Master Degrees
Graduate Student Handbook

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School of Planning, Design and Construction Home Page

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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 addressing their questions to the Associate Director or assigned major professor. In most cases, the 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 SPDC Direct 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, School of Planning, Design and Construction Home Page.* *(This information is important in reading this document.)*

General Graduate Program Requirements

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, and
- Urban & 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 Environment Design,
- Doctor of Philosophy in Planning, Design and Construction with transcriptable concentrations in:
  - Construction Management,
  - Environmental Design, and
  - Urban and Regional Planning.

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

- Masters in Urban & Regional Planning.

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 master’s 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. (This information is important in reading this document.)*

**Completing Application**

Applicants will need to indicate their major preference and code on the application using the following guide:

- Master of Science in Construction Management: 5260.
- Master of Arts in Environmental Design: 5268.
- Master in Urban & Regional Planning: 7619.

**Prospective students**

- Complete the [MSU Application for Admission](https://www.msu.edu/admissions/apply/).
- $50 Application fee (online).
- Submit Academic Statement - A concise academic statement of your plans for graduate study, your research interests, your career goals, and how MSU’s graduate program will help you meet your career and educational objectives. This may be completed online in the application or submitted to SPDC directly with other application documents.
- Submit Personal Statement - A statement about how your background and life experiences, including social, economic, cultural, familial, education, or other opportunities or challenges motivated your decision to pursue a graduate degree. This may be completed online in the application or submitted to SPDC directly with other application documents.
- Submit resume or curricula vita.
- Provide official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended. Transcripts MUST be in a sealed envelope from the college or university.
- Provide three recommendations from references using the method provided as part of the online admission application:
  - References may attach a letter of support to this form if they so desire, and
  - If for some reason, the recommender chooses to submit a paper letter he reference should place the recommendation in a sealed envelope, place their signature across the label. The letter must be submitted the SPDC graduate secretary.
- Have GRE scores electronically reported to MSU by ETS testing service:
  - For reporting purposes use School Code 1465 (MSU), and
  - GRE scores must be from a test taken in the last three years.
- International applicants must report scores from the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language):
  - For reporting purposes use School Code 1465 (MSU), and
  - TOEFL Scores should be from a test taken within the last 18 months, as the scores must be no more than 2 years old at the time of matriculation or entry to MSU.

Admission for graduate studies is on a rolling basis. However, for priority consideration of financial funding applications should be received by:

- Fall Semester Admission – February 15.
Spring Semester Admission – August 15.

After you have submitted your online application and paid the application fee, any additional documents and transcripts should be submitted to:

MSU School of Planning, Design and Construction
ATTN: Graduate Program Secretary
Human Ecology Building
552. W. Circle Drive, Room 102
East Lansing, MI 48824-1030

Later applications will be processed on a rolling basis. Admissions processing depends also upon the applicant’s situation. International student admissions may take four months or longer to process due to immigration issues. International applicants should apply at least six months in advance of the semester they plan to enroll.

The School’s decision to admit or not admit an applicant into one of its degree programs is based upon an evaluation of the complete application packet, which includes: all transcripts and grades, GRE scores, TOEFL (when relevant), recommendations and reference letters, the academic statement, and other pertinent information such as a portfolio, awards, professional experience, and related achievements.

**Applicants from Chinese Universities**

Please arrange for a verification report of your university academic records with the China Academic Degree and Graduate Education Development Center (CDGDC). The report must be mailed directly to the department to which you are applying by the CDGDC, rather than by you or any third party.

China Academic Degree and Graduate Education Development Center
Verification Division
B-17, Tongfang Scientific Plaza
No.1 Wangzhuang Road, Haidian District, Beijing, 100083, P.R.China
Ph: (+86) 10-82379480
Fax: (+86) 10-82378718 (24 hours)
Email: cqv@cdgdc.edu.cn
Website: [China Development Center](http://www.chinadevelopmentcenter.cn)

*Specific admission requirements and guidelines for each major are shown in Program Specific areas of this handbook. (This information is important in reading this document.)*

**Applicants interested in applying for 2 Graduate Programs**

Michigan State University now permits concurrent applications for admissions to two Graduate Programs, each with a separate application fee.

Masters of Urban Planning students may be dually enrolled in more than one program. Please see the Masters of Urban & Regional Planning section of this hand book for specific details.

**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:

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

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.

Plan B

There are two options:

Option one

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.

Option two

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. (This information is important in reading this document.)

Transfer Courses

Students may transfer no more than 9 approved semester credits of course work, excluding research and thesis credits, Transfer of Credit Form.

Credit Sharing Policy

If your program includes more than 30 credits, then you may share up to 30% of the total with another Master’s Program.

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 to the faculty member/instructor for the study. After the instructor’s approval, the application must be signed by the major professor or the Associate Director and then submitted to the Graduate Secretary. 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
Michigan State University
International Center
427 N. Shaw Lane, Room 109
East Lansing, MI 48824-1035
Phone: (517) 353-8920
[Study Abroad Home Page](#)

**General 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. Within the first academic year graduate students must file an Academic Program of Study, signed by their major professor or academic advisor with the Graduate Secretary. 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. (This information is important in reading this document.)*

**Selection of Major Professor**

Students should refer to the degree specific section of this handbook for information on assignment and selection of a major professor.

**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.

**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 strength and weaknesses so that the student can work on improvement of weaker performance areas (refer to Graduate Students’ Rights and Responsibilities.)

**Plan A Thesis Proposal, Defense and Final Oral Examination**

**Plan A Thesis Proposal**
The student must present to the major professor and guidance committee members a proposal for thesis research. After the proposed research topic has been approved, the student will do research and begin writing the thesis. The thesis should be finalized in the layout specified by The Graduate School of MSU. Students should obtain a copy of the “Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guide” from the Graduate School for details on the layout of the thesis. Students should also refer to the MSU Graduate Schools “Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities.”

**Plan A Final Oral Examination**
Plan A students are required to pass a Final Oral Examination covering their thesis topic. The student’s committee administers this examination. In order to pass the exam, the student must receive positive votes from the committee members. The following items constrain the Final Oral Exam:

- 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. (This information is important in reading this document.)
- 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.

**Plan A Submission of Thesis**
After successful completion of the final oral exam and upon the Guidance Committee’s approval, a copy of the thesis (with all corrections made) must be submitted to the Graduate School for approval via the Grad School Process. The Plan A thesis must be formatted according to the standards established in the Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guide published at The Graduate School.

**Plan B Thesis Proposal, Defense and Final Examination**

**Plan B Thesis Proposal**
The student must present to the major professor and guidance committee members a proposal for thesis research. After the proposed research topic has been approved, the student will do research and begin writing the thesis. The thesis should be finalized in the layout specified by The Graduate School of MSU. Students should obtain a copy of the “Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guide” from the Graduate School for details on the layout of the thesis. Students should also refer to the MSU Graduate Schools “Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities.”
**Plan B Final Examination, 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.

**Plan B Submission of Examination, 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.

**Plan B Submission of Report**
Students who choose the Plan B Report option will write a Report and defend it in a Final Oral Examination (follow formatting instructions for Plan A Thesis). The Plan B report must be submitted to each guidance committee member well ahead of the defense and a final copy of the report an electronic copy with all corrections made, should be given to each guidance committee member, and an electronic PDF copy to the School of Planning, Design and Construction (submitted to the graduate secretary). In addition, the student must comply with all university requirements regarding Plan B submittals and graduation.

When submitting an electronic thesis or dissertation to ProQuest, a student has 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. The Graduate School now permits the submission of supplementary materials to ProQuest. These supplemental materials will not be reviewed by the Graduate School for formatting requirements, but they must be acceptable by ProQuest and comply with ProQuest’s criteria and storage limits. All supplementary materials need the written approval of the thesis committee chair.

The MSU library may accept supplementary materials approved by the thesis committee chair per their collection criteria. The Graduate School does not review these materials for formatting requirements. Questions about submission of these materials to the MSU library should be directed to Assistant Director for Digital Information, currently Shawn Nicholson. He can be reached via email at nicho147@mail.lib.msu.edu.

**Certification for Graduation**
In order to be certified to graduate, students must verify their graduation status with the SPDC Associate Director. Student will follow with applying for graduation with the Office of The Registrar by completing the Application for Graduation Form. 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 to complete Graduate Degree.

**Commencement Ceremony**
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. Students who will be December graduates will participate in the December ceremony. Students who will graduate in Spring or Summer semesters will participate in the ceremony held at the end of Spring semester. To be listed in the Ceremony Program students who will graduate in Fall, should apply for graduation at the beginning of September and Spring/Summer graduates should apply in January.
Student Responsibilities and Expectations

It is the responsibility of ALL graduate students to:

- 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 on the Graduate School Website.
- 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.
- After consultation with the major professor or Associate Director, complete and file the Academic Progress Report/Annual Evaluation form each spring semester. The form is available at Graduate School Annual Evaluation Forms.
- Follow disciplinary and scholarly codes of ethics in course work, research, and professional activities found on the Student Rights and Responsibilities page on the Spartan Life OnLine website.
- 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.
- 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 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 Major Professor and Guidance Committee. 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 status if the student’s cumulative grade-point average for the courses on the Academic Program of Study is below 3.0. Should a student’s cumulative grade-point average fall below 3.0 after having completed half of the courses in the Academic Program of Study, the student may be enrolled in probational status in the master’s degree 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 may continue to enroll in the master’s degree program. If at the end of the additional semester, the student’s cumulative grade-point average is still below 3.0, the student will be dismissed from the School.

All students must meet the academic criteria set by the School of Planning, Design and Construction. In addition to meeting the grade criteria required by the School, an annual evaluation of each graduate student is prepared.
during the spring semester. The major professor is responsible for the preparation of the evaluation for the program and its communication to the student.

The following outline is used for the evaluation:

- **Academic Ability:**
  - Individual grads and grade-point average.
  - Progress on special problem topics, thesis or dissertation.

- **Analytical Ability:**
  - Student’s initiative in the choice of a research topic.
  - Student’s initiative in the analysis of a research topic.
  - Student’s performance in the execution of research.

- **Communication:**
  - Student’s ability in oral communication.
  - Student’s ability in written communication.

When the student’s performance or progress does not meet School requirements, he/she shall be notified by the Associate Director. When the deficiencies affect the student’s status in the major, he/she shall be promptly informed.

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.

**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.

**Grief Absence Policy**

For master’s (Plan A), master’s (Plan B) with research responsibilities, it is the responsibility of the student to: a) notify their advisor/major professor and faculty of the courses in which they are enrolled of the need for a grief absence in a timely manner, but no later than one week from the student’s initial knowledge of the situation, b) provide appropriate verification of the grief absence as specified by the advisor/major professor and faculty, and c) complete all missed work as determined in consultation with the advisor/major professor and faculty. It is the responsibility of the advisor/major professor to: a) determine with the student the expected period of absence – it is expected that some bereavement processes may be more extensive than others depending on individual circumstances, b) receive verification of the authenticity of a grief absence request upon the student’s return, and c) make reasonable accommodations so that the student is not penalized due to a verified grief absence. If employed as a Graduate Assistant or Teaching Assistant, the graduate student must also notify their employer. Both employer and student will swiftly communicate to determine how the student’s responsibilities will be covered during their absence. Graduate teaching assistants (TAs) should refer to the bereavement policy in the
MSU GEU CBU Article 18. Students who believe their rights under this policy have been violated should contact the University Ombudsperson.

**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 their major professor.

**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 Associate Director.

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

**Time Limit to Complete 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 Associate Director conducts an annual review and informs the student of his or her level of progress.

The time limit for completion of the requirements for the master’s degree set by the University is:

- Five years for students in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources,
- Six years for programs in the College of Social Science, and
- 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.

*Completion is from the date of enrollment in the student’s first course in the Master’s degree program. (This information is important in reading this document.)*

**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 “Mission Statement” approved by the Board of Trustees on April 18, 2008, [MSU Mission Statement on the Office of the President website](http://www.msu.edu) 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, and
- Adherence to fair and open relationships between senior scholars and their coworkers.

Students are encouraged to read the complete text of “Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities,” which is available from the MSU Graduate Office.

**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 online 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 (517) 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, MSU Human Research Protection Program Home Page.

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**


**Authorship**

A person claiming authorship of a scholarly publication must have met the following criteria:

- Substantial participation in conception and design of the study, or in analysis and interpretation of data,
- Substantial participation in the drafting of the manuscript or in the substantive editing of the manuscript,
- Final approval of the version of the manuscript to be published, and
- Ability to explain and defend the study in public or scholarly settings.

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.)

**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.

"**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.

**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.)
**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.

**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.

**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.

**Plagiarism**

The word plagiarism is derived from the Latin plagiarist, an abductor, and plagiar, 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).

**Distribution**

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

In many disciplines the content of one or more chapters of a thesis/dissertation comes directly from papers already published, often with multiple authors in addition to the author of the thesis/dissertation. In this context, graduate program faculty and thesis/dissertation committees and their chairs are urged to consider the appropriateness of including a chapter in a thesis/dissertation that is a multi-authored published paper not written by the author of record of the thesis/dissertation. If this is deemed appropriate, that practice must be described in the Graduate Handbook. Similarly, if not seen as an acceptable practice, that position must be part of the definition of what is acceptable or not as a thesis/dissertation by the department/program/school.

**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 at Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities on the Graduate School website.

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 How to File a Request for an Academic Grievance Hearing from the MSU Office of the University Ombudsperson website.

**Assistance Polices**

**Selection of Graduate Assistants and Teaching Assistants**

Graduate Assistants and Teaching Assistants are appointed on a quarter-time, half-time, or three-quarter-time basis for 18-19 weeks each (depending on number of University holidays) for Fall and Spring semesters and 12-13 weeks (depending on number of University holidays) for Summer semester. 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.

**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.

*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. (This information is important in reading this document.)*

**Expectations**

**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.

**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.

Normal workload, averaged over the entire period of the appointment is:

- 10 hours per week for a quarter-time stipend.
- 20 hours per week for a half-time stipend.
- 30 hours per week for a three-quarter-time stipend.

**Responsibilities**

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

**Appointed Levels**

**Level I**

Students with less than one year of experience as a Graduate Assistant, Teaching Assistant or a full support fellow. They conduct research, perform administrative tasks or other supervised duties such as reading and grading papers.

**Level II**

Students with a master’s degree or equivalent and/or one year of experience as a Graduate Assistant, Teaching Assistant or a full support fellow in the School of Planning, Design and Construction or in a department/unit considered relevant by the Director of the School of Planning, Design and Construction. They conduct research, grade papers, or perform administrative tasks with moderate supervision. Advancement from Level I to Level II is usually routine. The advancement is accompanied by an increase in stipend at least to the minimum of the Level II range established by the University.

**Level III**

Successful completion of doctoral comprehensive exams, as defined by the School of Planning, Design and Construction in which the student is enrolled, and six semesters of experience as a Graduate Assistant, Teaching Assistant or a full support fellow in the School of Planning, Design and Construction or in a department/unit considered relevant by the School Director. The definition of equivalent experience is left to the discretion of the School Director, but it is expected that only experience in research-oriented or teaching-oriented assignments will count toward the six semesters of experience as a Graduate Assistant, Teaching Assistant or full support fellow. (Consistent with current practice, ¼ time and ¾ time appointments count the same as ½ time appointments, and Summer Semesters count the same as Fall and Spring Semesters.)

**Mandatory Training on Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct**

All TAs and RAs must complete the online training about the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy. To Access the training, login to the TRAIN.ORA.MSU.EDU training website. Click "Register," "Complete Registration" and then "Launch" to begin the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct (RVSM) Policy - Faculty, Staff Training. (If it indicates that you have already registered, use "In Progress Training", then "Launch.") You will want to reserve approximately 30 minutes to complete all assignments. If you need assistance, contact the Helpdesk, (517) 884-4600 or train@ora.msu.edu.

**Evaluation**

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.

**Termination**

Graduate Assistants can be terminated if:

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

**Periods of Employment**

Graduate assistants Employment are as follows:

- Fall semester: August 16 to December 31.
- Spring semester: January 1 to May 15.
- Summer session: May 16 to August 15.

Stipends are compensation for completion of the entire body of work associated with a TA appointment, including through the submission of grades when that dates falls outside the employment period.

**Health Coverage**

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 other eligible individual (OEI), and/or children. Questions regarding enrollment, premium payment and coverage should be directed to the Aetna Student Health, (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, (517) 353-4434 extension 170 or extension 144.

**Right to Work**

The payment of union dues and fees is now consistent with the Michigan Rights to Work legislation. Nothing in the application of Michigan Right to Works Laws impact the daily terms and conditions of employment of TA’s. Union membership is voluntary; meeting the definition of a TA under the GEU contract is independent of union membership. Once can be a TA covered by the contact and enjoy all the rights and responsibilities of the agreement but not be a member of the union. Union membership is not tied to the employment relationship and is a private matter between the employee and the union.

**Leave Time**

Article 18 now provides for possible medical disputes where TA’s may not be able to perform their employment responsibilities due to physical or mental conditions. In addition, adoptions and parental leave time provides for pay during the first work week of applicable leave. The language on jury duty has been refined with regard to payment for lost time and reporting back to work after jury duty.

**Additional Opportunities**

**Internships**

The School believes that there is great advantage to our graduate students to seek additional professional opportunities. Internships for academic credit are allowed for students enrolled in the Urban & Regional Planning
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. 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: Teaching Assistant Program through The Graduate School website.

General Information and Recommendations

- Fall semester: August 16 to December 31.
- The Graduate School has moved from Linton Hall- The new home of the Graduate School is Chittenden Hall, 446 W. Circle Drive East Lansing, MI 48824-1044.
- Graduate students traveling internationally for MSU-related work (research data collection, international professional conferences, courses, or other academic business, are strongly encouraged to sign up using the International Travelers Database (even if they are not being reimbursed for travel). This is the best way for MSU to stay in touch with our students if there is an emergency, Travelers Database found here.
Master in Urban & Regional Planning (MURP)

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.

Admissions
To be admitted to the master’s degree program, the applicant must have a bachelor’s degree from a recognized institution; a cumulative undergraduate grade-point average of 3.0; a grade-point average below 3.0 may be supplemented with a Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score of 1000 in verbal and quantitative, and an analytical writing score of 3.5. Students who are required to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) must submit scores.

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 Master’s Program Director 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, etc.).
- Landscape Architecture (urban design).
- Community Sustainability (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 Degree**

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.

**MURP 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 curriculum is a two-year program of full-time study that requires 43 credits. This includes a core series of URP courses totaling twenty-eight 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 completion 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.
MURP Degree Requirements

In addition to meeting the requirements of the University and the College of Social Science, students must meet the requirements specified below. 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 43 credits, at least 24 of which must be in courses numbered in the 800 and 900 series, and meet the requirements specified below:

Urban Planning Core Courses: 28 Credits
- UP 824: Geographic Information Systems and Design Tools for Planning (3 credits).
- UP 844: Planning Theory & Ethics (3 credits).
- UP 854: Economics of Planning & Development (3 credits).
- UP 865: Planning & Development Law (3 credits).
- UP 894: Planning Practicum (4 credits).
- UP 892: Research Seminar in Planning & Construction Management (2 credits).

Elective Requirements: 9 Credits
The second part of the MURP degree program requires students to choose an area in which they wish to focus their studies. This requirement provides flexibility within what is primarily a “generalist” planning program. It allows students an opportunity to develop expertise and competency within a certain area of planning and to pursue an area of interest.

Students satisfy this requirement by completing nine credits of approved elective courses chosen from a list of electives in consultation with the student’s academic advisor. At least one three (3) credit UP 400-800 Special Topics course must be taken.

Additional Requirements: Plan A
- UP 899: Master’s Thesis Research (6 credits).

Additional Requirements: Plan B
- 6 additional credits in one or more courses approved by the student’s faculty advisor.
- Pass a comprehensive exam.

Year I

Fall Semester
- UP 844: Planning Theory & Ethics (3 credits).
- UP 892/ CMP 892: Research Seminar in Planning & Construction Management (2 credits).

Total: 12 Credits.
Spring Semester

- UP 824: GIS & Design Tool for Planning (3 credits).
- UP 865: Planning & Development Law (3 credits).
- Approved Elective (3 credits).

Total: 12 Credits.

Year II

Fall Semester

- UP 854: Economics of Planning & Development (3 credits).
- UP 800: Special Topics (3 credits).
- UP 899: Plan A Research (3 credits) OR Approved Electives: Plan B (3 credits).

Total: 9 Credits.

Spring Semester

- UP 894: Planning Practicum (4 credits).
- UP 899: Plan A Research (3 credits) OR Approved Elective Plan B (3 credits).
- Approved Electives (3 Credits).

Total: 10 Credits.

Total for all 4 Semesters: 43 Credits.

A maximum of 10 transfer credits at the 400 or 800-level may be accepted toward the Master in Urban & Regional Planning Degree.

For students who have been admitted to the dual JD-Master in Urban and Regional Planning program with Michigan State University - College of Law, a maximum of nine credits from Michigan State University College of Law may be transferred to the Master in Urban and Regional Planning program with a major in urban and regional planning. Transfer courses must be approved by the Associate Director of the Urban and Regional Planning program. Credits taken prior to admission at Michigan State University College of Law will not be accepted.

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 Student Service Center, 102 Human Ecology. The student must complete those forms prior to registering for UP 893.

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 posted on the SPDC website. 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**

- **UP 899: Master’s Thesis Research (6 credits).**
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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).
- **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.
- **Adhere to Agency Policies and Procedures and submit all necessary applications, agreements, evaluations, and reports on time.**
- **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 URP/ 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 Degree

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

After the end of the second semester of study the student must submit an Academic Program of Study approved by the major professor/faculty advisor. Plan A students must also have the plan signed by all committee. The Plan of Study will be submitted to the Graduate Secretary and placed in the student’s file. Any subsequent changes or amendments to the Plan of Study should follow the same procedure.

Advising and Guidance Committee

All students will be assigned a faculty advisor. Students should consult with the advisor to discuss course requirements, concentration area electives, and general procedures. Ideally, each graduate student who opts to pursue a Plan A 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 composed of three regular faculty members, with the Chair and one other member from the student’s major. The third member must be an approved MSU faculty member.

Graduate students who wish to change their research advisor and/or committee members should see Associate Director 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 Secretary.

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 Associate Director if a grade less than 3.0 is earned for a course.

In addition, the MSU Academic Programs Catalog states “Academic standards for graduation require that each student maintain an average of 3.00, or better, in all course work, including study undertaken in collateral courses; however, the accumulation of grades below 3.0 in more than two courses of 3 or more credits each removes the
student from the degree program.” 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 & 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.

**Thesis Defense and Final Oral Examination**

**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 and coursework. 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, [The Graduate School website](https://www.graduate.msu.edu) for specifics on Plan A thesis requirements and formatting.

**Plan B Exam**

The exam 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.

**Checklist for Full-Time Students**

**First Year Fall Semester**

- Meet with the assigned faculty advisor/ Associate Director to discuss your Academic Program of Study.
- Register for Fall and Spring Semester courses.
- Meet with the assigned faculty advisor/Associate Director towards the end of the semester to confirm your Spring Semester schedule.

**First Year Spring Semester**

**Plan A Master’s Thesis Students**

- Register for Spring Semester courses.
- Go to The Graduate School website, and download a copy of the, [2014 Master’s Thesis and Doctoral Dissertation Formatting Guide](https://www.graduate.msu.edu).
- 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.
• 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 Students
• Meet with the assigned faculty advisor/Associate Director to discuss your Academic Program of Study.
• Register for Spring Semester courses.

First Year Summer Semester
• Begin research and data collection for the Thesis.

Second Year Fall Semester
• Consult with the faculty advisor prior to the enrollment period for Spring Semester.
• Check to make sure all coursework, research and students records (for potential “University holds”), so that graduation will occur in a timely manner.

Plan A Master’s Thesis Students
• Select the guidance committee in consultation with the major professor.
• Enroll for UP 899.
• Continue with research and writing.

Second Year Spring Semester
Plan A Master’s Thesis Students
• Apply for Graduation online, Apply Now.
• Enroll for UP 899 if needed (required total of 6 credits).
• Continue with research and writing.
• Consult with the 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 ELECTRONICALLY as instructed at The Graduate School to The Graduate School by the stated 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).

Degrees are not certified until a copy of the final Thesis is submitted to the Graduate Secretary or major professor.

Plan B Master’s Students
• Apply for Graduation online, Apply Now.
• Register for and successfully pass comprehensive exam See the Graduate Secretary for details specific to the semester.