

# PhD Student Handbook

**Dr. Scott G. Witter**

Director

Human Ecology Bldg.

552 W. Circle Dr., Room 101

East Lansing, MI 48824

Ph: (517) 432-6379

[witter@msu.edu](mailto:witter@msu.edu)

**Dr. Pat Crawford**

Associate Director

Human Ecology Bldg.

552 W. Circle Dr., Room 101

East Lansing, MI 48824

Ph: (517) 432-1148

[crawf203@msu.edu](mailto:crawf203@msu.edu)

[Ph.D.pdcgrad@msu.edu](mailto:Ph.D.pdcgrad@msu.edu)

[School of Planning, Design and Construction Home Page](#)

## MSU Catalog Description

The many aspects of our built and natural environment—buildings, facilities, interior spaces, infrastructure, neighborhoods, and communities—are an integral part of our society. Every new space and structure serves to define and shape a community's personality. Poor planning, design and/or construction can compromise a community's appearance and drain its resources. Conversely, well-planned, designed and constructed environments sustain and enrich a community.

The Doctor of Philosophy in Planning, Design and Construction with a concentration in construction management, environmental design, or urban and regional planning will enable students to meet future challenges. Graduates of this program will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to understand the effects of plans, regulations, design, materials, project management techniques, and construction systems on the economic, environmental, and social concerns of stakeholders and society.

## General PhD Program Guidelines

### 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, and
- 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.

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.

## Admission

To be considered for regular admission to the Doctor of Philosophy degree program in Planning, Design and Construction, an applicant must have all of the following:

- Masters in Urban & Regional Planning;
- A master's degree in a related field;
- A cumulative grade-point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale;
- GRE scores no lower than 301 in combined verbal and quantitative and at least 4.0 analytical;
- TOEFL scores (for international applicants):
  - Paper-based – no lower than 575 (with no sub scores below 52),
  - Computer-based – no lower than 235 (with no sub scores below 19),
  - Internet-based – no lower than 90 (with no sub scores below 19 for reading, listening, and speaking, and no writing sub score below 22);
- Additionally, students are encouraged to submit a sample of scholarly work or a portfolio of design work; and
- Name of the Major professor/champion.

Provisional admission may be granted to an applicant who does not meet the above requirements but demonstrates outstanding potential. Collateral course work will not count towards degree requirements.

All dual major doctoral degrees must be approved by the Dean of The Graduate School. A request for the dual major degree must be submitted within one semester following its development and within the first two years of the student's enrollment at MSU. A copy of the guidance committee report must be attached, see academic programs at, [The Register's website](#). In addition to meeting the requirements of the university and of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the College of Social Science, the student must meet the requirements specified below.

### Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Planning, Design and Construction

The Student must complete 9 credits in the following courses:

- PDC 901: Integrated Approach to Planning, Design and Construction (3 credits).
- PDC 992: Advanced Research Methods in Planning, Design and Construction (3 credits).
- An advanced statistics course or other related course (3 credits).
- Complete a minimum of 4 additional courses related to the area of concentration as specified by the student's guidance committee. (12 credits):
  - Construction Management,
  - Environmental Design, and
  - Urban & Regional Planning.
- Pass both a written and oral comprehensive examination.
- Complete 24 credits of Planning, Design and Construction 999.
- Complete and successfully defend a dissertation in an area related to the area of concentration.

## Completing Application

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

- Major: Planning, Design and Construction (PDC) 5355.

Concentration:

- Construction Management (CM).
- Environmental Design (ED).
- Urban & Regional Planning (URP).

### Prospective Students

- Complete the MSU Application for Admission at [The Graduate School](#).
- \$50 Application fee (online).

- Submit Academic Statement- Include in the statement which area of concentration you wish to pursue, also include if you desire to work with a particular professor in SPDC. Write a concise academic statement of your plans for graduate study, your research interests, your career goals, and how the PhD program will help you meet your career and educational objectives, the statement may be submitted in the following ways:
  - Completed online in the application.
  - Email in a PDF format to [Ph.D.pdc@msu.edu](mailto:Ph.D.pdc@msu.edu).
  - Submit to SPDC directly with other application documents via hard paper copy.
- 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 PhD degree, this may be submitted in the following ways:
  - Completed online in the application.
  - Email in a PDF format to [Ph.D.pdc@msu.edu](mailto:Ph.D.pdc@msu.edu).
  - Submit to SPDC directly with other application documents via hard paper copy.
- Submit resume or curricula vita.
- Provide official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended. Transcripts MUST be in an envelope sealed by the college or university.
- Provide a minimum of three recommendations from references.
- Electronic Submission – Using Student Portal (Preferred Method):
  - The Student Portal allows applicants to submit the email addresses of their references to request the completion of a recommendation form. A minimum of (3) reference names are required to be submitted in order to be considered for the PhD Program. The Student Portal will then notify the reference to complete the recommendation. Once the recommendation is complete it is updated in your online application. The reference may attach a letter of recommendation.
  - The link to the Student Portal for applicants to check the status of their letters of recommendation, [Admissions website](#).
  - The Student Portal is available anytime the student logs back into their MSU application so they may check the status of recommendations or change reference names.
- Paper Submission:
  - Print the 2014-2015 Letter of Recommendation for Admission Form PDF found at [The Graduate website](#).
  - Provide Reference with completed and signed recommendation.
  - References should complete the paper copy form.
  - Reference may attach a letter of support to this form if they so desire.
  - The reference should place the recommendation in a sealed envelope, place their signature across the label and return it to the applicant for mailing with application documents to SPDC.
- Have GRE scores (for all applicants) reported electronically to MSU by ETS testing service:
  - For reporting purposes use School Code 1465 (MSU).
  - 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).
  - 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.
- Optional: Provide other pertinent information, such as a portfolio, awards, scholarly publications, professional experience, and related achievements.

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](mailto:cqv@cdgdc.edu.cn)  
Website: [China Development Center](http://China Development Center)

## Admission Review Process

- After all above-noted submissions are received; the Associate Director will review the application. Applications, that either meet all minimum requirements or exceed all requirements but are just below in one requirement, will be forwarded to the sponsoring faculty along with the doctoral advisor faculty in the respective concentration. A majority affirmative vote of the doctoral advisor faculty of the related concentration will be needed to admit/provisionally admit an applicant.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to start communicating with the doctoral advisor faculty in their desired concentration to identify a good match for them based on their and faculty's research interests. If no doctoral advisor/major professor is identified in advance, the application will be circulated among the doctoral-level faculty in the desired concentration to identify a major professor. The identified major professor must be willing to champion and present their application to the admissions committee. No applicant will be admitted unless a doctoral advisor faculty member is willing to sponsor their application.

- The University will permit concurrent applications for admission to 2 Graduate programs, each with a separate application fee.

## Doctoral Program of Study

The program of study leading to a PhD in Planning, Design and Construction consists of completing the following:

- Selection of Doctoral Advisor and Funding Requirements,
- Formation of Guidance Committee,
- Approval of the PhD Degree Plan,
- Completion of Written and Oral Comprehensive Examination,
- Presentation and Approval of Dissertation Proposal, and
- Dissertation Defense and Final Examination.

### Selection of Doctoral Advisor

The list of doctoral advisor faculty members for each concentration is provided in their respective sections of this handbook. Any of these faculty members can serve as a major professor/doctoral advisor for an applicant in their concentration.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to start communicating with the doctoral advisor faculty in their desired concentration to identify a good match for them based on their and faculty's research interests. If no doctoral advisor/major professor is identified in advance, the application will be circulated among the doctoral-level faculty in the desired concentration to identify a major professor. The identified major professor must be willing to champion and present their application to the admissions committee. No applicant will be admitted unless a doctoral advisor faculty member is willing to champion their application.

### Funding Requirements

Funding commitment is a requirement of admission to the PhD program. No applicant will be admitted without any of the funding commitment stated below. Preference will be given to candidates with funding in the following order:

- Funding commitment from their major professor at the graduate assistant level for 3 years (renewal subject to satisfactory progress).
- Funding by a government or an international agency (e.g., NSF, Fulbright, home country government fellowship or foundations, other fellowships, etc.).
- A minimum commitment of 10 hours per week for three (3) years by their major professor (renewal subject to satisfactory progress) and additional proof of self-funding.

### Changes in the Major Professor/Doctoral Advisor

Students are expected to stay with their major professor/advisor from start to completion of their doctoral program. At any time, if the student has concerns about the treatment by the major professor, he/she can meet with the Associate Director. All those students who are funded by the doctoral advisor/major professor, will be required to sign an agreement (see Appendix A) stating that they are accepting the funding with the understanding that they will work with that faculty member for their PhD and if they decide to request a change in the research topic and the doctoral advisor/major professor, SPDC may not consider them for another source of funding (unless the change is with the consent of the current and new doctoral advisors).

In rare cases, where a student may request a change, the following guidelines will be followed:

- During the first semester, the student can request a change by submitting a written request with justification to the Director of PhD Programs. If the student was funded by the doctoral advisor/major

professor, the doctoral advisor/major professor will need to sign off that the work expected under the funding has been completed.

- After the first semester, the student will only be allowed to change the major professor/doctoral advisor if he/she makes a case for a substantial change in the research area that aligns with another faculty member by submitting a written request with justification to the Director of PhD Programs. If the student was funded by the major professor/doctoral advisor, the major professor/doctoral advisor will need to sign off that the work expected under the funding has been completed.
- After the completion of the comprehensive examination, the student will not be allowed to change their major professor/doctoral advisor.

### Formation of Guidance Committee

- The guidance committee shall be formed no later than the third semester of doctoral study, or within two semesters beyond the Master's degree or its equivalent.
- By the end of the second semester, a guidance committee is selected by the student with advice from the major professor.
- Within one semester after the committee has met, the chairperson of the guidance committee shall file a guidance committee report with the Dean of the college, listing all degree requirements.

Members of the committee act as mentors, advisors, and evaluators for the student's program and research. They recommend the course plan and conduct the comprehensive examination, the dissertation proposal, and the final defense. All committee members are regular faculty of MSU or specialists that have been approved by The Graduate School to serve on doctoral guidance committees.

The guidance committee should be comprised of a minimum of four faculty members including the major professor/doctoral advisor who will serve as the committee chairperson. The chairperson and one other committee member should be from the student's area of concentration within the School, a third member can be from the student's area of concentration or another area of concentration within the School, and a fourth member must be from outside the school.

### Changes in the Guidance Committee Members

Students are expected to stay with their guidance committee from start to completion of their doctoral program. At any time, if the student has concerns about the treatment by a member of the guidance committee, he/she can meet with the Associate Director.

In rare cases, where a student may request a change, the following guidelines will be followed:

- Any request for change in the guidance committee has to be accompanied by the consent of the major professor/doctoral advisor and a written request by the student with justification to the Associate Director. The acceptable justifications include:
  - Substantial change in the research area, and
  - Unavailability of the member.
- If the change is made after the completion of the comprehensive examination, student will be required to re-take the comprehensive examination with the new committee.
- If the change is made after the completion of the proposal defense, student will be required to re-take the proposal defense with the new committee.

### Approval of the PhD Degree Plan

By the end of the first academic year, all PhD students must complete a PhD Degree Plan in "Grad Plan" (see instructions in appendix). The PhD Degree Plan must be approved by the major professor and the guidance committee. Once submitted, changes to the PhD Degree Plan must be made with recommendation from the

student's major professor and the guidance committee. The subject matter and instructor must be specified for every independent study, special problems, or selected topics course that is included in the student's program.

The PhD Degree Plan and any subsequent changes must be approved by the Associate Director and the College Associate Dean. It is strongly suggested that all PhD students map out their coursework and requirements early as many courses are taught only one semester per year and many others may have prerequisites.

### Required Course Credits

The Student must complete 9 credits in the following courses:

- PDC 901: Integrated Approach to Planning, Design and Construction (3 credits).
- PDC 992: Advanced Research Methods in Planning, Design and Construction (3 credits).
- An advanced statistics course or other related course (3 credits).
- Complete a minimum of 4 additional elective courses related to the area of concentration as specified (12 credits).
- PDC 999: Dissertation Research (24 credits).

24 credits are required for graduation; Students can enroll for a maximum of 36 credits. Requests for overrides to exceed the maximum of 36 credits of 999 must be directed to the office of register. To do so, access the, [Request for RNR override](#). Select "Request for RNR override" and fill in the requested information. Should the total of number of credits go about 45 the RO will confer with the Graduate School before considering the request for an override.

### Course Waiver

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

### Transfer Courses

Students may transfer up to 9 approved semester credits of course work. Students requesting transfer courses must compile suitable documentation concerning the courses to be transferred. 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 transfer. Once suitable documentation is compiled, students shall request written permissions from their major professor and the guidance committee. After completing the preceding steps, students shall submit all materials to the SPDC Graduate Secretary for approval from the Associate Director.

### Changes in Grades

The Following changes are not permitted in the PhD Degree Plan:

- Adding or deleting a course for which a grade has already been assigned under any of the three grading systems (numerical, Pass-No Grade, or Credit- No Credit),
- Adding or deleting a course for which grading was postponed by the use of DF- Deferred or I- Incomplete marker, or
- Adding or deleting a course with the student dropped after the middle of the semester and for which "W" or "N" or "0.0" was designated.

## 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 academic advisor. When the application is completed and approved by the Associate Director, 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.

## Internships

PhD students may have the option to participate in industry internships but they are not allowed to use an internship for academic credit.

## **Completion of Written and Oral Comprehensive Examination**

When the prescribed course work is substantially complete as defined by the guidance committee, the doctoral student is eligible to take the comprehensive examination covering the major and related fields. At least one component of the comprehensive examination must be written and must be maintained in the department for three years. Students must be registered during the semester in which they take comprehensive examinations (current semester enrollment covers student until the day before classes start for the following semester).

All guidance committee members will be invited to submit questions as part of the written examination. At an appropriate time, following completion of the written questions, a meeting of the guidance committee will be scheduled for the purpose of completing an oral phase of the comprehensive examination.

The comprehensive examination must be completed before the dissertation proposal defense can be scheduled. Any change in the guidance committee after passing the comprehensive examination will require retaking and passing the comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examination must be passed within five years of starting the degree. All remaining requirements for the degree must be completed within eight years from the time when a student begins the first class at MSU that appears on his or her doctoral program. Application for extensions of the eight-year period of time toward degree must be submitted by the school for approval to the dean of the college and the Dean of The Graduate School.

## Presentation and Approval of Dissertation Proposal

The student must submit and present to the major professor and the guidance committee members a proposal for dissertation research. Approval of the proposal requires “Yes” votes from the major professor and ¾ of the overall voting committee members.

## Dissertation Defense and Final Examination

The defense of the dissertation is conducted and evaluated by the guidance committee. Other interested faculty members and students may attend the examination, but not vote. In order to pass the exam, the student must receive “Yes” votes from the major professor and ¾ of the overall voting committee members.

### The Following Must Be Satisfied in Order to Schedule the Dissertation Defense

- The student must be enrolled during the semester in which the defense takes place (current semester enrollment covers student until the day before classes start for the following semester).
- The student must provide the major professor and the guidance committee members with a copy of the dissertation two weeks prior to the exam.
- The student must schedule a time for the exam and notify the SPDC Graduate Secretary at least two weeks’ prior to the exam so that a venue can be booked and an announcement can be circulated.

### Submission of Dissertation

The dissertation should be finalized according to the layout and specifications of The Graduate School, see [2014 Master’s Thesis and Doctoral Dissertation Formatting Guide PDF](#) and conform to “Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities,” which is available from [The Graduate School Office](#).

The student must provide the Graduate School with a copy of the dissertation via the process described on the [Thesis and Dissertation ELECTRONIC Submissions page](#). Students must submit a copy to their major professor and committee members, either bound or electronic as the respective faculty member prefers. A digital copy of the abstract and dissertation must be submitted to the SPDC Graduate Secretary.

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

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

### Certification for Graduation

The student must apply to graduate by completing an [Application for Graduation](#). When the Office of The Registrar receives the student’s application, a Degree Certification form is forwarded to the School. The Director of PhD Programs will review the PhD Degree Plan in the student’s file to determine if the student has fulfilled the requirements and may be certified for graduation. The Director of PhD Programs then formally approves or denies the certification. The [Register's website](#) will also provide specific application deadlines.

## 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 PhD 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 PhD level during Fall and Spring semesters and three credits in Summer semester for both Master's and PhD degrees. At the PhD 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.)*

### **Periods of employment for Graduate Assistants**

- Fall Semester- August 16 to December 31.
- Spring Semester- January 1 to May 15.
- Summer Semester- May 16 to August 15.

### **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.

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.

### **Expectations**

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 (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.

### **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](https://train.ora.msu.edu). 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](mailto: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, or
- Funding is no longer available.

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 Nisbet Building, 1407 S. Harrison Road, Room 140, East Lansing, MI 48824, or call (517) 353-4434, Ext. 170 or Ext. 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. One can be a TA covered by the contract 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.

## **Specific Concentration Guidelines**

### **Concentration in Construction Management (CM)**

#### **PhD Advisory Faculty**

##### **Mohamed El-Gafy, PhD,**

Associate Professor of Construction Management

[elgafy@msu.edu](mailto:elgafy@msu.edu)

Research areas: Organizational knowledge, organizational transformation, computer simulation modeling, business process modeling and analysis, and project management optimization.

##### **Sinem Korkmaz, PhD, LEED® AP**

Assistant Professor of Construction Management

[korkmaz@msu.edu](mailto:korkmaz@msu.edu)

Research areas: Sustainable built environment, integrated project delivery, green building assessment systems, international construction, and engineering education.

##### **Matt Syal, PhD, LEED® AP, CPC**

Professor of Construction Management

[syalm@msu.edu](mailto:syalm@msu.edu)

Research areas: Construction project management, housing, sustainable/green construction, international aspects related to these areas.

#### **Additional Admission/ Degree Requirements**

- All applicants must possess a four-year Bachelor's Degree with a minimum GPA of 3.0 and a Master's Degree with a minimum GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale.
- Preferred backgrounds: Bachelor's and/or Master's degree in Construction Management or Construction Engineering and Management.
- Other backgrounds that will be considered: Civil Engineering, Architectural Engineering, other Engineering, Architecture, Business, Management, Interior Design, Landscape Architecture, and Urban & Regional Planning Collateral/Prerequisite Courses: To be considered for regular admission to the PhD in PDC (CM), applicants must have background equivalent to the core M.S.-CM degree requirements (with either Plan A thesis or Plan B research report) at Michigan State University. All applicants will be evaluated against the MS-CM degree requirements (with at least Plan B research report) at Michigan State

University. Applicants will be required to take additional collateral/perquisite courses to fill any gaps determined by the PhD advisor, admissions committee, and the Associate Director.

Generally, one or more of the following courses will be considered as prerequisite/collateral courses:

- All undergraduate courses considered as prerequisites and collateral requirements – admission to MS-CM:
  - CMP 810,
  - CMP 811,
  - CMP 815,
  - CMP 817,
  - CMP 822, and
  - CMP 898 - 1 cr. (MS level Plan B research report).

### **Concentration in Environmental Design (ED)**

#### **PhD Advisor Faculty**

**Jon Burley, PhD**

Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture  
[burleyj@msu.edu](mailto:burleyj@msu.edu)

**Pat Crawford, PhD**

Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture  
[crawf203@msu.edu](mailto:crawf203@msu.edu)

**Suk-Kyung Kim, PhD**

Assistant Professor of Interior Design  
[kimsk@msu.edu](mailto:kimsk@msu.edu)

**Eunsil Lee, PhD**

Assistant Professor in Interior Design  
[leeunsi@msu.edu](mailto:leeunsi@msu.edu)

**Patricia Machemer, PhD**

Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture and Urban & Regional Planning  
[machemer@msu.edu](mailto:machemer@msu.edu)

#### **Additional Admission/Degree Requirements**

- Preferred backgrounds: Bachelor's and/or Master's degree in a design field, such as, LA, ID, Architecture, etc.
- Students from other backgrounds should contact the PhD -ED advisor faculty.
- Students can choose to pursue PDC (ED) without design (LA or ID) focus.
- Collateral/Prerequisite Courses:
  - No set collateral courses in design.
  - Collaterals to be determined by the faculty advisor, the admissions committee and the Associate Director.

### **Concentration in Urban & Regional Planning (URP)**

#### **PhD Advisor Faculty**

**Peilei Fan, PhD**

Associate Professor of Urban & Regional Planning  
[fanpeile@msu.edu](mailto:fanpeile@msu.edu)

**Roger Hamlin, PhD**

Professor of Urban & Regional Planning  
[hamlin@msu.edu](mailto:hamlin@msu.edu)

**Eva Kassens-Noor, PhD**

Assistant Professor of Urban & Regional Planning  
[ekn@msu.edu](mailto:ekn@msu.edu)

**Zenia Kotval, PhD**

Professor of Urban & Regional Planning  
[kotval@msu.edu](mailto:kotval@msu.edu)

**Patricia Machemer, PhD**

Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture and Urban & Regional Planning  
[machemer@msu.edu](mailto:machemer@msu.edu)

**Eric Strauss, PhD**

Professor of Urban & Regional Planning  
[strausse@msu.edu](mailto:strausse@msu.edu)

**Mark Wilson, PhD**

Professor of Urban & Regional Planning  
[wilsonmm@msu.edu](mailto:wilsonmm@msu.edu)

**Additional Admission/Degree Requirements**

- Preferred backgrounds: Bachelor's and/or Master's degree in URP.
- Other backgrounds that will be considered: Related fields.
- Regular Admission: To be considered for regular admission to the PhD in PDC (URP), applicants must have background equivalent to the core MURP degree requirements (with either Plan A thesis or Plan B research report) at Michigan State University or Master's degree in related fields. Additional course work to fill gaps will be determined by the PhD Advisor and URP faculty or URP admissions committee.
- Provisional Admission: Students without sufficient planning or related background or experience may be required to take additional coursework. Additional course work to fill these gaps will be determined by the Ph.D Advisor and the URP faculty or URP admissions committee.

## General School/College/ University Requirements and Guidelines

### School Orientation

All on-campus graduate students are expected to attend the School of Planning, Design and Construction's orientation program at the start of the semester. 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.

### Students 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 in [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 graduate academic advisor, complete and file the Academic Progress Report/Annual Evaluation form each Spring Semester found at [The Graduate School website](#).
- Follow disciplinary and scholarly codes of ethics in course work, research, and professional activities found at [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 PhD Degree Plan. Any course in the approved PhD Degree Plan for which the grade earned falls below 2.0 must be repeated.

### **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 PhD Degree Plan.

### **Annual Evaluation**

Graduate students receive an annual evaluation of their academic progress, performance, and professional potential. The major professor will meet with the graduate student at least once a year prior to the start of fall 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 the graduate student. This report will be filed with the major professor and a copy filed in the student's academic file together with any response the student may have to the report of the guidance committee.

### **Probation Status**

A student is placed on probation if the student's cumulative grade-point average for the courses in the approved PhD Degree Plan is below 3.0.

## **Academic Records**

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

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

Should a student's cumulative grade-point average fall below 3.0 in the approved PhD Degree Plan, the student will be placed on probationary status in the doctoral 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 doctoral 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.

### **Residency Requirements**

One year of residence on the campus after first enrollment for doctoral degree credit is required to permit the student to work with and under the direction of the faculty, and to engage in independent and cooperative research utilizing university facilities. A year of residence will be made up of two consecutive semesters, involving the completion of at least six credits of graduate work each semester.

### **Time for Completion of Degree**

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

The following time limits have been set by the University:

- The time limit for completion of the requirements for the PhD degree is eight (8) years from the date of enrollment in the student's first course in the doctoral degree program.
- The PhD Comprehensive Examination must be taken within five (5) years of initial acceptance to the program, and will expire after three years if there has been no progress toward the degree.
- All remaining requirements for the PhD degree must be completed within eight (8) years, from the time when a student begins the first class at MSU as a PhD student in SPDC.

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.

### **University 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 Office of the President website](#), and is an institutional priority. Faculty, staff, and students work in a rich and competitive environment for the common purpose of learning, creating new knowledge, and disseminating information and ideas for the benefit of their peers and the general public. The stature and reputation of MSU as a research university are based on the commitment of its faculty, staff, and students to excellence in scholarly and creative activities and to the highest standards of professional integrity. As a partner in scholarly endeavors, MSU is committed to creating an environment that promotes ethical conduct and integrity in research and creative activities.

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

Breaches in professional ethics range from questionable research practices to misconduct (MSU Faculty Handbook, Chapter VI, "Research and Creative Endeavor—Procedures Concerning Allegations of Misconduct in Research and Creative Activities"). The primary responsibility for adhering to professional standards lies with the individual scholar. It is, however, also the responsibility of advisors and of the disciplinary community at large. Passive acceptance of improper practices lowers inhibitions to violate professional ethics. Students should also refer to MSU Graduate School's "Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities." Integrity in research and creative activities is based not only on sound disciplinary practice but also on a commitment to basic personal

values such as fairness, equity, honesty, and respect. These guidelines are intended to promote high professional standards by everyone—faculty, staff, and students alike.

### **Key Principles**

Integrity in research and creative activities embodies a range of practices that include:

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

Students are encouraged to read the complete text of the “Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities,” which is available from [The Graduate School](#).

### **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. The 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

Adopted by the University Research Council on January 15, 1998, available at [MSU Guidelines on Authorships on the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies website](#).

### 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.)

### Acknowledgements

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.

### Lead Author and Order of Authors

The Lead author is defined as the person who leads a research/scholarly effort or creative work and makes a major contribution to a multi-authored work. The Lead author is also responsible for gathering the appropriate consents necessary (animal, human use) and for validating the integrity of the work. The Lead author takes the lead of discussing the contributions, recognition and order of all authors that participate in the study. All authors, regardless of position, have a voice in this discussion. Ideally, author arrangement is agreed to proactively, formally, and in writing prior to the initiation of the study. A sample agreement that allows for formal recognition and agreement on authorship can be found as an appendix to this policy. As the study evolves, agreements regarding authorship may need to be further discussed. Most journals and other scholarly outlets do not include statements on author order, so the Lead Author should guide this process and adhere to the norm of the discipline.

### Accountability

EVERY author listed on a publication or creative endeavor is responsible for:

- Approving the final version of the manuscript, including designation of the Lead Author and order of authors; and
- Verifying the integrity of the research/scholarly/creative work performed. In cases of alleged research misconduct, ALL authors are considered responsible for the integrity of the research or creative endeavor. Thus, every author must strive to hold him/herself accountable.

## 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.

Crafted by:

- Research Integrity Council.

Considered by:

- Council of Graduate Students.
- University Committee on Faculty Affairs.
- University Committee on Graduate Studies (formerly the University Graduate Council).

Approved by:

- Council of Research Deans, January 2013, SWW, [MSU Research Integrity Officer website](#).

The number of cases of scientific misconduct due apparently to unintentional plagiarism continues to be substantial. For this reason The MSU Graduate School suggests the use of "Ithenticate," the anti-plagiarism software that is available on, [Desire2Learn website](#). As part of the "Turn-It-In" package. Ithenticate is set up so that faculty, postdocs, and graduate students can check their manuscripts for unintentional plagiarism before submitting them. Read more at, [MSU Tech's website](#).

## 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

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. 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. The 2014 version can also be downloaded from [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](#).

## Other Resources

### 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: the [Teaching Assistant Program on The Graduate School website](#).

### 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  
Ph: (517) 353-8920  
[Study Abroad Home Page](#)

### Grad Plan

All PhD students will be required to use GradPlan by the end of Spring Semester of 2017. Starting in Summer of 2017 GradPlan will be the only way to process final degree certification. Until then, both paper and GradPlan can be used.

## 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.

## Appendix A

Agreement Letter between the Prospective Major Professors/Doctoral Advisors and Incoming Students (applicable to those who are receiving funding from SPDC):

I am being offered funding by Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ to pursue my PhD degree in Planning, Design and Construction with concentration in \_\_\_\_\_. I hereby state that I am accepting the funding with the understanding that I will work with Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ for the duration of my PhD program and if I request a change in the topic and the doctoral advisor, SPDC may not consider me for another source of funding (unless the change is with the consent of the current and new doctoral advisors).

Please sign and return to the Director of PhD Programs before the start of the first semester of enrollment

Student's Printed Name:

Student's Signature and Date:

Doctoral Advisor's Printed Name:

Doctoral Advisor's Signature and Date:

Associate Director's Printed Name:

Associate Director's Signature and Date:

## Appendix B

### Doctor of Philosophy Degree Calendar and Progress Checklist

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

- Attend the required SPDC graduate student orientation. Students are encouraged to participate in orientation activities offered by the Graduate School (and, for international students, by the Office of International Studies and Programs).

- Formalize assistantship expectations and paperwork (if relevant). If you have been awarded an assistantship or are otherwise employed on campus, contact your supervisor immediately to complete employment paperwork, discuss your assignment and schedule, and address any issues related to your employment:
  - Fall Semester Appointments, August 16 – December 31.
  - Spring Semester Appointments, January 1 – May 15.
  - Summer Semester Appointments, May 16 – August 15.
- Register for classes.
- Doctoral students must be registered for a minimum of six (6) credits per semester to be considered “full time” (After the student has completed his/her comprehensive exam(s), he/she may be considered “full time” with one (1) credit as long as he/she has informed the Registrar’s Office of her/his status and intent.).
- Doctoral students must register for PDC 992 during their first Fall semester:
  - It is the student’s responsibility to find a date appropriate for all Guidance Committee members, to schedule a room, prepare an agenda (in consultation with Advisor), and prepare the room as needed (suggestions include providing appropriate audio-visual aids, written agenda, preparing relevant written plans and forms [as appropriate to the meeting agenda]).

### First Semester

- Take PDC 901, the required core SPDC course (offered fall semester).
- Prepare a draft of the Report of the Guidance Committee (see Appendix A), which outlines courses to be taken during the doctoral program to meet degree requirements. Discuss your draft Report of the Guidance Committee with your Advisor to identify when you might take each of the courses, and modify the draft accordingly.
- Discuss potential Guidance Committee members with your Advisor (see previous section for further information):
  - As you move through your program and change your interest area, or as you become more familiar with the faculty and their interest areas, you may—upon mutual agreement—change academic advisor to better meet your academic and professional development goals. Please use the Change in Program Plan form.
- Begin RCR training, see [The Graduate School website](#).

### Second Semester

- Select Guidance Committee members in consultation with your Advisor.
- Schedule and hold an official meeting with your Guidance Committee to discuss your academic and professional goals and the courses you intend to take. You may also wish to discuss preliminary dissertation topics with your committee at this time.
- Finalize your program plan; complete and submit it in the GradPlan software. The form is available on, [The Graduate School website](#).
- Complete paper Academic Program of Study form, signed by full committee and submit to Graduate Secretary.
- A copy of your completed, approved form will be placed in your permanent academic files.

### Third Semester

- Take PDC 999 (fall semester).
  - Many faculty members are on Academic Appointments (nine-month) rather than Annual Appointments (all year), so be sure to schedule committee meetings and other committee activities (including reading of proposals and thesis/project drafts) when they are officially on duty. Exceptions can be made with the approval of all committee members; however, you should plan your work with respect for faculty appointments. Often they are involved in field research, study abroad programs, or otherwise away from the University during the time outside of their

appointments. Most often this is during the summer; however, some faculty have non-traditional schedules. Be sure to find out appointments and schedules of your Guidance Committee members.

### **End of Third Semester**

- Meet with your Academic Advisor to discuss procedures for and scope of your comprehensive program statement and the comprehensive examination.

### **Fourth Semester – Comprehensive Examination**

- Prepare and submit your comprehensive program statement to your Academic Advisor. (See previous section for detailed description.) Be prepared to make revisions based upon feedback.
- Submit your comprehensive program statement to your Guidance Committee for approval. Be prepared to make revisions according to their suggestions.
- Secure the approval of your comprehensive program statement by your Guidance Committee no less than 60 days before the date of the comprehensive examination. Your Advisor will subsequently send it to the department faculty for review.
- Schedule your written and oral comprehensive examination with your Guidance Committee. The oral examination should be held within 14 days of the completion of the written comprehensive examination.
- Complete your comprehensive examination no less than 60 days after final approval of your comprehensive program statement. Submit a Record of Comprehensive Exam in GradPlan.

### **Dissertation Proposal**

- Prepare a written draft of your dissertation proposal. Discuss it with your Advisor, revise/edit and secure his/her approval prior to submitting it to your Guidance Committee.
- Make necessary corrections in your proposal (based on the feedback from your Advisor, and Committee members, as they elect to be involved).
- Provide each member of your Guidance Committee with a copy of your proposal at least two weeks prior to the proposal defense.
- Schedule a public presentation of your dissertation proposal with your Guidance Committee.
- Present your dissertation proposal, to be followed by a closed meeting in which Guidance Committee members will review and assess the proposal.
- Obtain signatures of the members of your Guidance Committee on the Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Approval form.
- Secure approval from the Institutional Review Boards (IRB), as appropriate to your research by submitted the Human Subject Research Application Form found at [Human Research Protection Program website](#).
  - Students should have peers (and, if needed, professional editors) review and provide editorial recommendations for your dissertation prior to submission to your Advisor and Guidance Committee.

### **Preparing for Dissertation Defense**

- Check deadline dates for dissertation defense, final submission, and commencement at [The Graduate School website](#).
- Enroll for a minimum of one (1) credit in the semester in which you plan to defend your dissertation.
- Check StulInfo to be sure all DFs (deferred grades) have been converted to grades and that your GPA is at least 3.00. You cannot graduate unless these two conditions have been met.
- Complete and submit the online Application for Graduation early in the semester of planned graduation. The form is available at [The Registrar's website](#).
- Review the Thesis and Dissertation ELECTRONIC Submission page from [The Graduate School website](#).

## Completing of Dissertation

- Complete all requirements in the 2014 Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertation Formatting Guide PDF found at [The Graduate School website](#).
- Submit a draft of your dissertation to your Advisor (and Guidance Committee members, if requested).
- Edit your draft, as needed. See the 2014 Formatting Guidelines PDF at [The Graduate School website](#).
- Schedule your dissertation defense with your Guidance Committee. This "seminar" is an open session to which students and faculty in the CARRS Department (and building) should be invited.
- Announce the date of your dissertation defense. Notify faculty and students by e-mail and/or posted flyers at least two weeks prior to the seminar.
- Provide your advisor and each member of your Guidance Committee a copy of your dissertation at least two weeks prior to the seminar.
- Present and defend your dissertation at the seminar.
- Modify your dissertation as required by your Guidance Committee.
- Obtain signatures from the members of your Guidance Committee on the Record of Dissertation and Oral Examination Requirements for Doctoral Degree Candidate form (see Appendix A).
- Prepare the final copy of your dissertation according to the 2014 Formatting Guidelines PDF [at The Graduate School website](#).
- Prepare an abstract of your PhD dissertation to be filed with "Dissertation Abstracts."
- Electronically submit your dissertation to [The Graduate School website](#).

## Electronic Submission of Thesis and Dissertations

The MSU only accepts electronic theses and dissertations submitted via ProQuest. The instructions for electronic submissions are available from [The Graduate School website](#). The target date for the FINAL APPROVAL of an electronic Thesis or Dissertation to the Graduate School for graduating the semester of that submission is FIVE working days prior to the first day of classes for the next semester (see future target dates below). Be aware that a submission via ProQuest does not mean that the document has been ACCEPTED. The review process is interactive and final approval can take anywhere from a few hours to weeks, depending upon the extent of the necessary revisions and how diligent the author is when making the necessary revisions.

## Electronic Submission's Approval Target Dates

The deadline dates can be found at [The Graduate School website](#). Graduation on the semester of the electronic submission is only guaranteed if the document is approved on or before the target date for that semester. Provide a PDF file of your dissertation to the department Graduate Secretary and hard-bound copies of your dissertation to your Advisor and Guidance Committee members (Individual committee members may request an alternative format, such as a soft-bound, unbound, or digital copy.).

## Final Logistics

- Read and comply with the MSU's Exit Check List to ensure that you have all requirements and submitted all appropriate forms and other paperwork.
- Submit your online exit survey.

## New Exit Surveys

A new short online exit survey for all students graduating with a Plan A or Plan B Masters or with a Doctoral degree was introduced on May 9, 2011. Only students who have applied for graduation will have access to the survey. The survey asks questions about educational experiences in MSU graduate programs, as well as about immediate Professional plans. The Graduate School uses data from this survey when reviewing graduate programs and to guide decisions about services and initiatives for graduate students. The identity of all respondents will be kept confidential and only aggregate (group) information will be made available to faculty and administrators. The students will receive an e-mail message from the dean of the graduate school with a link to the survey. However, students do not need to wait for that e-mail message to complete the survey after applying for graduation. It takes

about 5-10 minutes to complete the online survey. Instructions for completing the survey are available under Step #3 on the Thesis and Dissertation Electronic Submissions page from [The Graduate School website](#).

Instructions for Students:

- Doctoral students should access the following website for [The Exit Survey](#).
- Enter your MSU NetID (Login Name) and Password.
- Complete all items on the survey- when finished, click submit.
  - If you cannot open this survey, please contact Katey Smagur via email at [smagurka@msu.edu](mailto:smagurka@msu.edu) and include your Name, Student ID #, Degree Level (PhD, MA/MS) and semester of graduation. You will be noticed when you are able to complete the survey.
- Complete all final forms/ questionnaires required by the Graduate School.
- Pay final fees.
- Prepare for commencement; see guidelines and checklists provided by [Michigan State University](#).

## Appendix C

### GradPlan

- Doctoral students can use GradPlan to create a PhD Degree plan or update their post degree placements:
  - [General Details](#).
  - [2012 Student Guide PDF](#).
  - [2014 Faculty Guide PDF](#).

## Appendix D

### PhD Advisory Faculty Qualifications

- Tenured faculty with doctoral degrees.
- Non-tenured (tenure system) faculty can serve as PhD advisor or co-advisor if recommended by their concentration tenured faculty and approved by director.
- Other requirements – for all PhD advisor faculty:
  - Journal papers published as the lead or corresponding Author.
  - Master's thesis completed.
  - Funded projects as PI/Co-PI.