School of Planning, Design and Construction
Master in Urban and Regional Planning
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
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](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](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/](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](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/](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](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.

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 ¼ time appointment are expected to work 10 hours per week. TAs with ½ 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 ¼ time appointment are expected to work 10 hours per week. RAs with ½ 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 in Urban and Regional Planning

Program Overview

The graduate program in Urban and Regional Planning is part of the School of Planning, Design and Construction (SPDC) at Michigan State University. It is committed to preparing students for professional planning careers in both the private and public sectors. The graduate program is supported by faculty members with strong professional and academic backgrounds and a curriculum which seeks to develop both general knowledge and specific planning and skills. Current faculty research and teaching expertise covers a range of planning subjects including urban design; land use planning; land use law; housing; community, economic and real estate development; research methods; international development; transportation; environmental planning; and public policy.

The Master in Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) degree is a nationally accredited degree and the program admits students with a variety of academic backgrounds. Ideal students are those strong intellectual ability; good written and verbal communication skills; basic statistical methods and who have demonstrated a proven potential for leadership in the field of urban and regional planning. The goal of the graduate program in urban and regional planning is to prepare graduates to assume the responsibilities of citizens of a democratic society and to participate in professional planning practice. The curriculum prepares students to develop basic knowledge of the history and theory of planning; presentation techniques; legal and administrative procedures and their applications; and technical skills in survey, research, and analysis of the structure and growth of communities.

The primary goal of the MURP degree program is to facilitate the development of technical skills and intellectual qualities necessary for students to meet the broad and varied range of problems associated with urban and regional development. It is intended that, upon completion of graduate study, the student should be able to enter the profession as a competent practitioner and be able to learn and improve throughout his or her career so as to respond to the changing needs of society and the profession.

A student entering the graduate program in urban and regional planning is expected to concentrate, under faculty guidance, on studies that provide an optimum learning experience in applying the various principles, theories, techniques, and design skills of planning to specific field problems. Unlike undergraduates, whose studies are divided between liberal education and technical studies, the graduate student is immersed in significant planning studies. After graduation, the student should be capable of assuming responsibilities on an intermediate level of a professional planning operation. The master's program in Urban and Regional Planning has been accredited by the American Planning Association.

Joint Study

Because planners must synthesize and apply a large body of knowledge from many other disciplines, a joint study degree option is available to MURP students. The Urban Planning program maintains close relationships with many other departments and colleges on campus so that students wishing to specialize in a particular area of planning may take advantage of resources in other academic units.
Students have found that the diverse academic background provided by joint study has enabled them to pursue unusual and rewarding opportunities. The Graduate Academic Advisor should be consulted for specifics on how to set up joint study programs and what career paths might be pursued with each.

Samples of subject areas of informal joint study with URP are:

- Geography (cartography, remote sensing, geographic information systems, or location theory)
- Landscape Architecture (urban design)
- Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies (environmental)

Master’s in Urban and Regional Planning/Juris Doctor Degree
The dual Master in Urban and Regional Planning and Juris Doctor degrees allow students with career interests in planning and law to complete both degrees in a four year period. Students must apply for admission separately with the Urban and Regional Planning major and the MSU College of Law, and be accepted to both degree programs. Admission decisions for each degree are reached independently. It is assumed that dual degree students will be full-time students to complete the degrees in a four year period.

Bachelor’s/Master’s Dual Enrollment
A senior at Michigan State University who is within 12 credits of graduation and who is admitted to a graduate program may be dually enrolled to graduate study while completing the requirements for a bachelor’s degree. To be considered for dual enrollment, the student must complete a Request for Dual Enrollment Status form. An Application for Admission to Graduate Study must also be submitted.

Students dually enrolled as Bachelor’s/Master’s students are not eligible for graduate assistantships, other forms of graduate student financial aid, or those services and prerogatives normally reserved for graduate students. Such students will maintain undergraduate status until the baccalaureate degree has been awarded.
Program Components/Plan Options

In addition to meeting the requirements of the University and of the College of Social Science, students must meet the requirements specified below.

The Master’s degree program includes a core series of URP courses totaling twenty-seven credits. Students undertake studies of actual urban situations, involving the basic processes of research, analysis, and implementation. These applied studies are complemented and reinforced by seminars in planning theory and principles, planning law and legal instruments, research methodology, planning process, and program implementation. These requirements are designed to provide essential knowledge and understanding to function as a planning professional. Each MURP candidate must complete all core course requirements unless a waiver has been granted by the faculty for special circumstances. These requirements are designed to provide essential knowledge and understanding to function as a planning professional.

Students may choose between two degree options, Plan A (thesis) or Plan B (non-thesis). Students who elect to follow Plan A will take six hours of UP 899 Master’s Thesis Research and write and defend a thesis. Students who opt to follow Plan B will take an additional six hours of approved elective credit and must pass a comprehensive examination.
In addition to meeting the requirements of the University and the College of Social Science, students must meet the requirements specified below.

**Degree Requirements**

The program is available under both Plan A (with thesis) and Plan B (without thesis) and is intended to take four semesters of full-time work. The student must complete 39 credits, at least 28 of which must be in courses numbered in the 800 and 900 series, and meet the requirements specified below:

**Urban Planning core courses (27 credits)**

- UP 424 Geographic Information Systems and Design Tools for Planning 3
- UP 801 Concepts and Issues in Planning and Development 3
- UP 814 Applied Research Methods for Planning and Development 3
- UP 823 Urban Land Management and the Environment 3
- UP 844 Planning Theory and Ethics 3
- UP 854 Economics of Planning and Development 3
- UP 865 Planning and Development Law 3
- UP 894 Planning Practicum 4
- UP 892 Research Seminar in Planning and Construction Management 2

**Elective Requirements (6 credits)**

Complete six credits of approved elective courses from a list of electives in consultation with the student’s academic advisor. At least one 3-credit Urban Planning Special Topics course must be taken.

**Additional Requirements for Plan A:**

Six credit hours of UP 899 Master’s Thesis Research

**Additional Requirements for Plan B:**

1. Six additional credits in one or more courses approved by the student’s academic advisor.
2. Pass a comprehensive examination.

A maximum of 9 transfer credits at the 800 level may be accepted toward the Master in Urban and Regional Planning degree. The time limit for completing the degree is six years from the first semester of enrollment in the program.

The MURP degree requires students to take a capstone course, UP 894 Planning Practicum, during their final year. This course creates the opportunity for students to work with communities to help them reach their goals and for the student to gain valuable and realistic, hands-on experience. While many of
our other classes have opportunities for students to work with communities on a variety of projects, practicum is the only class that is solely dedicated to that purpose.

Practicum is a unique experience where students, guided by faculty, practicing planners, and community members, converge to complete a project that the community has requested. Practicum occurs every spring semester and must be completed by all students. The class of students is divided into groups. Each group is assigned a project to be completed within the semester. Typically, there are several meetings with community members, faculty, and other advisors. The students’ final product is a comprehensive report and a presentation of the report to the group’s client.

**Suggested Course Sequence for Full – Time Students**

**First Year**

**Fall Semester**
- UP 801: Urban Planning & Development (3 credits)
- UP 823: Urban Land Management and the Environment (3 credits)
- UP 892: Research Seminar in Planning and Construction Management (2 credits)
- Approved Elective (3 credits)

SUBTOTAL = 11 credits

**Spring Semester**
- UP 814: Applied Research Methods for Planning & Development (3 credits)
- UP 844: Planning Theory and Ethics (3 credits)
- UP 865: Planning & Development Law (3 credits)

SUBTOTAL = 9 credits

**Second Year**

**Fall Semester**
- UP 854: Economics of Planning and Development (3 credits)
- UP 800: Special Topics (3 credits)
- UP 899 (for Plan A) or Plan B Elective (3 credits)

SUBTOTAL = 9 credits

**Spring Semester**
- UP 894: Planning Practicum (4 credits)
- UP 899 (for Plan A) or Plan B Elective (3 credits)
- Approved Elective (3 credits)

SUBTOTAL = 10 credits

TOTAL = 39 credits
**Elective Courses in Urban and Regional Planning**

There are numerous credits allowed for elective courses, including those used to fulfill a concentration area or Plan B. The following elective courses in URP and various other departments are recommended:

- **CE 448**: Transportation Planning (3 credits)
- **CMP 822**: Legal Issues in Construction (3 credits)
- **GEO 413**: Urban Geography (3 credits)
- **GEO 414**: Geography of Transportation (3 credits)
- **GEO 415**: Location Theory and Land Use Analysis (3 credits)
- **GEO 418**: The Ghetto (3 credits)
- **GEO 425**: Problems in Geographic Information Science (4 credits)
- **GEO 432**: Environmental Ethics (3 credits)
- **GEO 453**: Metropolitan Environments (3 credits)
- **GEO 454**: Geography of Environment & Development (3 credits)
- **GEO 802**: Geospatial Technology (3 credits)
- **GEO 816**: The World System of Cities (3 credits)
- **IDES 458**: Housing Design and Planning (3 credits)
- **LA 816**: Design Scholarship Theory (3 credits)
- **UP 400**: Special Topics in Urban and Regional Planning (2-4 credits)
- **UP 458**: Housing and Real Estate Development (3 credits)
- **UP 478**: Urban Transportation Planning (3 credits)
- **UP 800**: Special Topics in Urban and Regional Planning (2-4 credits)
- **UP 893**: Internship in Urban and Regional Planning (2-4 credits)

**Internship Program**

When potential employers are screening applicants for a planning position, experience can be a crucial factor. One way for students to gain practical planning experience before they graduate is by doing an internship with a planning agency. Internships can offer students the opportunity to apply what they've learned in their coursework to practical, real-life situations. Internships can also enrich the student's understanding of the true nature of planning.

All of the forms necessary for enrollment for internship credits are available from the graduate academic advisor. The student must complete those forms prior to registering for UP 893.

For more specific information on internships see Ms. Robin Rennie, the Graduate Academic Advisor, in Room 112 Human Ecology.

The internship program is open to all MURP students who have a grade point average of 3.0 or higher in their coursework. Academic credit can be gained for the experience by enrolling for UP 893 in the semester during which the internship will be undertaken. A student may reenroll for up to a maximum of eight credits during fall, spring, or summer semesters. The number of credits registered for should reflect the following time commitments:

- 2 credits for 8 hours per week per semester
- 3 credits for 12 hours per week per semester
• 4 credits for 16 hours per week per semester

Finding an internship placement is the responsibility of the student. Announcements for internship opportunities are distributed by a URP student email list serve. Students may also contact an agency directly to ask if the agency can accommodate an intern, or consult with their faculty advisor and/or other members of the faculty. Overseas internships may also be undertaken.

Steps for Receiving Course Credit for an Internship
In order to receive course credit for the internship, each intern must complete the following forms/reports in the order and according to the time schedule specified below. All forms are available from the graduate academic advisor.

1. Apply for the Internship
A student who is interested in participating in the internship program should complete the Student Internship Application by the end of the twelfth week of the semester prior to the semester in which he/she wishes to intern.

2. Interview/Speak with the Agency
Most agencies prefer to conduct an interview with a prospective intern. Applicants should expect to present a résumé, writing samples, and/or portfolio at the interview.

3. Intern-Agency Agreement
Once a student has obtained a placement, the Intern-Agency Agreement which requests information on the scope of the intern’s responsibilities, number of hours, scheduling, etc., must be completed and submitted to the internship coordinator before registering for UP 893. The agreement is placed in the student’s file.

4. Registering to Receive Course Credit for the Internship
Once a student has completed and received the internship coordinator’s approval on the Intern-Agency Agreement form, he/she must register for UP 893 for the desired number of credits (2-4).

5. The Mid-Semester Internship Evaluation
The student fills out the evaluation form and submits it to the internship coordinator by the middle of the semester for which he/she is enrolled for the internship. This form is included in the internship packet.

6. Adhere to Agency Policies and Procedures and submit all necessary applications, agreements, evaluations, and reports on time.

7. The Semester Report
The semester report is a “reflection paper” of about 5-10 typewritten pages in which the student reflects on lessons learned during the internship. The primary purposes of this exercise are for the student: 1) to place the experience in a larger context, 2) to consider issues which go beyond day-to-day activities, and 3) to think about how the internship contributed to the student’s professional education.
In other words, the paper is to be a tool in helping the student to synthesize the internship experience and his/her overall professional goals.

The student can address a wide variety of topics in the semester paper. Some suggestions are: how the experience helped to shape the student’s career goals; the effect of internal and external politics on the intern’s job duties; the importance of the intern’s job to the mission of the agency; the relationship of the agency with other agencies; the complementary nature of the student’s prior coursework with the job duties; and the ideas on how the agency might improve its service delivery for the achievement of both organizational and societal goals.

To assist in the preparation, the student may find it useful to maintain a notebook of daily observations and reflections. This notebook need not be submitted with the other materials.

**Special Requirements for Master’s in Urban and Regional Planning/Juris Doctor Degree**
Core and elective requirements for each degree must be met. The Urban and Regional Planning Program will accept nine (9) credits for transfer from the MSU College of Law as elective courses. The College of Law will accept nine (9) credits for transfer from the MURP degree. Transfer credits from the College of Law to the MURP degree must be approved by URP. The courses must be approved by the major professor/academic advisor. Credits taken prior to admission at Michigan State University College of Law will not be accepted for transfer. Transfer credits from MURP to the JD degree program are approved by the College of Law.

**Special Requirements for Bachelor’s Master’s Dual Enrollment**
Admission to graduate study must be approved before work in a graduate program is undertaken. The maximum time limit for dual enrollment is three consecutive terms. The student may earn no more than 12 credits of graduate level course work applicable to the student’s graduate degree program and should carry no more than 16 credits per semester.

**Required Academic Program of Study**
Before the end of the second semester of study the student must submit an Academic Program of Study approved by the major professor. The Academic Program of Study form should be completed by the student and approved and signed by the major professor and then submitted to the School. The Plan of Study will be placed in the student’s file. Any subsequent changes or amendments to the Plan of Study should follow the same procedure.

**Advising and Guidance Committees**
Ms. Robin Rennie is the advisor for incoming graduate students for the first year. Upon arrival, students must schedule an appointment with Ms. Rennie to discuss course requirements, concentration area electives, and general procedures. Ideally, each graduate student will have a faculty member identified to guide their research by the end of the first year of study. When a faculty member has been determined as the major professor, he/she will assist the student with elective course selection and research development. The student should also work with the major professor to form their Guidance Committee. The guidance committee for Plan A is composed of three regular faculty members, with the
Chair and one other member from the student’s major. Ms. Rennie is available for any specific needs of the graduate student.

Graduate students who wish to change their research advisor and/or committee members should see Ms. Rennie for guidance. Ultimate approval for advisor and/or committee member changes rest with the Associate Director. On approval, it is the student’s responsibility to submit a revised “Request to Change Academic Program of Study” to the Graduate Academic Advisor.
MURP Faculty Members Who May Serve as Major Professor or Guidance Committee Member

Dr. Kenneth Corey, Professor
Geography, and Urban and Regional Planning
School of Planning, Design and Construction
124 Geography Building
MSU
E. Lansing, MI 48824-1117
517.432.4750
FAX 517.432.8108
kenneth.corey@ssc.msu.edu
Research interests: global knowledge economy planning; international comparative approaches to national and urban and regional policy analysis and planning; information and communications technologies – facilitated development; Asia; economic and urban geography

Dr. Peilei Fan, Assistant Professor
Urban and Regional Planning
MSU School of Planning, Design and Construction
Human Ecology Building
552. W. Circle Drive Room 201M
E. Lansing, MI 48824-1030
517.432.6517
FAX 517.432.8108
fanpeile@msu.edu
Research interests: international development and planning, high-tech industrialization, and Asia’s urbanization

Dr. Roger Hamlin, Professor
Urban and Regional Planning
MSU School of Planning, Design and Construction
Human Ecology
552 W. Circle Drive Room 208A
E. Lansing, MI 48824
517.353.8743
FAX 517.432.8108
hamlin@msu.edu
Research interests: fiscal/regional planning and economic development
Dr. Eva Kassens-Noor, Assistant Professor
Urban and Regional Planning
MSU School of Planning, Design, and Construction
Human Ecology Building
552 W. Circle Drive Room 201E
East Lansing, MI 48824
517.432-8085
FAX 517.432.8108
kassens@msu.edu
Research interests: transport planning, urban planning and policy, international planning, disaster prevention, emergency preparedness, land use planning and policy, recreation and leisure studies, regional planning, and transportation safety

Dr. Zenia Kotval, Professor
Urban and Regional Planning
MSU School of Planning, Design, and Construction
Human Ecology
552 W. Circle Drive Room 404
East Lansing, MI 48824
517.353-9362
FAX 517.432.8108
kotval@msu.edu
Research interests: economic development, community development, community development policy and applications
Dr. Rex L. LaMore, Director
Center for Community and Economic Development
Urban and Regional Planning
MSU School of Planning, Design, and Construction
552 W. Circle Drive
East Lansing, MI 48824
517.353-9555
FAX 517.884-6489
Research interests: socially responsible institutional investment policies which support sustainable development, knowledge economy planning, community and economic development policies that create a sustainable and just society.

Dr. Patricia Machemer, Associate Professor
Urban and Regional 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.

Herbert P. Norman, Jr., Specialist/Teacher
Urban and Regional Planning
MSU School of Planning, Design, and Construction
Human Ecology Building
552 W. Circle Drive Room 302E
517.353.0677
FAX: 517.432.8108
normanh@msu.edu
Research interests: land use planning, advocacy planning, neighborhood planning, smart growth, sustainable development, international applications in planning land use planning, advocacy planning, neighborhood planning, smart growth, sustainable development, international applications in planning.
Dr. Eric Strauss, Professor  
Urban and Regional Planning  
MSU School of Planning, Design, and Construction  
Human Ecology Building  
552 W. Circle Drive Room 201H  
East Lansing, MI 48824  
517.353.8715  
FAX 517.432.8108  
strausse@msu.edu  
Research interests: urban regeneration for large cities in North America, Europe and Northeast Asia, land use planning for smaller communities, legal control of urban development to achieve open space preservation

Dr. Mark Wilson, Professor  
Urban and Regional Planning  
MSU School of Planning, Design, and Construction  
Human Ecology Building  
552 W. Circle Drive Room 113  
East Lansing, MI 48824  
517.353.9056  
FAX 517.432.8108  
wilsonmm@msu.edu  
Research interests: Information technology, knowledge and global information society; Michigan’s nonprofit sector: planning for mega-events- World’s Fairs and the Olympics
**Academic Performance**

Students will receive a written evaluation of their academic progress, performance, and professional potential at least once an academic year. This evaluation will assist students to define their strengths and weaknesses so that the student can work on improvement of weaker performance areas (refer to *Graduate Students’ Rights and Responsibilities*).

College of Social Science guidelines state that the accumulation of grades below 3.0 in more than two semester courses of three or more credits each removes the student from candidacy for the degree. It is imperative that a student contact the Graduate Academic Advisor if a grade less than 3.0 is earned for a course.

In addition, the *MSU Academic Programs Catalog* found at http://www.reg.msu.edu/read/UCC/Updated/gradedmasters.pdf, states “Michigan State University is committed to high academic standards and expects all graduate students to excel in their particular majors. A 3.0 cumulative grade point average for all courses counting toward the master’s degree is the minimum University standard.” The College of Social Science and the Urban and Regional Planning major adhere to the University’s minimum standard. A student in danger of falling below the overall GPA of 3.0 may be removed from degree candidacy.

**Code of Ethics and Student Regulations**

The Urban and Regional Planning Program expects undergraduate majors and graduate students to adhere to the codes of responsibility as covered in the *MSU Spartan Life Student Handbook*, and the *AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct*. Refer to the *MSU Spartan Life Student Handbook*, PART III Regulations, for specifics at: http://www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/index.htm; and http://www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/default.pdf. Section A of the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct contains statements of aspirational principles that constitute the ideals to which urban and regional planners (including planning majors) are committed. Section B contains rules of conduct to which urban and regional planners (including planning majors) are held accountable. The AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct is found on the American Planning Association website at: https://www.planning.org/ethics/conduct.html.

**Thesis Defense and Final Oral Examination**

**Plan A**

Plan A thesis requires completion of a research-based thesis (six credits of UP 899).

*Graduate students enrolled in the Plan A option are required to pass an oral examination in defense of the thesis.* MURP faculty have the option in the defense to also cover coursework the student has completed. The Graduate Secretary will schedule the defense with approval from the student’s thesis committee chair. A minimum of three regular faculty members will be present at the thesis defense.

Graduate students pursuing the Plan A thesis option must follow all guidelines defined by The Graduate School. Refer to http://grad.msu.edu for specifics on Plan A thesis requirements and formatting.
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.

**Plan B**

Plan B is administered by the School and guidelines stated in this handbook. The Plan B is NOT within governance of The Graduate School. Plan B requires that the student take and successfully pass a comprehensive examination. This examination is written by the MURP faculty and administered by the School. The exam is given during both Fall and Winter Semesters. Students may take the exam during any semester they choose but, due to the cumulative nature of the test, it is strongly suggested that students wait until the fourth semester of study to do so. The student must be registered for at least one hour of credit during the semester in which they take the Comprehensive Examination. Since the examination is not given in Summer semester, students who plan to graduate during the Summer should take the exam in advance.

**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](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.

In addition, students who fall below an overall GPA of 3.0 may be removed from degree candidacy.
Checklist for Full-time Students

First Year

Fall Semester

_____ Meet with the Graduate Academic Advisor upon arrival to discuss your Academic Program of Study
_____ Register for fall and spring semester courses
_____ Meet with the Graduate Academic Advisor toward the end of the semester to confirm your spring semester schedule

Spring Semester

**Plan A Master’s Thesis students:**

_____ Go to The Graduate School website: [http://grad.msu.edu/thesisdissertation/formattingguide.aspx](http://grad.msu.edu/thesisdissertation/formattingguide.aspx) and download a copy of the “MSU Thesis/Dissertation Formatting Guide”.

_____ Consult with UP 892 professor, and other faculty concerning a proposed thesis topic and for suggestions of a major professor no later than March 1.

_____ Define the thesis topic and complete a first draft of the thesis proposal in conjunction with the major professor.

_____ Select the guidance committee in consultation with the major professor.

_____ Submit Academic Program of Study (with guidance committee signatures) to the Graduate Secretary or Graduate Academic Advisor.

_____ The thesis proposal should be approved by the guidance committee no later than the end of spring semester of the first year of study.

**Plan B Master’s Research students:**

Note that the Graduate School has no involvement with Plan B option.

_____ Submit Academic Program of Study (with Plan B committee signatures) to the Graduate Secretary or Graduate Advisor no later than the last week of classes.

Summer Semester

_____ Begin research and data collection for the thesis (Plan A)
Second Year

Fall semester
____ Consult with the faculty research advisor (Plan A) and the Graduate Academic Advisor prior to the enrollment period for spring semester.
____ Check to make sure all coursework, research, and student records (for potential “university HOLDS”), so that graduation will occur in a timely manner.

Plan A Master’s Thesis students
____ Enroll for UP 899.
____ Continue with research and writing

Spring semester

Plan A- Thesis students
____ Apply for Graduation on-line at: http://www.reg.msu.edu/StuForms/GradApp/GradApp.asp
____ Enroll for UP 899 if needed (required total of six credits).
____ Continue with research and writing.
____ Consult with thesis committee to determine the date and time for the thesis oral examination, following Graduate School guidelines.
____ Contact the Graduate Secretary to formally schedule the thesis oral examination (SPDC faculty and students are invited to attend the defense).
____ Submit a bound copy or electronic (check with faculty member for preference) of the final thesis to each committee member.
____ Submit the final thesis as instructed at http://www.grad.msu.edu/etd/ to the Graduate School by the stated Graduate School deadline, after the thesis committee has approved.
____ Submit an electronic copy of the final thesis to the graduate secretary and one bound or electronic copy to the major professor (check with professor for preference). Note that degrees are not certified until a copy of the final thesis is submitted to the graduate secretary or major professor.

Plan B- Master’s Research students
NOTE that the Graduate School has no involvement with Plan B Paper.
____ Apply for Graduation on-line at: http://www.reg.msu.edu/StuForms/GradApp/GradApp.asp
____ Register for and successfully pass comprehensive exam. See the graduate advisor for details specific to the semester.