MASTERS OF ARTS IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

HANDBOOK
I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A. AIMS OF THE MASTER OF ARTS IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

This handbook describes the Master of Arts (M.A.) program in Strategic Communication at Michigan State University. The Department is part of the College of Communication Arts and Sciences (CAS). CAS has a 70 year legacy as being the leading research college that studies communication from the neural level to interpersonal, group, organizational, and mass communication including the effects, public policy and economics of the media. No college in the world equals the breadth and depth of our expertise. We were among the very first colleges to study media innovations such as cable television, the Internet, e-commerce, online learning, and many forms of social media. Our faculty expertise cuts across the entirety of the new digital eco-system.

The aim of the M.A. program is to prepare individuals for professional positions in a broad range of positions in information and media industries. Graduates of the program are expected to master the professional competencies required for success in these areas.

The Department is a community of scholars that attracts students from around the world who, together with our faculty, celebrate ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity for the benefit of all. Students are expected to be an active part of the intellectual life of the Department and to maintain collegial relations with their faculty and with other students.

B. GRADUATE STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN ACADEMIC GOVERNMENT

In addition to participating in intellectual life of the Department, students are urged to take an active role in academic governance through participation in the Department’s M.A. Studies Committee, faculty meetings, and the Council of Graduate students.

1. M.A. Committee

The M.A. Committee’s functions are:

- To assure the highest level and quality of instruction.
- Regular review and evaluation of the graduate curriculum, seeking information and advice from students, faculty, authorities outside the University, including the professional community.
- Regular review and evaluation of the procedures for administering the graduate program, seeking advice and information from students, faculty, administrators, and authorities outside the University.
- Presentation at Department meetings of recommendations for revision of the curriculum, administrative procedures, and admission standards in the graduate program.
- Development and implementation of procedures for communicating administrative and curricular information to graduate students.

2. Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities

Rights and responsibilities as a graduate student at Michigan State University are explained at http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/graduate-student-rights-and-responsibilities.
II. PROGRAM COMPONENTS

A. COURSES

The combination of (1) organizational messaging; (2) news and information; (3) fundamental communication processes; and (4) new technologies provides for a comprehensive examination of the changing communication paradigm.

Program Objectives:

- The M.A. program will engage learners where they are, in terms of location, time and experience, maximize student access and university engagement.
- The M.A. program will integrate theory, research, and practical experience to bring academic insight to the practical experience of the professional world, and vice versa.
- The M.A. program will enhance student core competencies in vital digital environment categories including:
  - Understanding the marketplace and economics of the digital world
  - Encouraging an entrepreneurial approach to thinking about new communication technologies
  - Thinking about effective information techniques and flows for corporations
  - Enhanced understanding of cultural and national differences as they play out in the global corporate communication sector
  - Rethinking current embedded corporate practice in light of new digital possibilities
  - Embrace the types of knowledge available through academic scholarship
  - Learn how to be an effective leader in times of rapid technological change
- The M.A. program will test of skills and knowledge acquired in these graduate courses in the form of a capstone practicum course.

Evaluation of the students against stated competencies will assure graduates have the required skills upon graduation to excel in their current position or advance to higher levels of management. Graduates will have the skills to interpret scientific findings and integrate those insights to address the needs of organizations. The required core courses and practicum experiences will emphasize excellent communication skills and rational thought.

Degree Requirements

Students pursuing an M.A. degree in Strategic Communication are required to complete all ten 3-credit courses:

- CAS 827 - Digital Media Strategies
- CAS 842 - Professional Communication Ethics
- CAS 838 - Organizational Communication for Leaders & Entrepreneurs
- CAS 833 - Crisis Communication
- CAS 835 - Branding and Image Communication
• CAS 831 - Digital Content Creation, Curation & Promotion
• CAS 832 - Strategic Message Development
• CAS 828 - Persuasion Techniques for Working Professionals
• CAS 829 - Evaluation Techniques for Working Professionals
• CAS 844 - Capstone/Practicum

B. EXIT PLAN - CAPSTONE

The capstone course, CAS 844, will satisfy the requirement for an exit plan and comprehensively test the learning in the nine core courses. It requires the application of managerial, communication, and strategic skills to a realistic business project in a virtual team setting. Major project management topics will be tested in the course, including assembling and managing a team, goal setting, managing assets, documentation, setting and adhering to deadlines and client expectations, and balancing continuous assessment and improvement against the need to manage the scope of work.

It is the student’s responsibility to fulfill all of the requirements for the degree in accordance with this manual and any changes that are announced. If a waiver is requested, it is the student’s responsibility to be sure that the waiver is properly signed and in the student file. Students are strongly advised to keep the student copy of all documents related to the requirement categories, or monitor progress in those requirements. This is the responsibility of the student and must be in compliance at the “final certification” for the degree.

It is the responsibility of the student to be familiar with all policies related to their responsibilities as a MSU student:

• This Handbook, also available online on http://gradstudies.mi.msu.edu/academics/requirements-resources/.
• The University’s current Schedule of Courses (http://schedule.msu.edu) and Academic Handbook (http://www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/), which lists course offerings for the upcoming semesters, and explains various academic rules and procedures, including registration procedures.
• The University’s current Graduate Studies Catalog (https://reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/ProgramDetail.asp?Program=6317), which lists all graduate-level courses in the University and describes University, College, and Department requirements for the M.A. degree.

C. DURATION OF THE PROGRAM

The maximum time for completing the program is five calendar years from the date of first enrollment. There is no minimum time for completing the degree. A student may petition the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies of the College for an extension if it appears likely that the degree can be completed within a short period of time after the five years have elapsed.

D. PROVISIONAL STATUS

Students admitted to provisional status are so identified in their acceptance letter. All requirements listed in the admission letter must be completed in order to have the provisional status removed.
Prospective students must submit the following information:

- A Graduate School application;
- Official and original transcripts and degree certification documents from all colleges attended;
  - Note 1: Applicants must have completed the minimum of a 4 year bachelors program;
  - Note 2: For applicants submitting materials from China, please see detailed information in item 3 further below;
- TOEFL test scores for international students;
  - Note 4: StratCom requires a minimum of 91 IBT with no subscores below 22; or a 237 CBT with no subscores below 22; or a 580 PBT with no subscores below 55. Reported scores must not be older than 2 years at the time a completed application has been submitted;
- Three letters of recommendation;
- A Personal Statement and an Academic Statement of Goals for Graduate Study and Professional Career

Admission to the M.A. program is determined by an evaluation of the complete application package. Students whose grade-point averages were below 3.25 in the last two years of their undergraduate work must present evidence of special merit through professional experience or extracurricular activities. Students without adequate background in communication disciplines through courses or professional experience will be required to enroll in appropriate undergraduate coursework. An applicant's file cannot be evaluated until all materials have arrived. The deadline for receipt of application and all materials is April 1 for the fall semester, December 1 for the spring semester and April 1 for summer semester. To apply to our program please follow the following steps:

1. Complete the Graduate School Application (online interactive application). The associated $100 fee can be paid by credit card, check (US Funds), or money order;
2. Upload the following materials to the Applicant Portal:
   - Email addresses for your three recommenders
     Note: An email will be sent out to your recommenders providing them the information on where to go to submit their letters electronically. So please be sure to list accurate information. The department will only accept letters submitted via the online system. The department will not accept letters submitted through any other format.
   - Academic Statement of Goals for Graduate Study and Professional Career;
   - Personal Statement;
   - Resume or Curriculum Vitae
3. Send the following materials to:
   Attn: Director of M.A. Studies
   Strategic Communication Program
   404 Wilson Road, Room 294
   Michigan State University
   East Lansing, MI 48824
   United States of America
   - One set of official and original (i.e. no scans, photocopies, or other duplication of) transcripts and degree certification documents for all university work;
     - Please note that the Strategic Communication M.A. will only accept official transcripts in printed form. Transcripts must be sent in a sealed envelope directly from the granting institution. All other materials should be reported electronically through the Applicant Portal or reported via the ‘Educational Testing Service’ (ETS; http://www.ets.org) to Michigan State University. Supporting materials that should be submitted electronically
through the Applicant Portal but sent in print form will not be accepted by the College of Communication Arts & Sciences.

4. **Note** for applicants submitting transcripts from **Chinese institutions**: During the application process, applicants submit certified copies (sealed and stamped by institutions) of all post-secondary transcripts, graduation certificates and degrees directly to the department. MSU requires these documents in the original language (Chinese) as well as an official English translation. Effective spring 2015, Michigan State University will require all incoming ADMITTED students pursing degrees or who have earned degrees from universities in China to submit a verification report (English version) through the China Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Development Center (CDGDC) for their final bachelor degree transcripts and bachelor degree. Please refer to the CDGDC website for more information: [http://www.chinadegrees.cn/en/](http://www.chinadegrees.cn/en/).

5. Report the following directly to Michigan State University Office of Admissions:
   - *International students only* Official TOEFL Scores
     - Please use the University code of 1465; there is no need to use a department code.

**F. DEGREE PROGRESS**

There are multiple options for completing the M.A. in Strategic Communication; as previously mentioned, the degree must be completed within 5 years, but students may decide with their advisor how they would like to schedule their degree progress. Examples of one year, two year, and three year plans can be found below.

In year one, students create a plan of study. The last semester includes the capstone course, and students must also apply for graduation within the **first week** of their last semester.

1. **Timeline and Checklist**

The following are suggested completion dates for important milestones in the M.A. program. All forms may be found online at [http://gradstudies.mi.msu.edu/academics/requirements-resources/](http://gradstudies.mi.msu.edu/academics/requirements-resources/):

**Three Semester Track (One-Year)**

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**Six-Semester Track (Two-Year)**

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Students should submit an "Application for Graduation" by the first week of the semester the student expects to complete his/her degree requirements. This form can be found online at the Office of the Registrar’s website at http://www.reg.msu.edu/StuForms/GradApp/GradApp.asp.

A student who does not complete the requirements for graduation during the semester in which he/she applied for must reapply for graduation for the appropriate semester that he/she will complete the degree requirements.

Students must be registered for at least one credit during the semester in which they complete their degree requirements, e.g., complete their required courses and have their capstone project evaluated.

3. Exit Survey

A new short online exit survey will be requested (but not required) for all graduating students. 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. Below are the instructions for completing the survey and they are also available from https://www.egr.msu.edu/masters/survey/:

- Access the following website:
  - https://www.egr.msu.edu/masters/survey/
- Enter your MSU NetID (Login Name) and Password

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• Complete all the items on the survey. When finished, click Submit.

   Note: If you cannot open this survey, please contact Katey Smagur by email at exitsurvey@grd.msu.edu, and include your name, student ID #, degree level (MA/MS), and semester of graduation. You will then be notified when you are able to complete the survey.

III. DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

A. ANNUAL EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The StratCom Graduate Committee will review student progress each to assess student progress in the program. The review will also include those aspects of the students’ performance, which pertain to professionalism and scholarly integrity. A report on the results of this review will be signed by the Director of the Strategic Communication Program and sent to the graduate student. This report will be filed with the M.A. Studies office and will be placed in the graduate student’s file, together with any response that the graduate student may attach to the report.

Upon request, the program director will meet with each graduate student to review all aspects of the annual progress report. At this occasion, the graduate student has the opportunity to discuss with the Director any aspects of his or her studies that seem relevant for successful completion of the graduate program, including problems that may hinder progress, and any appeal of the Academic Advisor’s evaluation (see above). Recommendations based on this review will be communicated in writing to the Academic Advisor and the graduate student within two weeks of the meeting, and that report will be placed in the graduate student’s file.

B. RETENTION IN THE PROGRAM

1. Acceptable Academic Standing

The MSU grading scale is 4.0, 3.5, 3.0, 2.5, 2.0, 1.5, 1.0 and 0.0. Credit is awarded at a minimum of 2.5 for graduate students. However, when a student receives a grade below 3.0 in more than two courses taken for graduate credit at MSU, he/she is automatically removed from candidacy for that degree. A graduate student who has been withdrawn under this regulation is required to wait a minimum of one calendar year from date of the withdrawal before being eligible to apply for readmission to a graduate program in the College of Communication Arts and Sciences. The student may be readmitted contingent upon repeating one of the three courses in which a grade below a 3.0 was earned, and earning a 3.0 or better grade in the course. The course to be repeated may be specified by the department. Following readmission, any additional grade below 3.0 in any course numbered 400 or higher will result in permanent dismissal. All courses taken at the 400 level or higher are to be considered as graduate courses and will be subject to the “Grades Below 3.0 Rule”. There is a special situation in the case of the graduate student who has been given graduate credit for a course at the 300 level. When this situation arises, we treat such a course as a graduate course, and any grade received below 3.0 will be held against the student and counted as part of the “Grades Below 3.0 Rule”.

When a graduate student receives a grade, which falls below the acceptable standard, he/she is issued a warning letter from the Office of the Dean. Upon receipt of this letter the student should consult with his/her Academic Advisor with respect to the progress the student is making.
C. STUDENT RECORDS

Records of student performance and correspondence with the program is maintained electronically in an MSY database which is available to students, the graduate program director, and the graduate program coordinator. The file includes copies of the student’s annual evaluations, and copies of written correspondence directed to the student pursuant to the provisions of this handbook. Students may challenge the accuracy of the information in their file in a letter addressed to the director of the Strategic Communication Program, who will discuss the problem with the student. Henceforth, the letter will be placed in the student’s file.

IV. DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES: INTEGRITY AND SAFETY IN RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

A. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism means presenting, as one's own, the words, creative work or opinions of someone else. You commit plagiarism if you submit as your own work:

1. Part or all of an assignment copied from another person's manuscript or notes, spoken words, sounds, or images.
2. Part or all of an assignment copied or paraphrased from a source, such as a book, magazine, journal, Web page, or creative product.
3. The sequence of ideas, arrangement of ideas or images, or pattern of thought of someone else, even though you express them in your own words, sounds or images. Plagiarism occurs when such a sequence of ideas is transferred from a source without the process of digestion, integration and reorganization in the writer's mind, and without acknowledgement.
4. A paper written for you by someone else.
5. An entire work or substantive part of a work that you submitted for another course to a second course without the permission of BOTH of the instructors involved.

You are an accomplice in plagiarism and equally guilty if you:

1. Allow your paper or creative project, in outline or finished form, to be copied and submitted as the work of another.
2. Prepare an assignment for another student and allow it to be submitted as his or her work.
3. Keep or contribute materials to a group project with the clear intent that these be copied and submitted as the work of anyone other than the author. (The student who knows that his or her work is being copied is presumed to consent to its being copied.)

The penalties described in the Academic Rights and Responsibilities shall apply.

You can avoid plagiarism by:

1. Clearly identifying anything you copy directly from another source (e.g., by using quotation marks).
2. Citing or otherwise acknowledging all ideas that are not your own, including anything that you copy directly or that you paraphrase, modify or “sample.”
3. Including appropriate acknowledgments or citations throughout the body of your work, as opposed to merely listing general sources at the end.
4. Never “downloading” anything from the Internet into your work product without acknowledging the source.

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a. Consulting the helpful hints at https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/academic-integrity/plagiarism-policy.html

5. Asking your instructor to register your course at Turnitin.com: http://www.turnitin.com/

6. You should also familiarize yourself with the Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities, found on the Graduate School webpage at: https://grad.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/researchintegrity/guidelines.pdf, and reprinted below from Michigan State University, Research Integrity, Vol. 7 No. 2 Spring 2004

B. GUIDELINES FOR 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 (see Note 1, below) 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 may also lead to an erosion of professional integrity.

Breaches in professional ethics range from questionable research practices to misconduct. (see Note 2) 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.

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.

1. Key Principles

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

- 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

Honesty in proposing, performing, and reporting research. The foundation underlying all research is uncompromising honesty in presenting one’s own ideas in research proposals, in performing one’s research, and in reporting one’s data. Detailed and accurate records of primary data must be kept as unalterable documentation of one’s research and must be available for scrutiny and critique. It is expected that researchers will always be
truthful and explicit in disclosing what was done, how it was done, and what results were obtained. To this end, research aims, methods, and outcomes must be described in sufficient detail such that others can judge the quality of what is reported and can reproduce the data. Results from valid observations and tests that run counter to expectations must be reported along with supportive data.

**Recognition of prior work.** Research proposals, original research, and creative endeavors often build on one’s own work and also on the work of others. Both published and unpublished work must always be properly credited. Reporting the work of others as if it were one’s own is plagiarism. Graduate advisors and members of guidance committees have a unique role in guiding the independent research and creative activities of students. Information learned through private discussions or committee meetings should be respected as proprietary and accorded the same protection granted to information obtained in any peer-review process.

**Confidentiality in peer review.** Critical and impartial review by respected disciplinary peers is the foundation for important decisions in the evaluation of internal and external funding requests, allocation of resources, publication of research results, granting of awards, and in other scholarly decisions. The peer-review process involves the sharing of information for scholarly assessment on behalf of the larger disciplinary community. The integrity of this process depends on confidentiality until the information is released to the public. Therefore, the contents of research proposals, of manuscripts submitted for publication, and of other scholarly documents under review should be considered privileged information not to be shared with others, including students and staff, without explicit permission by the authority requesting the review. Ideas and results learned through the peer-review process should not be made use of prior to their presentation in a public forum or their release through publication.

**Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest.** There is real or perceived conflict of interest when a researcher has material or personal interest that could compromise the integrity of the scholarship. It is, therefore, imperative that potential conflicts of interest be considered and acted upon appropriately by the researcher. Some federal sponsors require the University to implement formal conflict of interest policies. It is the responsibility of all researchers to be aware of and comply with such requirements.

**Compliance with institutional and sponsor requirements.** Investigators are granted broad freedoms in making decisions concerning their research. These decisions are, however, still guided, and in some cases limited, by the laws, regulations, and procedures that have been established by the University and sponsors of research to protect the integrity of the research process and the uses of the information developed for the common good. Although the legal agreement underlying the funding of a sponsored project is a matter between the sponsor and the University, the primary responsibility for management of a sponsored project rests with the principal investigator and his or her academic unit.

**Protection of human subjects and humane care of animals in the conduct of research.** Research techniques should not violate established professional ethics or federal and state requirements pertaining to the health, safety, privacy, and protection of human beings, or to the welfare of animal subjects. Whereas it is the responsibility of faculty to assist students and staff in complying with such requirements, it is the responsibility of all researchers to be aware of and to comply with such requirements.

**Collegiality in scholarly interactions and sharing of resources.** Collegiality in scholarly interactions, including open communications and sharing of resources, facilitates progress in research and creative activities for the good of the community. At the same time, it has to be understood that scholars who first report important findings are both recognized for their discovery and afforded intellectual property rights that permit discretion in the use and sharing of their discoveries and inventions. Balancing openness and protecting the intellectual property rights of individuals and the institution will always be a challenge for the community. Once the results of research or creative activities have been published or otherwise communicated to the public, scholars are expected to share materials and information on methodologies with their colleagues according to the tradition of their discipline.
Faculty advisors have a particular responsibility to respect and protect the intellectual property rights of their advisees. A clear understanding must be reached during the course of the project on who will be entitled to continue what part of the overall research program after the advisee leaves for an independent position. Faculty advisors should also strive to protect junior scholars from abuses by others who have gained knowledge of the junior scholar’s results during the mentoring process, for example, as members of guidance committees.

**Adherence to fair and open relationships between senior scholars and their co-workers.** The relationship between senior scholars and their coworkers should be based on mutual respect, trust, honesty, fairness in the assignment of effort and credit, open communications, and accountability. The principles that will be used to establish authorship and ordering of authors on presentations of results must be communicated early and clearly to all coworkers. These principles should be determined objectively according to the standards of the discipline, with the understanding that such standards may not be the same as those used to assign credit for contributions to intellectual property. It is the responsibility of the faculty to protect the freedom to publish results of research and creative activities. The University has affirmed the right of its scholars for first publication except for “exigencies of national defense”. (see Note 3) It is also the responsibility of the faculty to recognize and balance their dual roles as investigators and advisors in interacting with graduate students of their group, especially when a student’s efforts do not contribute directly to the completion of his or her degree requirements.

2. Misconduct in Research and Creative Activities

Federal (see Note 4) and University (see Note 2) policies define misconduct to include fabrication (making up data and recording or reporting them), falsification (manipulating research materials, equipment or processes, or changing or omitting data such that the research is not accurately represented in the record), and plagiarism (appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit). Serious or continuing non-compliance with government regulations pertaining to research may constitute misconduct as well. University policy also defines retaliation against whistle blowers as misconduct. Misconduct does not include honest errors or honest differences of opinion in the interpretation or judgment of data.

The University views misconduct to be the most egregious violation of standards of integrity and as grounds for disciplinary action, including the termination of employment of faculty and staff, dismissal of students, and revocation of degrees. It is the responsibility of faculty, staff, and students alike to understand the University’s policy on misconduct in research and creative activities (see Note 2), to report perceived acts of misconduct of which they have direct knowledge to the University Intellectual Integrity Officer, and to protect the rights and privacy of individuals making such reports in good faith.

3. Resources

“Guidelines on Authorship”, Endorsed by the University Research Council, January 15, 1998 (http://www.msu.edu/unit/vprgs/authorshipguidelines.htm)


“Research Data: Management, Control, and Access Guidelines”, Endorsed by the University Research Council, February 7, 2001 (http://www.msu.edu/unit/vprgs/research_data.htm)

Notes

2. MSU Faculty Handbook, Chapter VI, “Research and Creative Endeavor-Procedures Concerning Allegations of Misconduct in Research and Creative Activities” (http://www.hr.msu.edu/HRsite/Documents/Faculty/Handbooks/Faculty/ResearchCreativeEndeavor/vi-misconducttoc.htm)
3. MSU Faculty Handbook, Chapter VI, “Research and Creative Endeavor-Sponsored Research and Creative Endeavor” (https://www.hr.msu.edu/documents/facacadhandbooks/facultyhandbook/misconductproc/).

V. STUDENT CONDUCT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

A. STUDENT CONDUCT

Students, faculty and staff are expected to exhibit intellectual curiosity, good cheer, cooperation, and professional demeanor toward each other at all times. They should treat each other with mutual consideration while recognizing the differences between individuals and cultures that we in Media and Information all celebrate. (http://www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/default.pdf).

B. GRIEVANCES

Grievances, and conflicts of interest between students and their advisors, students and other faculty, students and staff, or between students will be referred first to the Director of Graduate Studies or the Dean for Graduate Studies for resolution. Requests for conflict resolution may be made in person during the Director’s or Dean’s office hours or via email. All such requests will be handled in confidence. Appeals of the Director’s or Dean’s decisions may be made to the Chair of Media and Information and from there to the Dean of the College of Communication Arts and Sciences and/or to the university ombudsman, as appropriate, for referral to the appropriate grievance committees.

At the departmental level, the procedures are described in Article 9 of the departmental bylaws (as adopted by department faculty on December 13, 2013). The Department follows University guidelines and procedures for addressing grievances as described in the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibility Conflicts and by the Office of the MSU Ombudsman (https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/grievance-procedures/index.html).

Office of the University Ombudsperson

Conflicts, disagreements, and issues sometimes arise during the course of a graduate program. If you find yourself in this situation and have exhausted the internal resources for resolving the issue, you may contact the Office of the University Ombudsperson.

The Office of the University Ombudsperson provides assistance to students, faculty, and staff in resolving University-related concerns. Such concerns include: student-faculty conflicts; communication problems; concerns about the university climate; and questions about what options are available for handling a problem according to Michigan State University policy. The University Ombudsperson also provides information about available resources and student/faculty rights and responsibilities. The office operates as a confidential, independent, and neutral resource. It does not provide notice to the University - that is, it does not speak or hear for the University.
Contact the Ombudsperson at any point during an issue when a confidential conversation or source of information may be needed. The Ombudsperson will listen to your concerns, give you information about university policies, help you evaluate the situation, and assist you in making plans to resolve the conflict.

Contact information:

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