

# INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION

Department of  
**Community Sustainability**  
Michigan State University

APPLICANTS REQUIRING A VISA TO ATTEND MSU [http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective\\_students](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students)

**STEP A: Items 1-9 are outlined below. Items 1-9 are required of all international applicants, to be worked on simultaneously. Scroll down to follow detailed application instructions for each item.**

STEP A	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>ITEMS 1-4</b> Submit items 1-4 using applicant portal.  <a href="http://bit.ly/1N0y5I0">http://bit.ly/1N0y5I0</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>ITEM 5</b> Request item 5 using applicant portal.  <a href="http://bit.ly/1N0y5I0">http://bit.ly/1N0y5I0</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>ITEMS 6 + 7</b> Request items 6 + 7 from testing agency.  <a href="https://www.ets.org/">https://www.ets.org/</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>ITEMS 8 + 9</b> Request items 8 + 9 from former institutions.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>CONTACT</b> Notify Graduate Secretary when all 9 items are complete: <a href="http://csus.msu.edu/graduate">http://csus.msu.edu/graduate</a>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>MSU GRADUATE APPLICATION</b> (Item 1) \$75 application fee; scroll for instructions.</li> <li>• <b>PERSONAL STATEMENT</b> (Item 2) Scroll down for instructions.</li> <li>• <b>ACADEMIC STATEMENT</b> (Item 3) Scroll down for instructions.</li> <li>• <b>RESUMÉ</b> (Item 4) Scroll down for instructions.</li> </ul> (U Upload Items 2-4 separately on student application portal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>3 LORs (LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION)</b> (Item 5)</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify your 3 recommenders on the portal. Specify whether or not you waive your right of access to their comments.</li> <li>2. Recommenders will receive an email from MSU's Office of Admissions to complete online LOR.</li> <li>3. Applicants should follow up directly with recommenders, reminding them to complete LOR forms and letters before the application deadline.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GRE</b> (Item 6) <b>MSU General Code: 1465</b> (scores no older than 5 years)</li> <li>• <b>TOEFL</b> (Item 7) <b>MSU General Code: 1465</b> (scores no older than 2 years)</li> </ul> Order official scores through ETS; ask ETS to send scores <b>electronically</b> directly to the MSU Office of Admissions.  MSU Office of Admissions 517-355-8332 Email via email link at Contact: <a href="https://admissions.msu.edu/contact.asp">https://admissions.msu.edu/contact.asp</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS</b> (Item 8)</li> <li>• <b>OFFICIAL DIPLOMAS</b> (Item 9)</li> </ul> Ask all former institutions to send official transcripts and other official academic records (diplomas, other records as relevant) by postal mail in a sealed, official university envelope to the address below:  CSUS Graduate Admissions Michigan State University Dept. of Community Sustainability 480 Wilson Road, Room 131 East Lansing, MI 48824	<p>Completed applications will be sent to the CSUS Graduate Admissions Committee 1-3 days after all items are received from the applicant, former institutions, ETS, and recommenders.</p> <p>All application items must be received by the application deadline.</p> <p>Applications with missing or incomplete items will not be processed or reviewed.</p>

**STEP B: The 4 components of STEP B occur in the order listed below. STEP B occurs after STEP A is completed satisfactorily, based on the detailed instructions found in following pages.**

STEP B	<b>APPLICATION REVIEW</b>	<b>DEPARTMENT DECISION</b>	<b>FINANCIAL AFFIDAVIT</b>	<b>UNIVERSITY DECISION</b>	<b>APPLICANT DECISION</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed applications are reviewed by the CSUS Graduate Admissions Committee, a committee of CSUS Department faculty.</li> <li>• Applications that pass Admissions Committee review are made available to all faculty in the Department for review. Faculty indicate their interest and ability to accept an applicant, and if they are able to provide any funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typically, applicants can expect a Department admissions decision by email 8-10 weeks after their application is complete (all items received by the Department), depending on when in the review cycle it is completed.</li> <li>• If you are accepted, initial advisor assignment and funding information are provided in your Department offer letter. Assistantship details, if applicable, will follow in a separate letter.</li> <li>• If you are accepted, the CSUS Dept's decision is preliminary to MSU's review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MSU Office of Admissions will ask admitted international students to show proof of funding via affidavit of support.</li> <li>• If you are accepted by CSUS, be prepared to provide an affidavit of support if you do not have an assistantship or your funding is less than US\$16,584 for the academic year.</li> <li>• The MSU Office of Admissions will not issue an I-20 form or acceptance letter to students who do not provide proof of sufficient financial support.</li> </ul> Click Affidavit of Support for Financial Proof details (amount above is for 2019-20 year): <a href="https://grad.msu.edu/internationalapplicants">https://grad.msu.edu/internationalapplicants</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MSU Office of Admissions reviews application items of applicants who are admitted by the Department.</li> <li>• If an applicant is accepted by MSU, an official letter of acceptance will appear in the student's portal.</li> <li>• Notify the Department Graduate Secretary and Graduate Program Coordinator if and when you receive correspondence from the MSU Office of Admissions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are admitted by the Department and the University, send an email notification to the CSUS Department Graduate Secretary and Graduate Program Coordinator that you accept or decline the offer. Please CC your assigned advisor.</li> <li>• Send this decision by email as soon as possible, or by April 1 or (if applied near the March 1 deadline) <b>no later than two weeks</b> after you receive the official University acceptance letter.</li> </ul>

# APPLICATION DEADLINES

Department of  
**Community Sustainability**  
**Michigan State University**

APPLICANTS REQUIRING A VISA TO ATTEND MSU [http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective\\_students](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students)

**All applicants should apply for fall admission**, consistent with the CSUS cohort program structure, because it allows students to:

- attend the formal once-yearly CSUS orientation held a few days before fall semester begins;
- enroll in required foundations courses, offered only during the fall semester; and
- become part of a CSUS graduate student cohort (this group provides mutual support throughout your degree program, based on shared experiences early in your CSUS career).

If you are also applying to a special government or other funding entity, please comply with those deadlines and guidelines also, as they may be different.

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## I want to start my graduate program **FALL 2020**

Applications for **FALL 2020** admissions are accepted on a rolling basis (as completed) from September 1, 2019 through March 2, 2020.

Rolling admissions means the applicant can submit application materials to the Department of Community Sustainability (CSUS) at any time between September 1, 2019 and March 2, 2020. Rolling admissions enables the CSUS Graduate Admissions Committee to review applications as they are completed, and to make admissions decisions typically within 8 weeks after the applicant submits all of the required application items. The Department does not hold all applications until the March 2 deadline.

If Fall 2020 applicants submit all application items by **November 1, 2019**, they have an improved chance of consideration for:

- university-wide fellowships, *if* applicant is deemed eligible and competitive <https://grad.msu.edu/msu-graduate-school-fellowships>
- early availability research assistantships offered by individual faculty, or other campus opportunities <https://grad.msu.edu/assistantships>

If Fall 2020 applicants submit all application items by **March 2, 2020**, they can be considered for:

- research assistantships as available and offered by individual faculty, or other campus opportunities <https://grad.msu.edu/assistantships>

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## I want to start my graduate program **SPRING/SUMMER 2019 or 2020**

CSUS accepts applications only for **FALL** semester starts. Therefore, plan ahead to meet **Fall 2020** deadlines (or Fall 2021 deadlines, not yet posted). See above.

# PROGRAMS AND DEGREES

Department of  
**Community Sustainability**  
Michigan State University

APPLICANTS REQUIRING A VISA TO ATTEND MSU [http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective\\_students](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students)

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## COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

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The Department of Community Sustainability offers three degree types (MS-A, MS-B, PhD\*) within the Community Sustainability (CSUS) graduate program:

CSUS GRADUATE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: <http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/programs/csus>

MS-A, MS-B, PhD DEGREE DESCRIPTIONS: [http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/programs\\_degrees](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/programs_degrees)

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## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM & PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT

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The Department of Community Sustainability offers three degree types (MS-A, MS-B, PhD\*) within the Sustainable Tourism & Protected Area Management (STPAM) graduate program:

STPAM GRADUATE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: <http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/programs/stpam>

MS-A, MS-B, PhD DEGREE DESCRIPTIONS: [http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/programs\\_degrees](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/programs_degrees)

\* A Master of Arts (MA) degree program in Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Education (AFNRE) also is offered in the CSUS Department.

To learn more about that program, see separate information and application guidelines at: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/csus/graduate/programs/afnre>

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## CSUS GRADUATE HANDBOOK

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To review details about the department, the graduate programs, and the graduate degree program requirements for CSUS and STPAM, you may link to the most current version of the CSUS Graduate Handbook via: [http://www.canr.msu.edu/csus/graduate/current\\_students/graduate\\_handbook](http://www.canr.msu.edu/csus/graduate/current_students/graduate_handbook)

# APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

APPLICANTS REQUIRING A VISA TO ATTEND MSU [www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective\\_students](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students)

## ITEM 1 – MSU ONLINE GRADUATE APPLICATION

**Submit Item 1 using the MSU applicant portal.**

Submit Item 1 using the MSU Office of Admissions Graduate Education Student Portal (applicant portal) available at: <https://admissions.msu.edu/gradportal/>. If you forget your applicant ID and/or your password, contact the MSU Office of Admissions for assistance. Use the same name that appears on legal documents, such as a passport or identification card, to complete your application. No paper or email applications can be accepted. The online portal allows you to request letters of recommendation (LORs), request LOR cover forms from your recommenders, view and send e-messages from/to the CSUS Department, submit your application, and check the status of your application.

Select the major code for your desired program on the applicant portal. Major codes are:

### **MS CODES** – Plan A and Plan B

- 5389: CSUS (Community Sustainability)
- 5376: STPAM (Sustainable Tourism & Protected Area Management)

### **PhD CODES**

- 5390: CSUS (Community Sustainability)
- 5377: STPAM (Sustainable Tourism & Protected Area Management)

**Applicants must answer the supplementary questions on the MSU online graduate application before submitting the \$75 application fee.**

## ITEM 2 – PERSONAL STATEMENT

**Submit Item 2 using the MSU applicant portal.**

A typed personal statement is required of all applicants. The personal statement gives the applicant an opportunity to share personal experiences with the Admissions Committee. Prospective faculty advisors and other faculty members also read personal statements during the review and advisor selection process. Upload the statement to the applicant portal. The content below should be addressed in your personal statement, using format guidelines:

### **CONTENT: BACKGROUND AND LIFE EXPERIENCES**

- How have your background and life experiences (social, economic, cultural, familial, educational, and/or other opportunities or challenges) motivated your decision to pursue your selected graduate degree from the Department of Community Sustainability?
- Describe how these experiences have prepared you or led you to your proposed degree work. You can choose to focus on a single aspect of your background or write about multiple experiences.
- Applicants who have overcome economic barriers or extreme personal, social, or cultural obstacles to seek a graduate degree are encouraged to include this information in the personal statement.

**FORMAT:** Follow the format guidelines below in preparing your personal statement:

- Essay format
- Single-spaced, using 12-point font in a Word document, converted to PDF
- Maximum length: 500 words
- 8.5" X 11" paper, not A4 (use only white paper)
- Use the title **Personal Statement** at the top of each page (in the header).
- Include your first and last names (as appear on your application) in header of each page.
- Include the program and degree type to which you are applying (CSUS or STPAM; MS-A, MS-B, or PhD) at the top of each page (in the header).
- Include page numbers at the bottom of each page (in the footer).
- Do NOT include any of the following anywhere on your personal statement:
  - MSU PID
  - Phone number, address, email
  - Photo

**Leave blank the sections on the MSU online graduation application for PERSONAL STATEMENT and ACADEMIC STATEMENT. The CSUS Graduate Admissions Committee requires both statements be uploaded as individual PDF files on the applicant portal – this allows the applicant to follow the required formatting guidelines (and statements are easier to read).**

# APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

APPLICANTS REQUIRING A VISA TO ATTEND MSU [http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective\\_students](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students)

## ITEM 3 – ACADEMIC STATEMENT

Submit Item 3 using the MSU applicant portal.

A typed academic statement (external to the MSU application) is required of all applicants. The academic statement gives the applicant an opportunity to share proposed academic and career goals with the Graduate Admissions Committee. Prospective faculty advisors and other faculty members also read academic statements during the review and advisor selection process. Upload the statement to the applicant portal. The content below should be addressed in your academic statement, using the format guidelines provided:

### CONTENT: PLANS FOR GRADUATE STUDY

- Identify the program option to which you are applying (CSUS or STPAM).
- Identify the degree option for which you are applying (MS-A, MS-B, or PhD).
- Discuss with specificity what you want to study/research during your degree work.
- Identify faculty members you believe most closely match your interests (review faculty bios from <http://www.csus.msu.edu/people/faculty> ; click names for links to information).
- Include a summary of discussions you have had with potential faculty advisors.

### CONTENT: ACADEMIC INTERESTS, PASSIONS, AND CAREER GOALS

- Discuss why you want to earn the degree specified above.
- Describe what motivates your interest in this program.
- Describe what experiences have led to this choice.
- Explain why this **interdisciplinary, systems-based program** (rather than a disciplinary program) is a good fit with your goals.
- Explain how the CSUS or STPAM graduate program will help you meet your educational and career goals.

### CONTENT: CONTRIBUTIONS

- Discuss what you will contribute to the Department of Community Sustainability graduate program, to Michigan State University, and to fellow students (especially in your cohort).

### CONTENT: WEAKNESSES

- If you have apparent weaknesses in your application materials, explain them in your academic statement and describe strategies for addressing them in the future.

### FORMAT:

Follow the format guidelines below in preparing your academic statement:

- Essay format
- Single-spaced, using 12-point font in a Word document, converted to PDF
- Maximum length: 750 words
- 8.5" X 11" paper, not A4 (use only white paper)
- Use the title **Academic Statement** at the top of each page (in the header).
- Include your first and last names (as they appear on your application) in header of each page.
- Include the program and degree type to which you are applying (CSUS or STPAM; MS-A, MS-B, or PhD) at the top of each page (in the header).
- Include page numbers at the bottom of each page (in the footer).
- Do NOT include any of the following anywhere on your academic statement:
  - MSU PID
  - Phone number, address, email address
  - Photo

Leave blank the sections on the MSU online graduation application for **PERSONAL STATEMENT** and **ACADEMIC STATEMENT**. The CSUS Graduate Admissions Committee requires both statements be uploaded as individual PDF files on the applicant portal – this allows the applicant to follow the required formatting guidelines (and statements are easier to read).

# APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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## ITEM 4 – RESUMÉ

**Submit Item 4 using the MSU applicant portal.**

A typed resumé is required of all applicants. The resumé must be two pages in length and formatted on 8.5" X 11" white paper (not A4). Do not include a photo. Upload your resumé to the applicant portal.

The following content should be included in your resumé:

- Education
- Professional experiences (paid and/or unpaid)
- Other relevant experiences (if any)
- Certifications, honors, awards (if any)
- Professional organization memberships and/or involvement
- Publications and professional presentations (as relevant)

## ITEM 5 – LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

**Request Item 5 using the MSU applicant portal.**

Three letters of recommendation are required of all applicants. Applicants must request letters from 3 different recommenders via the portal. Be sure to indicate whether or not you waive your right of access to the recommendations.

- MS applicants: at least 1 (preferably 2) of your LORs should be academic. PhD applicants: at least 2 (preferably 3) of your LORs should be academic. Be sure they speak to your match with CSUS programs.
- After the applicant identifies a recommender on the portal, an auto-recommendation request is sent (by email) to the recommender.
- Applicants cannot submit the recommendation materials on behalf of the recommenders.
- Applicants can view their recommendation status in the portal.
- Applicants must follow up with their recommenders to ensure letters of recommendation are submitted before the CSUS application deadline.

## ITEM 6 – GRE SCORES

**Request Item 6 from testing agency.**

GRE scores are required of all applicants. Applicants must contact ETS (<https://www.ets.org>) and request GRE reports be sent directly to the MSU Office of Admissions, identifying one of the codes below. The MSU general code is **1465**. The general code identifies to ETS to which university(ies) you want your GRE scores sent. Select only ONE of the ETS codes below to identify your MSU degree program interest. It does not matter which code below you select.

- 0110 – Resource Management
- 0111 – Parks and Recreation Management
- 0113 – Renewable Natural Resources
- 5101 – Interdisciplinary Programs

## REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR GRE SCORES

- GRE scores must be no more than 5 years old at the time of application.
- Contact the Graduate Secretary via email if the name on your GRE report is different than the name on your MSU online application. The Graduate Secretary must notify the MSU Office of Admissions of the name discrepancy to prevent a delay in the processing of your scores.
- Copies of scores sent by the applicant to MSU or CSUS via email and/or postal mail are deemed unofficial by the University and will not be considered.
- Scores must be accessible to CSUS by the application deadline. Therefore, the applicant must order a GRE report from ETS long before the application deadline (and take the exam long before that, to allow time for ETS scoring and reporting). GRE reports can take 1-3 weeks to arrive at MSU and an additional 2-4 weeks to be processed after they are received by the MSU Office of Admissions. Thus, it could take as long as 7 weeks for your report to become available to the Department. The scores are not accessible by the Department until processed by the Office of Admissions. Plan accordingly.



# APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

APPLICANTS REQUIRING A VISA TO ATTEND MSU [http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective\\_students](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students)

## ITEM 7 – TOEFL SCORES

Request Item 7 from testing agency.

TOEFL scores are required of all international applicants except international applicants who are citizens of the countries listed below. Applicants must contact ETS (<https://www.ets.org/toefl>) and request TOEFL scores be sent directly to MSU Office of Admissions using the MSU General Code: **1465**. The general code identifies the university to which you want the scores sent.

## COUNTRIES FOR AUTO-WAIVER OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

The TOEFL exam is required of all international applicants except if:

1) applicant is a citizen of/born in the countries listed below:

A – Anguilla, Antigua, Australia

B – Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands

C – Canada (except Québec), Caribbean, Cayman Islands

D – Dominica

G – Greenland, Granada, Guayana

J – Jamaica

M – Martinique, Micronesia, Federated States of Micronesia, Montserrat

N – New Zealand

S – St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent

T – Trinidad, Tobago, Turks & Caicos Islands

U – United Kingdom (England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland), U.S. Virgin Islands

See: <https://grad.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/forms/EnglishCountryList.pdf>

2) applicant earned 4-year BA/BS in the U.S. or other English-speaking country, or

3) applicant earned a campus-based MS degree from a U.S.-based AAU institution; see <https://www.aau.edu/who-we-are/our-members>

TOEFL scores must meet the University TOEFL requirements outlined below:

- PBT (paper-based test): minimum average score of 550; no sub-score below 52
- iBT (internet-based test): minimum average score of 80; no sub-score below 19 for reading, listening, and speaking; no sub-score below 22 for writing

**CSUS does not offer “Provisional Admissions” for graduate students.**

## ALTERNATIVES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Information on alternative assessments to the TOEFL and on the University's English language proficiency requirements for international applicants can be found at link from:

<https://grad.msu.edu/english-language-competency>

## REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR TOEFL SCORES

- TOEFL scores must be no more than 2 years old at the time of application.
- Contact the Graduate Secretary via email if the name on your TOEFL report is different than the name on your MSU online application. The Graduate Secretary must notify the MSU Office of Admissions of the name discrepancy to prevent a delay in the processing of your scores.
- Copies of scores sent by the applicant to MSU or CSUS via email and/or postal mail are deemed unofficial by the University and will not be considered.
- Scores must be accessible to CSUS by the application deadline. Therefore, the applicant must order a TOEFL report from ETS long before the application deadline (and take the exam long before that, to allow time for ETS scoring and reporting). TOEFL reports can take 1-3 weeks to arrive at MSU and an additional 2-4 weeks to process after they are received by the MSU Office of Admissions. Thus, it could take as long as 7 weeks for your report to become available to the Department. The scores are not accessible by the Department until processed by the Office of Admissions. Plan accordingly.

## NON-AUTOMATIC WAIVER OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

Applicants being recruited by a faculty member in CSUS *may* apply for a waiver if certain conditions are met and strongly supported by potential CSUS advisor (letter to Program Coordinator). See <https://grad.msu.edu/procedure-request-waiver-english-language-competency>

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## ITEMS 8 & 9 – OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS & DIPLOMAS

**Request Items 8 & 9 from former institutions.**

Official transcripts and diplomas are required of all international applicants for each previous academic institution attended. Applicants must arrange for one OFFICIAL transcript and one OFFICIAL DIPLOMA (plus English translations of each, if not already in English) to be sent directly to the Department of Community Sustainability from EACH university or college listed on the online graduate application. ALL colleges and universities attended (even if no degree was granted) must be listed on the online application.

### REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR TRANSCRIPTS

- Transcripts/diplomas are deemed official if they are sent in a sealed envelope directly to the Department from the respective institutions in an official, sealed envelope via postal service, FedEx or other delivery service.
- Photocopies or scanned copies of transcripts/diplomas are considered unofficial and will not be accepted or reviewed.
- Any transcript/diploma received by the Department from an applicant or from an entity other than the institution is considered unofficial and will not be accepted or reviewed.
- Official English translations of transcripts/diplomas originally in a language other than English must be submitted with the original official documents. A translation is deemed official if it is sent with the official transcript in a sealed envelope via postal mail directly to the Department from the institution or Ministry. (All must arrive by the application deadline.)
- Official transcripts/diplomas for work completed at MSU need not be submitted because the Graduate Program Office can access records of MSU coursework and granting of MSU degrees.
- Applicant must order each official transcript/diploma (and translation, if applicable) long before the application deadline and ensure that each institution/Ministry sends the transcript/diploma directly to the Department of Community Sustainability. Transcripts/diplomas can take 2-8 weeks to arrive at the Department; international transcripts may take longer. Plan accordingly.

### TRANSCRIPT & DIPLOMA MAILING INSTRUCTIONS

DO NOT SEND OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS & DIPLOMAS TO THE MSU OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS because it is difficult for Department staff to know when documents arrive, and to access official documents, if they are sent there.

The applicant must contact each institution, pay the required transcript and translation fee(s), if applicable, and request official transcripts be sent from the institution directly to:

CSUS Graduate Admissions  
Michigan State University  
Department of Community Sustainability  
Natural Resources Building  
480 Wilson Road, Room 131  
East Lansing, MI 48824

### NOTE: PREVIOUS DEGREE COMPLETION

If you have not completed a required previous degree at the time of application (4-year bachelor's degree for MS applicants, or master's degree for PhD applicants), a departmental acceptance will be "conditional" until you officially complete your previous degree - prior to beginning your CSUS/ STPAM degree. **Be sure to submit official diploma (home language plus English translation) to confirm degree completion as soon as you have completed your degree.**



# APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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## ITEM 9 – OTHER OFFICIAL ACADEMIC RECORDS (info also included on previous page w/ #8)

### Request Item 9 from former institutions.

Official academic records are required of all applicants, as relevant to the various academic institutions. Applicants must arrange for the following to be sent directly to the Department of Community Sustainability: one official/certified university or professional school record of subjects/mark sheets, diplomas, and/or certificates from each institution attended. The names of all certificates, diplomas, and degrees earned and dates received should be noted on the official academic records.

### REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR ACADEMIC RECORDS

- Academic records must be sent directly by the principal/registrar of each school you have attended, or by the Ministry of Education in your country, directly to the CSUS Department.
- Academic records are deemed official if they are sent in a sealed envelope via postal, FedEx or other delivery service directly to the CSUS Department from the respective institutions.
- Photocopies or scanned copies of academic records are considered unofficial and will not be accepted or reviewed.
- Any academic record received by the Department from an applicant or from an entity other than the institution or Ministry of Education is considered unofficial and will not be accepted or reviewed.
- Official English translations of academic records originally in a language other than English must be submitted with the original documents. A translation is deemed official if it is sent with the official academic record in a sealed envelope via postal, FedEx or other delivery service directly to CSUS from the institution. (All must arrive by the application deadline.)
- Applicant must order academic records (and translations, if applicable) long before the application deadline and ensure that each institution/Ministry sends the documents directly to the Department of Community Sustainability. Academic records can take 2-8 weeks (or more) to arrive at the Department, especially from international locations. Plan accordingly.

### ACADEMIC RECORDS MAILING INSTRUCTIONS

DO NOT SEND OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS & DIPLOMAS TO THE MSU OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS because it is difficult for Department staff to know when documents arrive, and to access official documents, if they are sent there.

Applicant must contact each institution, pay the required academic record and translation fee(s), if applicable, and request official records be sent to:

CSUS Graduate Admissions  
Michigan State University  
Department of Community Sustainability  
Natural Resources Building  
480 Wilson Road, room 131  
East Lansing, MI 48824

## ITEM 10 – AFFIDAVIT OF SUPPORT

### Item 10 should be uploaded in the applicant portal.

If the CSUS Department admits you, the next step is for the MSU Office of Admissions to admit you. This will happen only if sufficient financial support is verified. If you are offered an assistantship stipend of less than **US\$ 16,301**, or are *not* offered an assistantship, you must provide an affidavit of support for verification by the Office of Admissions. If needed, this is the final item required as part of your application.

All international applicants accepted by the CSUS Department of Community Sustainability must review thoroughly the information on the next page to determine the information required by MSU. Students ultimately are responsible for meeting the financial requirements established by the University if 1) their fellowship or assistantship funding does not meet requirements for any academic year, or 2) no funding is offered through the University. See next page for details.

# AFFIDAVIT OF SUPPORT

APPLICANTS REQUIRING A VISA TO ATTEND MSU [http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective\\_students](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students)

## ITEM 10 – AFFIDAVIT OF SUPPORT (info here based on 2019-20 amounts)

**Provide completed form plus supporting bank, loan, or government funding documentation.**

### What is the Affidavit of Support?

The Affidavit of Support confirms that the international applicant is financially prepared to meet the costs associated with obtaining a graduate education at MSU. An I-20 form and a letter of acceptance will not be issued by the University until sufficient financial support is verified by the Office of Admissions. The Office of Admissions will ask for the relevant proof of financial support after the CSUS Department sends you an acceptance letter. The Office of Admissions will not send an official acceptance letter until sufficient financial proof is verified.

### I am a MS-A or MS-B applicant. Do I need to submit the Affidavit of Support? (check website for updated 2019-20 amounts)

- 1) Yes, if your graduate assistantship stipend (for 2019-20) is less than **US\$ 16,584** per semester and you bring no dependents (e.g., spouse/children). The University requires you to show financial support for the difference between US\$ 16,584 and your assistantship stipend. The Office of Admissions may require proof of additional funding, especially if you bring dependent(s).

EXAMPLE: If your assistantship stipend equals US\$ 11,000 for academic year 2019-2020 (fall & spring), you must provide financial proof that you have US\$ 5,584 to cover the difference.

- 2) Yes, if you are not offered a graduate assistantship. The University requires you to show financial proof in the amount of **US\$ 45,187** if you bring no dependents. If you bring dependents, you will be required to provide proof of additional financial resources.

For detailed information about proof of financial support see:

<https://grad.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/apply/AffidavitofSupport20-21.pdf> available via link from <https://grad.msu.edu/internationalapplicants> (link labeled "Financial Proof").

### I am a PhD applicant. Do I need to submit the Affidavit of Support? (check website for updated 2020-21 amounts)

- 1) Yes, if your graduate assistantship stipend (for 2019-20; the 2020-21 limits are not posted at time of this writing, August 2019) is less than **US\$ 16,584** per semester and you bring no dependents (e.g., spouse/children). The University requires you to show financial support for the difference between US\$ 16,584 and your assistantship stipend. The Office of Admissions may require proof of additional funding, especially if you bring dependent(s).

EXAMPLE: If your assistantship stipend equals US\$ 11,000 for academic year 2019-2020 (fall & spring), you must provide financial proof that you have US\$ 5,584 to cover the difference.

- 2) Yes, if you are *not* offered a graduate assistantship. The University requires doctoral students to show financial proof in the amount of **US\$ 36,279** if you bring no dependents. If you bring dependents, you will be required to provide proof of additional financial resources.

### What if I plan to study during the summer semester also?

If you plan to attend summer school, proof is required for an additional **US\$ 16,907** for tuition, fees, books and miscellaneous expenses.

### No Affidavit of Support is required if:

You are offered a graduate assistantship stipend equal to or greater than **US\$ 16,584** and you bring no dependents.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

APPLICANTS REQUIRING A VISA TO ATTEND MSU [http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective\\_students](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students)

## **I am a fall applicant. When should I submit the required application items – by the ‘soft’ November 1 or the ‘hard’ March 2 deadline?**

Opportunities for funding are greater, though not guaranteed, early in the fall application cycle. Fall applicants are highly encouraged to submit all required items before November 1 for potential fellowship consideration. Applications will be accepted through March 2 and considered for research assistantships, as available through individual faculty, but applications are likely not to be considered for university-wide fellowships if received after November 1.

## **What fellowship opportunities are available?**

Fall applicants may be considered for university-wide fellowships if all application items are received by November 1 (earlier preferred) and applicants are deemed competitive/eligible for specific fellowships. University-wide fellowship descriptions and criteria can be found on the Graduate School website: <https://grad.msu.edu/msu-graduate-school-fellowships>. The Department of Community Sustainability does not have full-funding fellowships, but **early** admitted students **may** apply for 2 of the endowed scholarships offered by the Department (Axinn, Steinmueller), as relevant (these provide supplemental funding only, not substantial or full funding support for degree work). 11/27/19 deadline.

## **What other funding opportunities are available?**

Funding opportunities provided by MSU are available on the MSU Graduate School website: <https://grad.msu.edu/funding>. The MSU Office of Financial Aid describes additional funding opportunities: <https://finaid.msu.edu>. Most funding from the Department of Community Sustainability is in the form of hourly work pay or research assistantships for qualified students, as available, through individual faculty.

## **For more information about assistantships, explore these websites:**

MSU Graduate School website: <https://grad.msu.edu/assistantships>

Assistantship FAQ: <https://hr.msu.edu/employment/graduate-assistants/faqs.html>

Assistantship Stipend Ranges: <https://www.hr.msu.edu/employment/graduate-assistants/stipend-ranges.html>

CSUS Fellowships: [http://www.canr.msu.edu/csus/graduate/current\\_students/graduate\\_fellowship](http://www.canr.msu.edu/csus/graduate/current_students/graduate_fellowship)

## **What is an assistantship?**

Research assistantships at MSU include a stipend (bi-weekly paycheck) + tuition & fees for 9 credits per semester (fall and spring) + health insurance + fees. Assistantship amounts vary, based on many factors. Admitted students who are offered an assistantship will receive a separate assistantship offer letter having details about the faculty supervisor, assistantship level, hours per week, and stipend.

Because research assistantships in CSUS are offered only by individual faculty members, applicants are encouraged to talk with faculty about potential assistantship opportunities. View faculty biographies and faculty contact information at: <http://www.csus.msu.edu/people/faculty>

## **Does the CSUS Department offer teaching assistantships?**

Occasionally, yes. But generally only research assistantships are available via individual faculty members. Competitive Department-funded teaching assistantships may be available in unusual cases such as made possible by sabbatical faculty salary savings and when a specific teaching need exists. Also, each year one competitive endowed award (Malcolm & Ann Kerr Award for Excellence in Scholarship) will fund one teaching assistantship for one semester. TAs typically are offered to current students.

## **Are all CSUS graduate students funded by assistantships?**

No, not all admitted applicants are offered assistantships or other funding, as they are based on funded project and research grants of individual faculty (typically the student's advisor). Students fund their education in many ways: full- or part-time jobs on or off campus, hourly project work, assistantships, home government or other agency funding (international students), scholarships, and/or personal savings and loans.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## How are applications evaluated?

Completed graduate applications are reviewed by the CSUS Graduate Admissions Committee, comprising three CSUS faculty members. Applications that pass this review then are made available for review by the CSUS faculty at large, for identification of potential advisors. An applicant is admitted only if a faculty member commits to advising a specific applicant. The multi-stage review cycle does not begin until all application items are received (including official test scores, official transcripts/diplomas, and letters of recommendation). CSUS uses holistic review, meaning all items are reviewed as a package, representing the applicant *in toto*; no individual item automatically disqualifies an applicant.

## How soon is an admission decision made after all required application items are submitted?

Applicants typically receive an admission decision letter from the Department by email no later than 8-10 weeks after all the required application items are received. The Graduate Admissions Committee will not review an application until an application package is complete. The review process has several steps and takes time. Please be patient.

An applicant can view the official letter from the MSU Office of Admissions on the applicant portal – granting or denying admission – soon after receiving the admission decision email from the Department (unless waiting for Affidavit of Support for an international applicant). The amount of time depends on the university-wide applicant load in the system at the time of decision. An applicant is accepted **officially** to MSU only by the MSU Office of Admissions.

## Does the Department accept spring/summer applications?

No, the CSUS Department does not accept spring/summer applications. Applicants may apply only for fall semester starts. Applying for fall admission gives admitted students the best opportunity to 1) attend the formal once-yearly CSUS orientation, 2) enroll in fall-offered required foundations courses, and 3) become part of a full student cohort.

## Can I apply if I have not taken GRE or scores are older than 5 years?

No. GRE scores are required and must be no older than 5 years at the time of application.

## What is the minimum GRE score accepted by the Department?

The CSUS Department does not specify a minimum GRE score for any section of the exam, as GRE scores are not a singular admissions criterion. We assess the entire application as a whole. That is not to say that GRE scores are irrelevant. In making admissions decisions, the Graduate Admissions Committee considers 1) the degree program for which an applicant is applying, 2) the age of the GRE scores, which must be no older than 5 years at the time of application, 3) experiences between GRE test-taking and application dates that might have enhanced applicant abilities in low-scoring areas, 4) transcripts, and 5) comments in letters of recommendation. Applicants having a low GRE score (low percentile) should address the low score in their academic statement.

## May I send my transcripts/diplomas/academic documents by email?

No, because all academic documents sent by email are not considered official and will not be reviewed. Contact your former institutions and ask them to send official transcript/diploma and translations in a sealed, official envelope to the Department of Community Sustainability. ***Anything sent by the applicant – by email or postal mail – is considered unofficial and will not be accepted.***

## May I send my GRE scores by email?

No, because GRE scores sent by email are not considered official and will not be considered. Contact ETS and ask them to send your official scores to the MSU Office of Admissions. ***Anything sent by the applicant – by email or postal mail – is considered unofficial and will not be accepted.***

## May I send any application materials by email?

No, applicants should follow the detailed application instructions (found in this document) and submit items as instructed.