended semester, a new application must be submitted for the semester of intended graduation. Following is detailed information on the final steps students need to take in order to complete their graduate degree at MSU: <http://grad.msu.edu/graduation/>

### **Commencement Ceremony**

Effective Fall 2012 the Graduate Advanced Degree Ceremonies will be on Friday of Finals week: 3:30 PM in the Breslin Center. Graduates and faculty should arrive one hour early to put on gowns and be properly ordered for the procession.

## **Student Responsibilities and Expectations**

It is the responsibility of ALL graduate students to:

1. Learn and adhere to University and academic unit rules, procedures and policies, including those outlined in this Graduate Handbook, in Academic Programs, Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities, and Academic Freedom for Students at MSU. These publications are available in the Graduate School web sites, <http://grad.msu.edu/gsrr/>
2. Select a major professor and form a Guidance Committee that meets University and School requirements, keep the members of their Committee informed regarding their academic progress;
3. After consultation with the major professor or graduate academic advisor, complete and file the Academic Progress Report/Annual Evaluation form each spring semester. The form is available at <http://grad.msu.edu/annualevaluation/>;
4. Follow disciplinary and scholarly codes of ethics in course work, research, and professional activities, <http://www.msu.edu/%7Ebiomed/rcr/>;
5. Follow high ethical standards in accordance with University and federal guidelines in collecting and maintaining data, including seeking regulatory approval for research before any research project begins; and
6. Provide the School with copies of research-related documents (such as permits, approvals, grant proposals, research proposals) within the prescribed deadlines.



## **Academic Standards**

**Grades** - The student must earn a grade of 2.0 or higher in each course in the approved Academic Program of Study. Any course in the approved Academic Program of Study for which the grade earned falls below 2.0 must be repeated. In addition, students in degree programs administered by the College of Social Science shall not have more than two 3-credit courses with grades below 3.0.

**Cumulative Grade-Point Average** - The student must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.0 in the courses listed in the approved Academic Program of Study.

**Annual Evaluation** - Graduate students receive a periodic evaluation of their academic progress, performance, and professional potential. The major professor or graduate academic advisor will meet with the graduate student at least once a year during spring semester to review the graduate student's progress concerning his or her research or creative activity as well as plans for work in the coming year (GSRR 2.4.8). A letter/written report on the results of this review will be signed by the members of the student's guidance committee and by the graduate student. This report will be filed with the major professor and a copy filed in the student's academic file together with any response the student may have to the report of the guidance committee.

**Probation Status** - A student is placed on probation if the student's cumulative grade-point average for the courses in the approved academic program of study is below 3.0.

## **Academic Records**

Each student will have an academic file on record containing submitted application materials, grade reports, academic program of study materials, and copies of official letters from the School and faculty. Students have the right to challenge the accuracy of academic files. This challenge, correction or inaccuracy is addressed by the student writing a letter that is to be placed in his/her academic file. Students are allowed to examine their file by making an appointment with the Graduate Secretary or Graduate Academic Advisor.

If a student is an employee of MSU, a separate employment file will be maintained by the employing office/program/department.

## **Retention in and Dismissal from the Program**

Should a student's cumulative grade-point average fall below 3.0 after having completed 16 or more credits in courses in the approved academic program of study, the student will be placed on probationary status in the master's degree program for one additional semester. If at the end of the additional semester the student's cumulative grade-point average is 3.0 or higher, the student will be placed on full graduate status for the master's degree program. If at the end of the additional semester the student's cumulative grade-point average is still below a 3.0, the student will be dismissed from the program. In addition, for degrees offered through the College of Social Science the accumulation of grades below 3.0 (including N grades in the P–N grading system) in more than two courses of three or more credits each removes the student from the degree program; this policy does not apply to courses below the 400 level unless the courses are required for the student's academic program.

## **Course Waiver**

Students requesting course waivers must compile suitable documentation concerning the course proposed as a substitute for the course to be waived. Suitable documentation may include but is not limited to: course syllabi, examinations, term papers, bibliographies, textbooks, reading lists, and lecture notes. A lack of suitable documentation may be grounds for refusal to grant the waiver. Once suitable documentation is compiled, students shall request written permissions from their guidance committee and from the instructor of the course to be waived. After completing the preceding steps, students shall submit all materials to the Graduate Academic Advisor.

## **Time to Completion of Degree**

It is vital that students make adequate progress in their graduate programs. Lack of satisfactory progress toward the degree may jeopardize the student's funding status and other graduate student benefits, and it may lead to dismissal. The major professor and/or graduate academic advisor conducts an annual review and informs the student of his or her level of progress.

The following time limits have been set by the University:

(1) The time limit for completion of the requirements for the master's degree is **five years** (six years for programs in the College of Social Science) from the date of enrollment in the student's first course in the Master's degree program.

(2) Applications for extensions of periods of time toward the degree must be submitted by the School for approval by the Dean of the College and the Dean of The Graduate School.

## **3. POLICIES REGARDING INTEGRITY AND SAFETY IN RESEARCH**

### **Integrity in Research and Creative Activities**

The conduct of research and creative activities by faculty, staff, and students is central to the mission of Michigan State University (Michigan State University "Mission Statement" approved by the Board of Trustees on April 18, 2008, ( <http://president.msu.edu/mission/> ) and is an institutional priority. Faculty, staff, and students work in a rich and competitive environment for the common purpose of learning, creating new knowledge, and disseminating information and ideas for the benefit of their peers and the general public. The stature and reputation of MSU as a research university are based on the commitment of its faculty, staff, and students to excellence in scholarly and creative activities and to the highest standards of professional integrity. As a partner in scholarly endeavors, MSU is committed to creating an environment that promotes ethical conduct and integrity in research and creative activities.

Innovative ideas and advances in research and creative activities have the potential to generate professional and public recognition and, in some instances, commercial interest and financial gain. In rare cases, such benefits may become motivating factors to violate professional ethics. Pressures to publish, to obtain research grants, or to complete academic requirements also may lead to an erosion of professional integrity.

Breaches in professional ethics range from questionable research practices to misconduct (MSU Faculty Handbook, Chapter VI, “Research and Creative Endeavor—Procedures Concerning Allegations of Misconduct in Research and Creative Activities”). The primary responsibility for adhering to professional standards lies with the individual scholar. It is, however, also the responsibility of advisors and of the disciplinary community at large. Passive acceptance of improper practices lowers inhibitions to violate professional ethics. Students should also refer to MSU Graduate School’s “Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities.”

Integrity in research and creative activities is based not only on sound disciplinary practice but also on a commitment to basic personal values such as fairness, equity, honesty, and respect. These guidelines are intended to promote high professional standards by everyone—faculty, staff, and students alike.

**Key Principles** - Integrity in research and creative activities embodies a range of practices that include:

- Honesty in proposing, performing, and reporting research
- Recognition of prior work
- Confidentiality in peer review
- Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest
- Compliance with institutional and sponsor requirements
- Protection of human subjects and humane care of animals in the conduct of research
- Collegiality in scholarly interactions and sharing of resources
- Adherence to fair and open relationships between senior scholars and their coworkers

Students are encouraged to read the complete text of “Integrity in Research and Creative Activities” which is available from the MSU Graduate School Office at <http://grad.msu.edu/publications/docs/integrityresearch.pdf>

### **Office of Radiation, Chemical and Biological Safety (ORCBS)**

The use of hazardous materials in research, teaching, and outreach activities is subject to state and federal laws and guidelines. The Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies has been assigned responsibility to see that appropriate practices are followed where hazardous materials are involved, to maintain a safe environment for campus personnel, to protect the surrounding community, and to assure the MSU meets its obligations under the law.

Oversight of activities involving hazardous substances is provided by the ORCBS. ORCBS is assisted by faculty committees in the area of radiation safety, chemical safety, and biological safety. The Radiation Safety Committee has responsibility and authority under federal law for specific actions.

The ORCBS provides live and on-line training classes throughout the year to educate the employees and students of Michigan State University on safe work practices. Completion of these courses by MSU personnel ensures that the university is fulfilling local, state and federal regulations in radiation, chemical, biological, hazardous waste, and environmental safety. For more information about courses contact the ORCBS at 355-0153.

## Human Subjects Research

A student whose research involves human subjects must receive approval for their project from the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) *prior* to initiating data collection for their master's thesis, pre-dissertation research, or doctoral dissertation. HRPP is an Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Federal and University regulations *require* that all research projects involving human subjects be reviewed and approved by an IRB before initiation. Under the regulations, research is defined as a formal investigation designed to develop or contribute to general knowledge. A human subject of research is an individual (1) from whom an investigator obtains data by interaction or intervention or (2) about whom the researcher obtains confidential information.

Depending upon the level of risk to subjects in the protocol, HRPP assigns the student's application to one of three review categories (exempt from full review, expedited review, and full review) and sends it to one, two or five reviewers, respectively. If the reviewer(s) is satisfied that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are adequately protected, he or she approves it. However, if the reviewer has concerns, the reviewer returns written comments to the HRPP office for transmission to the investigator. The investigator must then send a response to each comment, in writing, to HRPP which will forward it to the reviewer(s). If the proposal is either an exempt or expedited proposal, an approval letter can be issued as soon as the reviewer(s) approves. When a proposal receives full (five-member sub-committee) review, an approval letter is issued after the proposal is discussed and approved by vote of the full committee at its monthly meeting. More information can be found at <http://humanresearch.msu.edu/>.

Copies of the HRPP application form and the official notification of HRPP approval must be kept in the student's academic file maintained by the School's Graduate Secretary and in the files maintained by the student's major professor. The student also should keep copies in his/her own personal files. Failure to satisfy the University standards and HRPP regulations is considered grounds for dismissal from the program. A copy of the approval must be included as an appendix in the thesis or dissertation.

## Michigan State University Guidelines on Authorship

Adopted by the University Research Council

January 15, 1998

Available at: <https://www.msu.edu/unit/vprgs/authorshipguidelines.htm>

1. **Authorship** - A person claiming authorship of a scholarly publication must have met the following criteria:
  - a. Substantial participation in conception and design of the study, or in analysis and interpretation of data;
  - b. Substantial participation in the drafting of the manuscript or in the substantive editing of the manuscript;
  - c. Final approval of the version of the manuscript to be published;
  - d. Ability to explain and defend the study in public or scholarly settings.
  - e. (Note: these criteria follow closely those recommended by several professional associations. See especially the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, Annals of Internal Medicine 1988; 108: 258-65.)
2. **Acknowledgment** - Contributions that do not justify authorship should be acknowledged separately in the notes to the manuscript. These may include general supervision of a research group, assistance in obtaining funding, or technical support.
3. **"Honorary Authorship"** - A claim of authorship by, or assignment of authorship to, persons who may have been associated in some way with a study but do not meet the four criteria in item 1 may constitute an unethical research practice.
4. **Graduate Student Authorship** - "Faculty should be especially aware of their responsibility to safeguard the rights of graduate students to publish the results of their research." (MSU Research Handbook, 1985, p. 16, section 4.3.1.)
5. **Senior Author and Order of Authorship** - The senior author is generally defined as the person who leads a study and makes a major contribution to the work. All the authors at the outset of a project should establish senior authorship, preferably in a written memorandum of understanding. This memorandum of understanding should reference the authors' agreement to abide by their departments' policy on authorship or this University default policy on authorship. At the outset of the study the Senior Author should discuss the outline of work and a tentative Order of Authorship with the study participants. As projects proceed, agreements regarding authorship may need to be changed. It is the responsibility of the senior author to assure that the contributions of study participants are properly recognized.
6. **Disputes Over Authorship** - Disagreements over authorship, e.g. who has a right to be an author or the order of authorship, should be resolved by the Senior Author in collegial consultation with the other authors. When this process cannot reach resolution, the Senior Author should arrange with his or her chairperson for arbitration by a knowledgeable and disinterested third party acceptable to all the authors. If the authors cannot agree on a mutually acceptable arbitrator, then the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies shall appoint an arbitrator. During the arbitration process all the authors are expected to refrain from unilateral actions that may damage the authorship interests and rights of the other authors.
7. **Accountability** - Every author listed on a publication is presumed to have approved the final version of the manuscript. Each author is responsible for the integrity of the research being reported.
8. **Plagiarism** - The word plagiarism is derived from the Latin *plagiarius*, an abductor, and *plagiare*, to steal. The expropriation of another author's text, and the presentation of it as one's own, constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism, in turn, constitutes misconduct in scholarship under University policies and

procedures. Plagiarism in scholarly projects should be reported to one's chairperson, dean, or the University Intellectual Integrity Officer (American Historical Association, Statements on Standards, 1993, p. 13).

**9. Distribution** -This policy should be widely distributed, especially to each new faculty, graduate student and research staff member in academic units.

#### **4. STUDENT CONDUCT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

##### **Student Conduct**

The University expects student conduct and behavior to reflect qualities of good citizenship. The out-of-classroom activities of Michigan State University students should reflect favorably upon the institution and should indicate the personal integrity of the individual. See *Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide* for specific policies, ordinances and regulations that define some of the relevant University expectations. Students planning to use the Human Ecology Building after normal building hours must sign a Code of Conduct agreement available at the SPDC School Office, Room 101 Human Ecology.

##### **Conflict Resolution**

Conflicts involving a graduate student may be handled informally, or at the request of a party or parties, formally. Student's rights and responsibilities, including grievance procedures, are detailed in the document: *Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University*. Procedures more specifically designed for graduate students are to be found in the publication *Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities* available in the Graduate School Office Room 118 Linton Hall. It can also be downloaded from <http://grad.msu.edu/gsrr/>

Grievance procedures outlined in these documents shall be followed and the College Advisory Council shall be responsible for the interpretation and execution of these procedures in the College. Students also have access to the University Ombudsman for help with conflict resolution. A template and additional information on grievance procedures and resources available to students may be found at [www.msu.edu/unit/ombud](http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud)

#### **5. WORK RELATED POLICIES**

##### **Graduate Assistantships**

Graduate assistantship support for students is determined on an individual basis depending upon recommendations, availability of funds, fellowship and scholarship support, and academic record. Assistantships are reviewed annually by the Associate Director of the School and may be renewed if satisfactory progress is being made and funds are available. Graduate assistantship support will be limited to two years for Master students, and four years for Ph.D. students. To request an extension of assistantship support, students may petition the Director/Associate Director of the School with an accompanying letter from the major professor.

**Important** - If you have an assistantship, you are **required** to enroll for a minimum of six credits at the Master's level and three credits at the Ph.D. level during Fall and Spring semesters and three credits in Summer semester for both Master's and Ph.D. degrees. At the Ph.D. level, once you complete your comprehensive exams, the following semesters you need to only be enrolled for a minimum of one credit.

### **Selection of Graduate Assistants**

Graduate assistants are selected based on students' qualifications, background, and research or teaching needs of faculty and the School. Faculty members review application folders and make recommendations to the School's Director/Associate Director who makes the final appointment.

### **University Expectations for Teaching Assistants**

Teaching assistants (TAs) play a vital role in the educational mission of MSU. Disciplinary knowledge and instructional skills are key requisites for being a successful teacher, but teaching assistants are also expected to conform to ethical and professional standards described in the MSU Code of Teaching Responsibility. TAs must treat students with respect, deal with conflict fairly and promote a classroom atmosphere that encourages free and meaningful exchange of ideas. As an average, TAs with a  $\frac{1}{4}$  time appointment are expected to work 10 hours per week. TAs with  $\frac{1}{2}$  time appointment are expected to work 20 hours per week.

### **University Expectations for Research Assistants**

Research Assistants (RAs) at Michigan State University play a vital role in the research and outreach missions of MSU. Disciplinary knowledge and research/laboratory skills are key requisites for conducting research, but research assistants are also expected to conform to ethical and professional standards described in the MSU Faculty Handbook Section IV: Research and Creative Endeavors. This section includes information on working with animal and human subjects, radiation, chemical, and biological safety, and adherence to federal guidelines on data generation, management and control. Sections of the Academic Freedom Report for MSU Students and the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities document also contain valuable information. As an average, RAs with a  $\frac{1}{4}$  time appointment are expected to work 10 hours per week. RAs with  $\frac{1}{2}$  time appointment are expected to work 20 hours per week.

Michigan State University offers graduate assistants health insurance coverage. 'Student only' coverage is automatically provided at no cost to graduate assistants. Michigan State University will provide a full twelve-month coverage for assistantship appointments of at least nine months. Students may also enroll a legal spouse or domestic partner and/or dependent children. Questions regarding enrollment, premium payment and coverage should be directed to the Aetna Student Health at 1-800-859-8452. Questions or issues that cannot be resolved with Aetna Student Health may be directed to the MSU Benefits office at 1407 South Harrison Road, Room 140 Nisbet Building at 517-353-4434 x170 or x144.

### **Evaluation of Graduate Assistants**

Graduate teaching assistants (TAs) are evaluated at the end of each semester by the faculty on record for the course to which the TA has been assigned. Graduate research assistants (RAs) are evaluated by the faculty member who hires the graduate student. Graduate assistants are given specific assignments by their faculty supervisor for the semester for which the student is being funded. The faculty supervisor evaluates the student's performance based on assignments given at the beginning of the semester.

Graduate assistantships may be terminated if:

- a. The student does not maintain an overall 3.0 GPA
- b. The student is not making satisfactory progress toward his or her degree
- c. Work performance is determined to be inferior
- d. Funding is no longer available

Periods of employment for graduate assistants are as follows (refer to MSU/GEU Contract):

Fall semester: August 16 to December 31

Spring semester: January 1 to May 15

Summer session: May 16 to August 15

## **6. Online Workshops about Teaching**

Both faculty and graduate students can access nine online modules on improving your classroom teaching. The Graduate School purchased access for 3 years from Epigeum, a spin-off company from Imperial College of London <http://www.epigeum.com/>. These are high-quality interactive modules on a variety of topics related to teaching and learning.

For more information and to access the modules visit: <http://tap.msu.edu/teche/>

## **7. Internships**

The School believes that there is great advantage to our graduate students to seek additional professional opportunities and skills by participating in internships. Internships for academic credit are allowed for students enrolled in the MURP and MIPS program. Students enrolled in the Masters in Construction Management, and the Masters in Environmental Design may not use an internship for academic credit.



# **Master of Arts in Environmental Design: An Interdepartmental Graduate Program in Environmental Design**

## **Program Overview**

The purpose of the Master of Arts in Environmental Design is to train prospective or practicing professionals to address the complex interdisciplinary nature of environmental design. Students will develop a highly individualized plan of study with a focus in design areas such as: design process, historic preservation and conservation, environment and behavior, design communication media, lighting, healthcare design, universal design, culture and design, golf course architecture, landscape reclamation, visual quality modeling, landscape restoration, interiorscapes, wellness/therapeutic garden design, landscape development systems, plant management systems, adaptive reuse facilities for tourism and recreation, site design safety, park and tourism development, design with ecological systems, green roof design and sustainable design.

The Master of Arts in Environmental Design (MED) addresses four areas of professional development. These include:

1. acquisition of in-depth knowledge in the area of environmental design theory;
2. development of problem solving skills within an interdisciplinary professional context;
3. development of technological expertise and knowledge base in a selected area of environmental design; and
4. advanced ability in graphic, written, and oral communications skills.

The program is planned to provide an alternative to traditional professional degrees by addressing the needs of students with undergraduate design backgrounds who wish to work in an interdisciplinary setting while pursuing an area of individual interest.

## **Program Components/Plan Options**

Students in MED must carefully consider choosing a Plan A or Plan B option for their academic program of study.

### **Plan A**

The purpose of the Plan A thesis is to facilitate student endeavors related to environmental design science, conducting a research investigation, and publishing results. Plan A also prepares the student for pursuing a PhD.

Plan A students must complete a minimum of 6 credits of Master's Thesis Research (899) in one of the following departments/programs:

- Horticulture
- Interior Design
- Community, Agriculture, Recreation, and Resources Studies
- Landscape Architecture.

They must also:

- Complete a written thesis
- Pass an oral examination in the form of a presentation open to the public with a question and answer period, which will be administered by the student's guidance committee.

### **Plan B**

Students in Plan B complete a Master's Practicum (898) which allows the student to explore, through planning and design, the creation and practical application of precedents, normative theories processes, technology, ordinances, philosophies, and related ideas. Such studies facilitate specialization in a planning and design topic and prepare the student with a professional area of expertise.

Plan B students must complete a minimum of 6 credits of Master's Thesis Practicum (898) in one of the following departments/programs:

- Horticulture
- Interior Design
- Community , Agriculture, Recreation, and Resources Studies
- Landscape Architecture.

They must also:

- Complete a final report
- Pass an oral examination in the form of a presentation open to the public with a question and answer period, which will be administered by the student's guidance committee.

## Degree Requirements

MED students must complete a total of 33 credits for the degree under either Plan A (thesis option) or Plan B (practicum option). A minimum of 17 credits must be at the 800 level or above, distributed as follows:

<u>Course</u>	<u>Credits</u>
IDES 891 Research Fundamentals	3
LA 816 Environmental Design Theory	3
LA 817 Environmental Design Studio	3
LA 883 Environmental Design Seminar	3
Elective Courses	12-15
__ 899 Master's Thesis Research (Plan A)	6-9
OR	
__ 898 Master's Thesis Practicum (Plan B)	6-9
<i>Total Credits (Minimum)</i>	<i>33</i>

*Please note: Currently the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources suggests that students take no more than 6 hours of 898. It is strongly suggested that students limit themselves to 6 hours of 898.*

**Plan A** students must also:

- Complete a written thesis
- Prepare, present and complete a final presentation open to the public
- Pass an oral examination administered by the student's guidance committee

**Plan B** students must also:

- Complete a final report
- Pass an oral examination, in the form of a presentation open to the public with a question and answer period which will be administered by the student's guidance committee.

**Sample Academic Program of Study  
Master of Arts Environmental Design**

**Student Starting Fall Semester**

**Fall Semester I**

IDES 891	3
LA 816	3
Elective	<u>3</u>
Total	9 credits

**Spring Semester I**

LA 817	3
LA 883	3
LA 898 or LA 899	<u>3</u>
Total	9 credits

**Fall Semester II**

LA 898 or LA 899	3
Elective	3
Elective	<u>3</u>
Total	9 credits

**Spring Semester II**

LA 898 or LA 899	3
Elective	<u>3</u>
Total	6 credits

**TOTAL            33 credits**

**Students Starting Summer Semester\***

**Summer Semester I**

LA 898 or LA 899	6
Elective	<u>3</u>
Total	9 credits

**Fall Semester I**

IDES 891	3
LA 816	3
Elective	3
Elective	<u>3</u>
Total	12 credits

**Spring Semester I**

LA 817	3
LA 883	3
LA 898 or LA 899	3
Elective	<u>3</u>
Total	12 credits

**TOTAL            33 credits**

**\*It is not normally recommended that a student begin studies during a Summer Semester. However, if a student is highly motivated, has a major professor in place and has a clearly defined research topic, which has been approved by the major professor, starting in a Summer Semester is feasible.**

### **Required Academic Program of Study**

All students are required to complete and submit a formal plan of study, which is called the Academic Program of Study. An Academic Program of Study with signatures from all guidance committee members must be submitted to School Office before the end of the second semester of study. It is strongly suggested that students develop their program of study as early as possible during the first year of study. Once submitted, changes to the Academic Program of Study must be approved by both the student's guidance committee and the Associate Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Courses related to the student's area of design interest are chosen in consultation with, and approved by, the student's guidance committee. The program of study may include courses related to statistical methods and research techniques. In addition, the program of study may include technology classes such as Bio-Engineering, Geographic Information Science/Systems (GIS), Global Positioning Systems (GPS), and remote sensing. Other program of study choices may include courses concerning topics addressing the student's area of specialization and interest. Interdisciplinary seminar classes are strongly recommended. Directed independent study, readings, and term papers related to highly specialized topics also are suitable.

### **Advising and Guidance Committees**

In both Plan A and Plan B, a student's guidance committee is composed of the student's major professor and other members of the Environmental Design faculty. Plan A students are required to have at least 3 faculty members on their committee, while Plan B students are required to have at least 2 faculty members. The guidance committee gives guidance during the practicum experience or research investigations and determines the results of the oral examination.

It is strongly urged that a student identifies members of his/her guidance committee in consultation with her/his major professor by the end of the first semester of classes. This will allow the committee to give advice concerning course work and research activities. In forming the committee, the student is encouraged to meet with their major professor and develop a list of potential committee members. The student should then make an appointment to visit with the potential committee members. The process involves the consensus of both the student and potential committee members.

The composition of the guidance committee (excluding the major professor) can change providing a faculty member is willing to step down and a new member is found. This should be accomplished with the approval of the student's major professor. A Request to Change the Academic Program of Study must be submitted (see the appendices for the form) to the School Office.

If a student's major professor leaves the university or is unable to continue advising, a new major professor must be identified by mutual consent of both faculty and student. If a different major professor in the MED program accepts the student, the student may continue their existing program of study. However, if a new major professor can not be found, the student will be advised to complete their degree under the supervision of a major professor appointed by the Associate Director.

MED Faculty available to act as a major professor or member of a student guidance committee are listed below:

**Dr. April Allen, Assistant Professor**

NCIDQ Certificate No. 013314

Interior Design

MSU School of Planning, Design and Construction

Human Ecology Building

552 W. Circle Drive Room 201N

E. Lansing, MI 48824-1030

517.432.3239

FAX 517.432.8108

allenapr@msu.edu

Research interests: history of interiors, historic preservation, sustainability, creativity and visualization

**Dr. Jon Bryan Burley, ASLA, Associate Professor**

Landscape Architecture

MSU School of Planning, Design and Construction

Human Ecology Building

552 W. Circle Drive Room 302B

E. Lansing, MI 48824

517.353.7118

FAX 517.432.8108

burleyj@msu.edu

Research interests: landscape reclamation, restoration, habitat design, landscape planning, spatial modeling, design theory, visual quality, landscape science, and research methods

**Dr. Pat Crawford, ASLA, Associate Professor**

Landscape Architecture

MSU School of Planning, Design and Construction

Human Ecology Building

552 W. Circle Drive Room 101

East Lansing, MI 48824

517.432.1148

FAX 517.432.8108

crawf203@msu.edu

Research interests: participatory design, park planning and design, design pedagogy, universal design

**Dr. Suk-Kyung Kim, Assistant Professor**

Interior Design

MSU School of Planning, Design, and Construction

Human Ecology Building

552 W. Circle Drive Room 201B

East Lansing, MI 48824

517.353-9367

FAX 517.432.8108

kimsk@msu.edu

Research interests: housing, health care research, sustainable design, environment behavior studies

**Dr. Eunsil Lee, Assistant Professor**

Interior Design

MSU School of Planning, Design, and Construction

Human Ecology Building

552 W. Circle Drive Room 201L

East Lansing, MI 48824

517.432.3249

FAX 517.432.8108

leeunsi@msu.edu

Research interests: human perception and behavior in relation to culture, sustainable lighting design, workplace design and performance, evidence based design

**Dr. Young S. Lee, Assistant Professor**

Interior Design

MSU School of Planning, Design, and Construction

Human Ecology Building

552 W. Circle Drive Room 201C

East Lansing, MI 48824

517.432.3242

FAX 517.432.8108

leeyou35@msu.edu

Research interests: sustainable indoor environment, long-term care environment, healing environment, post-occupancy evaluation, building information modeling

**Dr. Patricia L. Machemer, Associate Professor**

Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning

MSU School of Planning, Design and Construction

Human Ecology Building

552 W. Circle Drive Room 404

East Lansing, MI 48824

517.353.9047

FAX 517.432.8108

machemer@msu.edu

Research interests: landscape planning and management, land cover change, growth management, participatory design

**Warren J. Rauhe, ASLA, Associate Professor**

Landscape Architecture  
MSU School of Planning, Design and Construction  
Human Ecology Building  
552 W. Circle Drive Room 313  
E. Lansing, MI 48824  
517.353.9207  
FAX 517.432.8108  
rauhe@msu.edu

Research interests: effective community participation, community visioning, golf course architecture

**Dr. Robert E. Schutzki, Associate Professor**

MSU Horticulture  
A218 Plant and Soil Science Building  
E. Lansing, MI 48824  
517.355.5191x1337  
schutzki@msu.edu

Research interests: environmental horticulture, planting design, landscape specifications, landscape contracting

**Dr. Joanne M. Westphal, ASLA, Professor**

Landscape Architecture  
MSU School of Planning, Design and Construction  
Human Ecology Building  
552 W. Circle Drive Room 201P  
E. Lansing, MI 48824  
517.355.9729  
FAX 517.432.8108  
westphal@msu.edu

Research interests: wellness gardens, therapeutic environments, rural landscape preservation, recreation planning and design



## **Academic Performance**

Acceptable academic standing is considered to be a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Satisfactory progress to completion of the degree is flexible; however, each student should be aware of the University time limits for the completion of the degree (see front section of this handbook). In addition, the student must carefully plan and coordinate the completion of their degree in consultation with their major professor and complete their degree while their major professor is still a faculty member at MSU.

Students in poor academic standing, students nearing the end of their time limit and students who must finish their degree before a change of status of a major professor will receive written notice from the Graduate Academic Advisor informing them of their status/standing.

## Thesis Defense and Final Oral Examination

The final master's presentation and evaluation is the culmination of a student's graduate education and training and reflects not only on the accomplishments of the graduate student but also on the quality of the graduate program. A Plan A approved thesis or a Plan B practicum becomes a single-author publication and contributes to the body of knowledge within MED.

The student presentation concerning the results of the thesis or practicum is presented in a seminar that is open to the academic and public community. At the end of the presentation, an open question and answer period will follow.

Upon completion of the presentation and question and answer period, all visitors will be asked to leave, and the student's committee may ask further questions. Then the student will be asked to leave the room so the committee may confer. When the committee has made its decision the student will be asked to return to the room and the committee will discuss their decisions/conditions/results with the student.

To ensure fairness in the examination procedures and maintenance of academic standards, the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and/or Director of the School of Planning, Design and Construction may appoint an outside member to the examining committee. The outside member of the committee will read and critique the thesis/practicum, will participate in the oral part of the exam, and will submit a report to the Dean and/or the Director.

***For Plan A students:*** The final draft of the thesis must be submitted to each guidance committee member at least two weeks before the thesis presentation. Students must be registered during the semester in which they give their oral thesis presentation. Upon the Guidance Committee's approval, an unbound copy of the thesis (with all corrections made) must be submitted to the Graduate School for approval via the process described at <http://www.grad.msu.edu/etd/>. The Plan A thesis must be formatted according to the standards established in the Formatting Guide published by the Graduate School (available at: <http://grad.msu.edu/thesisdissertation/formattingguide.aspx>). After receiving the Graduate School's approval the student must provide a bound copy or electronic copy to each guidance committee member, according to their preference, and both an electronic PDF to the School of Planning, Design and Construction (submitted to the graduate secretary). In addition, the student must comply with all university requirements for thesis submittal and graduation.

When submitting an electronic thesis or dissertation to ProQuest, a student has now the option to open the document to searches using Google, Google Scholar and Google Books. The option to block such searches continues to be available.

The policy for embargos of thesis and dissertations has been changed, **but continues to be restricted to requests involving potential patents**. What is different is that the period of the embargo is restricted to six months and the holding of the document is now done by ProQuest after the electronic thesis/dissertation is submitted after the approval of the Graduate School.

***For Plan B students:*** The Plan B practicum must be submitted to each guidance committee member at least two weeks before the thesis presentation. Students must be registered during the semester in which they give their oral thesis presentation. A bound copy or electronic copy of the practicum (with all corrections made) should be given to each guidance committee member according to their preference, and an electronic PDF to the School of Planning, Design and Construction (submitted to the graduate secretary). The size and format for the document should accommodate drawings, plans, and related documents. A CD of images may also accompany the document to give full-sized detail to graphic presentations, digital movies, and other communicative material. In addition, the student must comply with all university requirements regarding Plan B submittals and graduation.

### **Certification for Graduation**

The student must apply to graduate by completing an Application for Graduation (available at <http://www.reg.msu.edu/StuForms/GradApp/GradApp.asp> ) Check this web site for specific application deadlines. When the Office of the Registrar receives the student's application, a Degree Certification form is forwarded to the School. The Graduate Academic Advisor will review the Academic Program of Study in the student's file to determine if the student has fulfilled the requirements and may be certified for graduation. The Associate Director then formally approves or denies the certification.

## Degree Calendar & Progress Checklist

### *Prior to Attending the First Semester of Classes*

- Activate** your NetID and MSU E-mail account. MSU E-mail is the official mode of communication at MSU. Students are advised against forwarding their MSU E-mail accounts to other outside accounts. MSU uses e-mail for a variety of official communications related to employment, student, and safety concerns. For instance, notices regarding a tuition bill are sent to a student's MSU e-mail account. It is important to [activate your NetID](#) because your MSU account is the only e-mail account to which official notices are sent. Students use their aPID and PAN for activation. Activate at <http://techbase.msu.edu/article.asp?id=139&service=>
- Attend** the required SPDC graduate student orientation. Students are encouraged to participate in orientation activities offered by the Graduate School (and for international students, by the Office of International Studies and Programs).
- Contact** the Graduate Academic Advisor and/or your major professor when you arrive in East Lansing to discuss degree requirements, to plan your courses (especially those for the first semester), and to discuss other student-related concerns.
- Register** for classes. Master's students must be registered for a minimum of 9 credits per semester (6 if hired as a graduate assistant) to be considered "full time"

### *First Semester*

- Select** Guidance Committee members with your advisor and major professor.
- Schedule** and **hold** a meeting with your Guidance Committee to discuss your academic and professional goals and the courses you intend to take. You may wish to discuss preliminary ideas for a Plan A Thesis or Plan B Practicum Project.
- If Provisional Acceptance:** Meet all provisional requirements as specified in letter of acceptance (or plan developed with your Advisor).

### *Second Semester*

- Finalize** your Academic Program of Study; complete and submit a Masters Academic Program of Study form with appropriate signatures from all Guidance Committee members. The form is available in the Appendices of this graduate handbook. A copy of your completed, approved form will be placed in your permanent academic file.
- Prepare** a written draft of your Plan A Thesis or Plan B Practicum Project proposal. Discuss it with your major professor and secure his/her approval prior to submitting it to your Guidance Committee.

### ***Second or Third Semester***

- Revise** your proposal based on the feedback from your major professor and schedule a meeting of your Guidance Committee to discuss your proposal. Provide each member of your Guidance Committee with a copy of your proposal at least two weeks prior to the committee meeting.
- Schedule and hold** a meeting of your Guidance Committee to discuss and approve your proposal and review progress on your academic program.
- Secure** approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), as appropriate to your research. Instructions and application templates are available on-line:  
<http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/>

### ***Last Semester***

- **Preparing for Thesis Defense/Practicum Project Final Examination**

- Check** deadline dates for that semester as they pertain to completing the MA degree at:  
<http://grad.msu.edu/current/final.htm>.
- Enroll** for a minimum of one (1) credit in the semester in which you plan to defend your thesis/practicum project.
- Check** StuInfo to be sure all DFs (deferred grades) have been converted to grades and that your GPA is at least 3.00.
- Complete** and **submit** the on-line Application for Graduation early in the semester of planned graduation: <http://www.reg.msu.edu/StuForms/GradApp/GradApp.asp> You must apply for graduation even if you do not plan to attend the ceremony, in order for final paperwork to be sent to the departmental graduate secretary and your degree to be conferred.
- Obtain** a copy of the Thesis/Dissertation Submission Packets from the Graduate School web site: <http://grad.msu.edu/current/packet.htm> *Not Required for Plan-B Practicum*
- Prepare** for commencement; see guidelines and checklist provided by the University:  
<http://www.msu.edu/unit/acadevnt/commencement>

- **Completion of Thesis/Practicum Project**

- Complete** all required forms in the Thesis/Dissertation Submission Packets (see <http://grad.msu.edu/current/packet.htm>). *Not Required for Plan-B Practicum*
- Submit** a draft of your Thesis or Practicum Project to your major professor and Guidance Committee members.

- Edit** your draft, as needed. MS- Plan A students should refer to <http://grad.msu.edu/current/formatfinal.pdf> for format guidelines.
  - Schedule** a seminar/examination time with your Guidance Committee for presenting and defending your work. This seminar is an open session to which students and faculty in the School of Planning, Design and Construction are invited. You may schedule a conference room with the Graduate Secretary.
  - Announce** the date of your thesis or practicum project presentation. Contact the Graduate Secretary at least 2 weeks prior to the seminar. The Graduate Secretary will notify faculty and students of your presentation by email and/or posted flyers prior to the seminar.
  - Provide** your Major Professor and each member of your Guidance Committee a copy of your Thesis or Practicum Project at least 2 weeks prior to the seminar.
  - Present** and **defend** your Thesis or Practicum Project at the seminar.
  - Modify** your thesis/practicum project as required by your guidance committee.
  - If Plan A, **Prepare** the final copy of your thesis according to the Graduate School Guidelines (see <http://www.msu.edu/user/gradschl/format.htm>).
  - If Plan A, **prepare** an abstract of your thesis to be filled with “Dissertation/thesis Abstracts”.
- If Plan A, **Submit** an unbound copy of your thesis to the Graduate School. If you are a Plan B student and completed a Practicum Project, the Graduate School does not receive a copy.
  - **Distribute** both digital and hardbound copies of your thesis/practicum project to the graduate secretary, your Major Professor, and Guidance Committee members. Individual committee members may request an alternative format, such as softbound, unbound, or digital.

***Final Logistics:***

- Read** and **comply** with MSU’s Exit Check List to ensure that you have met the requirements and submitted forms and other paperwork:  
<http://www.msu.edu/user/gradschl/current/formatexit.pdf>
- Submit** your on-line exit survey: [https://ntweb11.ais.msu.edu/csp\\_gas/](https://ntweb11.ais.msu.edu/csp_gas/)
- Complete** all final forms/questionnaires required by the Graduate School. Pay final fees.