

# Graduate Student Handbook

Information and Media Ph.D. Program



## College of Communication Arts and Sciences

Advertising and Public Relations

School of Journalism

Media and Information

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# Table of Contents

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**Links to Select University Policies .....3**

**Graduate Handbook..... 4**

- 1. Program Overview ..... 4
- 2. Program Component Options ..... 6
- 3. Degree Requirements ..... 9
- 4. Selection of Dissertation Advisor.....14
- 5. Formation of The Guidance Committee.....15
- 6. Dissertation Defense and Final Oral Examination .....16
- 7. Departmental Policies: Academic and Professional Performance.....18
- 8. Departmental Policies: Integrity and Safety in Research and Creative Activities .....24
- 9. Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.....31
- 10. Work Related Policies .....38
- 11. University Resources ..... 46

## Links to Select University Policies

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- [Academic Programs Catalog](#)
- [Anti-Discrimination Policy \(ADP\)](#)
- [Code of Teaching Responsibility](#)
- [Disability and Reasonable Accommodation Policy](#)
- [General Student Regulations](#)
- [Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities \(GSRR\)](#)
- [Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities](#)
- [Integrity of Scholarship & Grades](#)
- [Law Student Rights and Responsibilities \(LSRR\)](#)
- [Medical Student Rights and Responsibilities \(MSRR\)](#)
- [MSU Guidelines for Graduate Student Mentoring and Advising](#)
- [MSU-GEU Contract](#)
- [Policy on Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct](#)

# 1. Program Overview

	Program Highlights
Semester	Event
Fall 1 <sup>st</sup> Year	I&M Ph.D. Orientation
	Enroll for 6-9 credits
	Begin interviewing potential committee chairs
	Identify potential guidance committee members
	Attend 6-8 professionalization events (see 2C)
Spring 1 <sup>st</sup> Year	Enroll for 6-9 credits
	Select committee chair and guidance committee
	Enter Guidance Committee information in GradPlan
	Convene Committee to approve plan of study; complete annual progress report, pass on to chair for input
	Transmit completed Plan of study to GradPlan
	Attend 6-8 professionalization events (see 2C)
	Complete annual evaluation in consultation with committee chair
Summer 1 <sup>st</sup> Year	Enroll in 1-3 credits
Fall 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	Enroll for 6-9 credits
	Work on 2 <sup>nd</sup> year project in consultation with committee chair
	Attend 6-8 professionalization events (see 2C)
Spring 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	Enroll for 6-9 credits
	Work on 2 <sup>nd</sup> year project in consultation with committee chair
	Attend 6-8 professionalization events (see 2C)
	At least 80% of coursework now completed
	Turn in completed, Comprehensive Exam Proposal*
	Complete annual evaluation in consultation with committee chair
Summer 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	Enroll in 1-3 credits
	Work with guidance committee on comprehensive exam format
Fall 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Turn in completed, Completion of Comprehensive Exam*
	Schedule oral defense of comprehensive examination
	Selection of Dissertation Committee
	Complete and defend dissertation proposal
	Submit IRB approval for dissertation research
Spring 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Collect data and complete dissertation draft
	Schedule Oral defense of dissertation
	Turn in completed, results of Final Oral Examination
	Send dissertation to grad school
Fall 5 <sup>th</sup> Year	Comprehensive exam must be completed by this date



## Aims of the I&M Ph.D. Program

The Information and Media Ph.D. Program is an interdisciplinary program drawing primarily on the resources and faculties of the Department of Advertising and Public Relations, (AD+PR); School of Journalism, and the Department of Media and Information (MI). The program is designed to prepare scholars who may assume positions in higher education, government, and the media and information industries. The main thrust of the program is to train teacher-scholars for university appointments in departments of advertising, journalism, mass communication, public relations, or information studies. The Information and Media Ph.D. Program was established by the College of Communication Arts and Sciences and the participating departments as an alternative to department-specific doctoral programs. The program combines required coursework, elective and specialization coursework, collaborative research with faculty members, independent research by students and, for many students, a variety of teaching experiences.

Graduate study leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy develops critical thinking, independent scholarship, originality, and competence in research. Students who complete the program are expected to have depth in a specialized subject area relevant to the media and a genuine understanding of the media overall. Scholarly objectivity and educational leadership are essential to developing law and public policy relating to Information and Media; to using rapidly changing technology in the most efficient and humane ways; to creating messages that communicate most effectively; and to establishing an economic structure that supports the full potential of the media in an information society. Toward those ends, students study the effects of media on individuals and society. They study media institutions – businesses and government agencies – that are responsible for creating the structures under which media function in the information age. And, of course, they study media messages and information systems themselves, how they are shaped, and how they work.

The I&M Ph.D. program 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 program and to maintain collegial relations with their faculty and with other students at all times.

These procedures, revised in July 2019 are effective for those students entering Fall Semester 2019 and thereafter. These procedures may be revised at any time by a majority vote of the Executive Committee. Degree requirements (found in Section III) in effect the term of first enrollment in the I&M Ph.D. Program apply for the individual student. In the event of revisions in degree requirements, university policy allows students to opt for the requirements in effect when they first entered the program or to choose revised requirements. The decision should be consulted with the I&M Ph.D. Program Director. Revisions in procedures that do not affect program requirements are effective at the time they are adopted.

With this overview in mind, what follows is a description of program milestones, requirements, and procedures for completing the program. While this description is reasonably comprehensive, students and faculty should keep in mind that the University and the Graduate School have various requirements and guidelines that apply to all doctoral students at Michigan State University, some of which are not contained in this description of program-specific requirements.



## Graduate Student Participation in Academic Governance

The faculty of the Information and Media Ph.D. Program includes the tenure stream faculty members of the participating departments and other faculty in those departments who have permission from the Graduate School to serve on Ph.D. committees. The Information and Media Executive Committee makes policy decisions covering the procedures described in this manual. Changes in graduate catalog copy require approval by the I&M Ph.D. faculty members in each of the three units.

The Executive Committee consists of the I&M Ph.D. Program Director, three I&M Ph.D. Unit Coordinators, the chairperson or director of each department or school, and a student representative. The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies is an ex officio member. The unit coordinators are appointed from among the I&M Ph.D. faculty according to the procedures specified by their respective units. The Program Director is selected by the Executive Committee in consultation with the dean of the college. Unit Coordinators for the academic year shall be appointed at the beginning of each Fall Semester.

Students select three voting representatives on the Executive Committee. The student representatives participate in all functions of the Executive Committee involving matters of general policy but are excluded from matters of individual student admissions and evaluation. The student representatives also advise the I&M Ph.D. Program Director regarding student concerns between Executive Committee meetings. The selection of the student representatives shall be made by a vote of the student body via the ADSIM at the beginning of each Fall Semester.

Minutes and summaries of Executive Committee meetings, excluding confidential student matters, are circulated to all Information and Media Ph.D. faculty and all students in the program. Minutes containing confidential student matters are circulated to faculty members on the Executive Committee and are maintained in the program office.

## 2. Program Component Options

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### Program Components

The I&M Ph.D. program components are a plan of study, research practicum, a comprehensive exam or prelim paper, and a dissertation.

#### A. Plan of Study

The guidance committee meets to discuss and approve the student's program of coursework. GradPlan was developed for Ph.D. students to lay out their Ph.D. program of study and make notes on all the requirements as they are completed. After a check by the Program Director committee members will approve plans (and revisions) electronically. The GradPlan constitutes the student's official plan of study and should therefore list tentative dates for the completion of each of the following components listed below. Courses listed on the student's GradPlan should be consistent with the program requirements (see section III). The required courses have been selected to achieve the goals specified in section I.A, above. Before this meeting, the student should develop a [draft of the program](#) in consultation with the guidance committee chairperson. Subsequent changes in the program must be entered into the student's GradPlan and then approved by the guidance committee chairperson in consultation with other committee members. The university requires that a student's program of



study, including required, specialization, and elective classes, be approved by the guidance committee no later than the last day of classes of the Spring Semester of the first year. Students who miss the deadline may be denied enrollment in subsequent semesters.

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 Michigan State University. A copy of the guidance committee report must be attached. For details, see [Academic Programs](#).

## **B. Second Year Project**

Prior to the commencement of the Second Year Project, it is absolutely vital that the student and faculty mentor: define mutual expectations for the project experience; define the scope of the work to be completed to fulfill the project requirement; define the period of time to be devoted to the project; and negotiate authorship credit. Michigan State University publishes [guidelines](#) to help faculty and graduate students make these kinds of decisions in a fair manner. Students and faculty should clearly define the parameters of the study as well as criteria for determining the point at which a student has fulfilled his or her responsibilities. This endpoint may or may not coincide with completion of the study, but it should be agreed upon (preferable in writing) by both the faculty mentor and the student researcher. Additionally, students are required to present the results of the Second Year Project at a colloquium for the I&M Ph.D. community. Students and faculty put these definitions and decisions in writing via the [Second Year Project Proposal form](#) and the [Second Year Project Completion form](#).

## **C. Professionalization Requirement**

A professionalization requirement must be successfully completed in each semester of the academic year prior to completion of the Comprehensive Exam. To fulfill this requirement, in each semester of the academic year students must attend a minimum number of 6-8 program events that are intended to provide specific training or opportunities for professionalization. It is expected that a minimum of 50% of attendance at these events are sponsored by units in the College of Communication Arts and Sciences.

To qualify for this requirement, an event must be pre-approved by the Program Director and may include seminars, colloquium, job talks, tutorials, or workshops organized in the Graduate School, College or by a program department (or a program outside the College, with pre-approval of the Program Director or the student's advisor). Student attendance at these events will be tracked via OneDrive spreadsheet and monitored each semester by the Program Director.

## **D. Comprehensive Exams (See section 3c for additional details)**

The comprehensive exam is a written exam that covers theory, methods, and area of specialization in a student's area of study and is based upon a reading list that is mutually agreed upon by the student and guidance committee.

Evaluation: Responses to comprehensive exam questions should demonstrate mastery in theory, methods and area of specialization. Student should demonstrate an ability to combine methods, theory and a specialized area to formulate appropriate research questions and appropriate ways of contributing new research to answer those research



questions. All members of the guidance committee evaluate the written portion of the comprehensive exam. Adjunct professors or professors from other units who are approved members of the guidance committee participate in the evaluation process.

Deadline- Take home format, two to four weeks to complete, as determined by the guidance committee

Pass- all faculty committee members, or all members but one vote yes.

Conditional pass- More than one faculty member votes no

Fail- More than two faculty members vote no

Retakes: If a student receives a conditional pass, In the case of a conditional, the committee will stipulate the conditions in a statement that constitutes an agreement regarding additional work required. Additional work may be academic study, revision of a paper or submission of a different paper, or additional written examination questions. In any case, another oral examination and meeting will be scheduled in which the guidance committee will determine if the conditions have been met. The outcome of the second oral examination must take place no later than a calendar year following the first, although the guidance committee may set an earlier date if it chooses.

## E. Dissertation

After a student successfully completes the comprehensive examination, the program and the University require original research resulting in a dissertation that makes a significant contribution to knowledge. The dissertation is the student's original work and may not include chapters that were originally published as multi-authored works and that were not written by the author of the dissertation.

All doctoral students must sign up for a minimum of 24 credits and no more than 36 credits of CAS 999, "Doctoral Dissertation Research." These credits may be taken at any time following successful completion of the comprehensive examination regardless of whether the student is working on the dissertation. A grade of deferred ("OF") is reported for all enrolled credits of CAS 999 until the dissertation is approved. Students must be enrolled for at least one credit the term they defend the dissertation orally.

The first steps in undertaking research for a dissertation are the naming of the [dissertation director and committee](#) and the identification of an appropriate research topic resulting in preparation of a formal [dissertation proposal](#). Students may retain their guidance committee as their dissertation committee, or they may create a completely new dissertation committee. This sometimes happens when a student's research interests have substantially changed during the course of their program. The dissertation proposal will be voted and approved by the dissertation committee in a session scheduled for it.

## F. Academic Year 2021-2022 University Policies

- [Dual degrees](#)
- [Joint degrees](#)
- [Dual doctoral majors](#)



## 3. Degree Requirements

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### Intent

The minimum requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Information and Media are as follows:

#### A. Plan of Study

Completion of an approved program of study (see section 2A, above).

#### B. Second Year Research Project

Completion of second year research project.

#### C. Comprehensive Exam

After completion of 80% of coursework a student is eligible to take the comprehensive examination.

The comprehensive examination will normally be composed of 4 questions, with the possibility that some questions will have subcomponents, created to assure that the student can demonstrate the following:

1. Breadth of knowledge in theories of Information and Media
2. Breadth of knowledge in and ability to critique research methods
3. Depth of knowledge in area of specialization
4. An ability to apply theories, methods and specialization

### Format

The student and advisor will convene a meeting of the guidance committee to plan the comprehensive examination. In consultation with the guidance committee, the student and committee members will agree on a reading list to adequately address theory, methods and area of specialization. Using a take-home format, comprehensive exams will normally be completed within 2 weeks. In some circumstances, shorter or longer time frames to complete the comprehensive exams may be deemed appropriate by the guidance committee.

### Timing

The student and guidance committee will meet at the beginning of the semester to plan the date for the comprehensive exam. Normally, comprehensive exams will take place during the 7th week of fall, spring and summer semesters, or at a date selected by the guidance committee. Questions will be disseminated in the 7th week or date designated by the guidance committee.

### Evaluation

Responses to comprehensive exam questions should demonstrate mastery in theory, methods and area of specialization. Student should demonstrate an ability to combine methods, theory and a specialized area to formulate appropriate research questions and appropriate ways of contributing new research to answer those research questions.



### Oral Examination

The University requires an oral examination of the comprehensive exam. At least three members of the guidance committee must participate in the oral examination meeting. The primary focus of the questioning in the oral examination is on whether the written examination meets the purpose and criteria outline above. The committee is expected to examine the student on general areas where the student is expected to have competence and in areas that would provide evidence of the student's competence to successfully complete a dissertation. The oral examination is not limited to the topics and questions addressed in the written portion and may cover basic competencies imparted in the student's basic theory and research methods courses. Students must provide adequate responses to all questions posed by the committee. Upon successful completion, the student submits the [Record of Comprehensive Examination form](#).

### Comprehensive Exam Grading Policy

The possible outcomes of the comprehensive examination include votes of pass, conditional pass, or fail. For a student to receive a pass, all faculty members on the guidance committee or all faculty except one must vote pass. For a student to receive a fail, two faculty must vote fail. For a student to receive a conditional pass, two faculty must vote conditional. A conditional pass indicates that the committee wishes further evidence of the student's ability, and the result has not been either a pass or a fail. A pass means the student is formally accepted as a candidate for the Ph.D. degree (ABD). A fail means that the student is either recessed or withdrawn from the program (as decided by the Executive Committee).

In the case of a conditional, the committee will stipulate the conditions in a statement that constitutes an agreement regarding additional work required. Additional work may be academic study, revision of a paper or submission of a different paper, or additional written examination questions. In any case, another oral examination and meeting will be scheduled in which the guidance committee will determine if the conditions have been met. The outcome of the second oral examination must take place no later than a calendar year following the first, although the guidance committee may set an earlier date if it chooses.

## D. Required Course Work

Requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Information and Media. The student must meet the requirements specified below:

### 1. Core Courses. Complete all of the following (12 credits)

CAS 921	Theories of Media and Information	3
CAS 975	Introductory Methods	3
CAS 991	Ways of Knowing	3
	Intro. to Statistics course at the 800-900 level approved by the student's committee.	3

### 2. Advanced Methods or Statistics (12 credits)

Complete 3 credits in a specialized quantitative methods course, 3 credits in a specialized qualitative methods course, and 6 credits in an advanced methods or statistics course at the 800-900 level approved by the student's committee.

3. **Advanced Theory (3 credits)**  
Complete 3 credits of advanced theory as approved by the student's committee.
4. **Concentration (15 credits)**  
Complete 15 credits in an area of concentration selected in consultation with the student's committee.
5. **Professionalization Requirement**  
Each semester before the comprehensive examination, students must attend a minimum number of preapproved events intended to provide specific training or opportunities for professionalization, as specified in the program handbook.
6. Completion of second year project.
7. Successful completion of the comprehensive examination.
8. **Complete 24 credits of CAS 999 Doctoral Dissertation Research**  
24 credits are required for graduation; students can enroll for a maximum of 36. Requests for overrides to exceed the maximum of 36 (24 in the College of Education) credits of 999 must be directed to the Office of the Registrar. To so please contact Nicole Bond, I&M Academic Program Coordinator at [bondnic@msu.edu](mailto:bondnic@msu.edu) for the I&M Ph.D. Program to request an RNR override.
9. Prepare and successfully defend the doctoral dissertation.

#### **E. Graduate Education Enrollment and Registration Maximum and Minimum Credits Full-Time Students**

In order to be considered full-time for academic purposes, students must carry the minimum number of credits per semester or summer session as defined below:

Master's Level	9 credits
Doctoral Level (pre-comps)	6 credits
Doctoral Level (post-comps)	1 credit
Graduate-Professional Level	2 credits

All graduate assistants are classified as full-time students during the semester(s) of their appointments as long as they are enrolled for the minimum required credits for the assistantship.

#### **Full-time status for doctoral students is defined as a minimum of 1 credit for those students who:**

1. Have successfully completed all comprehensive exams and are actively engaged in dissertation research (DD status).

#### **OR**

2. Are doing department-approved off-campus fieldwork related to preparation of their dissertation. This off-campus fieldwork (DG status) will be granted for one semester at a time up to a maximum of three semesters. The dean's office of the student's college will request the change of status



by the Office of the Registrar at least one month prior to the beginning of the semester for which the status is requested.

Federal agencies such as the Department of Education, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Department of Homeland Security may have separate and distinct full-time status requirements.

### International Students

All international applicants whose first language is not English must be able to demonstrate their English language proficiency. Those applicants who do not demonstrate English language proficiency must fulfill certain [requirements](#). Graduate students may be admitted on regular status or on provisional status.

International students in the US must be enrolled full time and must have some credits face-to-face. Independent study and research credits can fill that requirement.

International students abroad can enroll in research credits can be taken from abroad and are considered F2F (there is some uncertainty on this).

International students, whether here or abroad are urged to make an appointment with advisors from OISS as there are a lot of complexities that need to be considered. For example, if students fail to maintain their F-1 status, their ability to get OPT may be endangered.

### F. Dissertation

Completion of a dissertation, based on original research and that makes a significant contribution to knowledge, which includes an oral examination and registration for at least 24 dissertation credits. **A maximum of 36 dissertation credits is permitted by the university.**

The Academic Programs Catalog [describes a doctoral dissertation](#) as “original research upon which a dissertation, which makes a significant contribution to knowledge is to be prepared and published.”

In addition to the main body of a thesis or dissertation, the Graduate School now permits the submission of supplementary materials to ProQuest. These supplemental materials will not be reviewed by the Graduate School for formatting requirements, but they must be acceptable by ProQuest and comply with ProQuest’s criteria and storage limits. All supplementary materials need the written approval of the thesis/dissertation committee chair.

### G. Foreign Language

A foreign language is not required except in individual cases in which a language is deemed appropriate by the student’s guidance committee.

### H. Ph.D. Residency Status

A year of residence will be made up of two consecutive semesters, involving the completion of credits at the level of full-time status of graduate work each semester.

## I. Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Training

The College of Communication Arts and Sciences supports the federal requirements for training set forth in the Competes Act and by the Graduate School, which teaches the responsible conduct in research, scholarship, and creative activities, which is fundamental to the integrity of every graduate program. As a graduate student you will be required to complete the appropriate training. You can find resources to help fulfill these requirements here: [RCR| College of Communication Arts and Sciences | MSU](#)

## J. Important Yearly Milestones

Semester	Week	Event
Fall 1 <sup>st</sup> Year	0	GAs report 10 days prior to start of classes
	0	I&M Ph.D. Orientation
	1	Classes Begin
	12	Begin interviewing potential committee chairs
	15	Classes end
	15	Initiate GradPlan by Appointment of Chairperson
Spring 1 <sup>st</sup> Year	16	Grades due, GAs released with permission of supervisor
	0	GAs report for spring term
	1	Spring classes begin
	4	Begin contacting potential committee members
	8	Complete Guidance Committee in GradPlan
	13	Convene Committee to approve plan of study; complete annual progress report, pass on to chair for input
	15	Transmit completed GradPlan
Summer 1 <sup>st</sup> Year	15	Classes end
	16	Grades due, GAs released with permission of supervisor; chair completes annual progress report. Student turns in annual progress report to the I&M Program Director.
	17	I&M Ph.D. Executive Committee completes 1 <sup>st</sup> year evaluations
	1	Summer classes begin
	5	Summer classes end
	6	Begin work on first conference paper
Fall 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	6-15	Fall conference submission deadlines
	9	Submit conference paper to a journal
Spring 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	1-15	Spring conference submission deadlines
	13	Complete student portion of Annual Progress Report, pass to chair
	15	Turn in completed, Second Year Project
	15	80% of coursework now completed
	15	Turn in completed, Comprehensive Exam Proposal*
	15	Complete student portion of Annual Progress Report, pass to chair
	16	Chair completes Annual Progress Report, returns to student
16	Student turns in Annual Progress Report to the I&M Program Director	

	17	I&M Ph.D. Executive Committee meets to review Annual Progress Reports
Summer 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	5	Summer classed end, begin studying for comprehensives
Fall 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	3-15	Turn in completed, Completion of Comprehensive Exam*
	4	Begin scanning the employment listings. You are now ABD.
	4	Turn in completed, Selection of Dissertation Committee
	6-15	Turn in completed, Dissertation Proposal
	7-16	Submit IRB approval for dissertation research
	8	Your first journal article is published
Spring 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	2	Complete first job interview
	8	Chair receives complete first draft dissertation
	10	Committee receives final draft dissertation
	12	Notify I&M Program Director and Academic Program Coordinator of Notice of Final Oral Examination
	14	Turn in completed, Results of Final Oral Examination
	14	Send dissertation to grad school
	15	Send acceptance letter to future employer
	15	Commencement. Today you are a Ph.D.
Fall 5 <sup>th</sup> Year	1	Comprehensive exam must be completed by this date
Fall 8 <sup>th</sup> Year	1	Dissertation must be completed by this date

\*For a qualifying exam, on the three-year plan.

## 4. Selection of Dissertation Advisor

### Intent

After an applicant is admitted to the program, the I&M Ph.D. Unit Coordinator will either initially serve as his or her academic adviser or request another faculty member to so serve. Students must obtain the approval of the advisor in selection of their first-year courses until their guidance committee members are named and approved. The first-year advisor will also help the student to identify potential committee members until such time that the student selects a guidance chair, after which time that becomes the responsibility of the guidance chair.

Students should begin assessing their "fit" with potential dissertation advisors during orientation. Shared backgrounds and culture should be considered as well as shared academic interests. The dissertation advisor is expected to form a mentoring relationship with the student consistent with Guidelines for Graduate Student Advising and Mentoring Relationships. The department chair of the student's home department may intervene to suggest an alternative, after consultation with faculty, if a student can no longer work with his/her advisor or if the advisor leaves the department prior to completion.

Students should select their dissertation advisor/guidance committee chair by the end of their first semester. The guidance committee chair must belong to the "regular (tenure-track) faculty" of Michigan State University as defined in the Faculty Handbook, possess a terminal degree, and be a member of one of the three I & M Ph.D. units (ADPR, JRN or MI). The appointment is formalized by submission to GradPlan. If a change in advisor becomes necessary, the student will update their GradPlan, which will be the official documentation of the change.

## 5. Formation of The Guidance Committee

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### Intent

The guidance committee must meet no later than the last day of classes of Spring Semester of the first year. The student selects members of the committee, beginning with designation of a chairperson. It is the student's responsibility to recruit faculty members to participate on the committee. Normally this will be done after consultation with the guidance committee chairperson. The student then submits the list of faculty members for approval through GradPlan.

The guidance committee shall be formed within the first two semesters of doctoral study, or within two semesters beyond the master's degree or its equivalent. 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.

Guidance committees have at least four members. The chair of the committee must have an appointment in one of the three academic units participating in the program (ADPR, JRN, MI). Including the chair, the committee must have at least two faculty with appointments including at least two of the three participating units. One member of the committee must hold faculty appointments in the College of Communication Arts and Sciences. Faculty members from any other MSU college may also sit on the committee but are limited to one seat on a four-person committee. If a specialization outside the program is planned, a faculty member from the specialization area should be sought. Faculty with joint appointments in two units may be counted in either of the units for the purpose of meeting these guidelines. The guidance committee:

1. Meets with the student to review and approve the Plan of Study
2. Meets to approve the form and content of the comprehensive examination
3. Administers and evaluates the comprehensive examination

The student is responsible for scheduling times for guidance committee meetings. The guidance committee chairperson conducts the meetings on the academic program and the comprehensive examination. A student may change the membership of his or her guidance committee at any point. Typically, changes occur when a student's research interests move in a new direction or a faculty member is unavailable to participate in the guidance process (e.g., because of leaving the university).

Once a student completes the comprehensive exam the guidance committee may be retained as the student's dissertation committee or may be reformulated at the instigation of the student. The responsibilities of the dissertation committee are to

1. Meet to review and approve the student's dissertation proposal.
2. Meet to review and evaluate the finished dissertation and conduct the oral examination (see next section).

The composition of the graduate committee may change with concurrence of the student and unit, and the committee may establish a distinct dissertation committee to guide dissertation

research specifically. While guidance committees are essential from early in the student's career, their composition may change with the student's developing needs. Changes in committee membership are submitted through GradPlan. If a student is considering requesting a change in committee membership, he or she should consult with the committee chairperson and/or the program Unit Coordinator. Faculty members considering resigning from a committee are also advised to consult with the committee chairperson and/or program Unit Coordinator.

### **Non-Regular (non-tenure) Faculty Committee Members**

If a committee member leaves the university or a student wants a faculty member from another university, an application needs to be made to have that person become a non-regular faculty member. See this [link](#) for MSU procedures that must be followed to become a non-regular faculty member.

## **6. Dissertation Defense and Final Oral Examination**

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### **Intent**

Dissertation committee members may wish to review each chapter of the dissertation as it is completed, or all chapters at once. The dissertation advisor works with the student throughout the process. The student and the dissertation advisor, in consultation with other dissertation committee members as appropriate, will determine when the work is ready for the oral defense.

All students should check the dates listed in each semester's schedule of courses book to make sure that they meet university deadlines for graduating in a particular semester. A final draft of the dissertation must be submitted to the guidance committee at least two weeks before the oral defense. At least two weeks before the time the oral defense is scheduled, the student shall provide the I&M Ph.D. Program with an abstract of the dissertation. An announcement of the time and place will be circulated along with the abstract to Information and Media faculty and students.

The first part of the dissertation defense is open to faculty, students, and the general public, without vote. Only dissertation committee members may participate in the examination portion of the defense and the final vote. The format of the dissertation and the details of publication and dissemination are described on the [Graduate School website](#). The final listing on the title pages of dissertations must be Information and Media.

The standards for the dissertation are determined and invoked by the members of the dissertation committee. Normally the expectations will have been delineated in the dissertation proposal. The general university standard is that the dissertation must be based on original research and must constitute a significant contribution to scholarly knowledge in the field of Information and Media. The guidance committee's judgment on the acceptability of the dissertation shall be final.

Four members on the guidance committee must participate in the oral examination on the dissertation. To ensure fairness in the examination procedure and maintenance of academic standards, the dean of the college or the chair/director of the academic unit may appoint an outside member to the examining committee. The outside member of the committee will read and critique the thesis/dissertation, will participate in the oral part of the exam, and will submit

a report to the dean of the college and/or the chair/director of the academic unit. It is the student's responsibility to verify the availability of faculty members in any particular semester.

Only members of the dissertation committee are allowed to remain during the examination portion of the defense. The possible outcomes of the oral dissertation defense and examination are votes of pass, conditional pass, or fail. The outcome is reported on the Final Oral Dissertation Exam form. For a student to receive a pass vote, all faculty or all faculty except one must vote pass. For a student to receive a fail vote, at least two dissertation committee members must vote fail. If the vote is fail, the student is withdrawn from the program. For a student to receive a conditional pass vote, at least two guidance committee members must vote conditional pass. A conditional pass indicates that the committee wishes substantial revision in the dissertation. Conditions should be stipulated on Final Oral Dissertation Exam form or on an attachment to the form. All dissertation committee members must review the revisions prior to voting pass or fail. A second meeting is not required. A conditional pass must be completed within one calendar year of the committee vote. A student may receive a conditional pass only once.

Dissertations are submitted electronically. The instructions for submission can be found at <http://grad.msu.edu/etd/>. When submitting an electronic thesis or dissertation to ProQuest, a student has the option to open the document to search using Google, Google Scholar and Google Books. The option to block such searches continues to be available. A bound copy of the dissertation as approved by the dissertation committee must be filed with the Information and Media Ph.D. Program Office before a student can graduate. It is the student's responsibility to ensure timely submission of all of these materials; certification for graduation may be denied or delayed if these materials are not submitted according to the university calendar.

#### **A. University Policy About Dissemination of Graduate Students' Research**

In keeping with MSU's public mission, the University requires that theses, dissertations and abstracts will become public after the conferral of the degree; embargoes can only be pursued for a limited period (see [1] below). Results that are subject to restrictions for dissemination by funding agencies (see [2] below) cannot be part of any document submitted as a thesis or dissertation to the Graduate School.

1. **Hold/embargo on publication of documents submitted to ProQuest:**  
Students submitting a thesis/dissertation to ProQuest now can request a hold/embargo of publication by ProQuest by contacting the Graduate School at [msuetds.approval@grd.msu.edu](mailto:msuetds.approval@grd.msu.edu). In response to the request, the Graduate School will send directly to the student a form that needs to be completed and turned to the Graduate School prior to submission of the document to ProQuest. The form needs to be signed by the student's major professor and by the Associate Dean of the student's college. The request for the hold/embargo may be for six months, one year or two years. Requests for a period longer than six months must include a written justification for the length of the hold/embargo.
2. **Graduate students' participating in University Research Organization (URO):**  
Graduate students involved in a URO project will receive both written documentation and a verbal explanation of any limitations or implications to their current or future academic progress prior to participating on the

project. Students engaging in work for a URO project undergo a 2-step approval process before hiring: a consultation with a representative of the URO's office to explain the restrictions on the project, and an interview with the Graduate School Dean or Dean's designee to discuss the relationship, if any, between their work as graduate students and their participation in the project. Students must be informed that results that are subject to restrictions for dissemination cannot be part of any document submitted as a thesis or dissertation. As part of their degree program, all graduate students must have research options to ensure the generation of appropriate results to fulfill the degree requirements, and to have data for professional development activities that are integral to their graduate education (e.g., presentations at conferences and research seminars).

## B. Exit Survey

You are required to complete an Exit Survey from the Graduate School. The survey will ask you questions about your educational experience in your graduate program. The Graduate School uses data from this survey when reviewing graduate programs and to guide decisions about services and initiatives for graduate students.

Beginning Spring 2021, graduating doctoral students will receive their exit survey from MSU's license with 12Twenty, not from egr.msu.edu.

## 7. Departmental Policies: Academic & Professional Performance

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### Intent

It is in the interests of students, faculty members, and the program to make early and continuing assessments of student performance. The evaluation procedures below are specific to the Information and Media Ph.D. Program. They incorporate both College of Communication Arts and Sciences and university requirements.

### A. Grades

Courses taken as part of a program of coursework approved by a guidance committee are to be taken on a graded basis. Any grade below a 3.0 received in a course taken for graduate credit or as part of a program of coursework approved by a student's guidance committee is considered a failing grade. A student is subject to dismissal from the program under any one of the following conditions:

1. If a student earns less than a 3.0 in two courses in his/her program, the student is automatically recessed, subject to the following conditions:
  - a. The student can apply for readmission to the program after one year by decision of the Executive Committee.
  - b. If readmitted by decision of the Executive Committee the student will retake the course and earn at least a 3.0. Any subsequent grade(s) of lower than 3.0 will result in automatic dismissal.

- c. All students need to maintain a 3.0 overall average in order to matriculate.
  - d. Students will receive a letter from the I&M Ph.D. director whenever they receive less than a 3.0 in a class reminding them of this policy.
2. A cumulative average below 3.0 after ten credits have been earned since the date of the first enrollment in the Information and Media Ph.D. Program.
3. Unacceptable performance in teaching or research assistantships, as indicated in section X, below.

Termination for other than the automatic causes (listed under 1, above) requires a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee of the Information and Media Ph.D. Program considers the accumulation of deferred and incomplete grades an impediment to progress in the program. Students who receive incomplete or deferred grades in first-year courses may be required to clear those grades from the record as a condition for receiving a pass in the first-year evaluation.

## **B. Formal Annual Evaluation of Students**

### **1. First Year Evaluation**

At the end of the first year of study in the program, each student will be evaluated at a meeting of the Executive Committee with input from course instructors in the participating units. Each student will be evaluated on the basis of all academic work in the first year and also on performance in any graduate assistantship.

Even if a student achieves a grade of at least 3.0 in each course, certain concerns may be noted by one or more instructors. For example, deficiencies may be detected in writing (ability to organize and follow a thesis logically, clear expository style) or in the ability to synthesize and analyze. These problems may be masked by the overall performance in courses or may not be directly measured in a specific course evaluation. This is the appropriate time to call attention to the difficulty and plan remedial action.

The result of this evaluation will be either pass, conditional, or fail. A pass in this evaluation means that the student continues to complete additional course work and other stages in the doctoral program. A conditional means that specified remedial action will be required to be reviewed later by the Executive Committee.

A student who receives a conditional vote shall be informed in writing of the conditions required. The remedial action may be counseling in the deficiency, as might be appropriate for a conditional in the teaching and research assignments, or it might include one or a combination of the following in response to difficulties in the academic area: an oral examination, preparation of a paper, special course work, or another appropriate activity. At the completion of the activity, the Executive Committee will confer again if necessary to determine if the conditions have

been met. A conditional must be removed within a period specified by the Executive Committee. If not, the student fails.

A fail as a result of the evaluation of course work, teaching or research work, or at the conclusion of conditions established for addressing a conditional, means removal from the program. A fail requires a simple majority of fail votes by participating members of the Executive Committee. Conditional requires two or more conditional votes. A student passes if no more than one fail or conditional vote is cast. The student is thereafter notified in writing of the Evaluation Committee vote.

If the student fails this evaluation process, the student will be informed, in writing, that enrollment in the Information and Media Ph.D. Program is terminated. The Program Director may request that students meet individually to discuss the Executive Committee results and decision. Any student may request a meeting with the Program Director to discuss the first-year evaluation.

## 2. Annual Evaluation

After the first-year evaluation, students will continue to receive, in writing, an annual evaluation while in the program. The evaluation shall be prepared by the student and the chairperson of the guidance committee upon consultation with other members of the student's committee and the chair or director of the student's home unit. This evaluation will cover assistantship performance, development of professional skills, scholarly contribution, and rate of progress.

The home unit is defined as that which funds the student or, if the student is unfunded, the unit in which the student's committee chair has his or her primary appointment. In providing advice to the Executive Committee, the unit chair or director may consult additional members of the I&M Ph.D. faculty who have supervised the student in assistantships or who have had contact with the student in other ways during the year. This advice will be provided to the students' committee chair by the end of the 13th week of spring semester.

### 2.1 Assistantship Performance

Performance in research or teaching assistantship held by the student since the preceding annual review may be considered as evidence of the student's overall academic progress. However, continued funding decisions are at the discretion of the unit providing the assistantship, consistent with section X, below, and are not subject to Executive Committee review.

### 2.2 Rate of Progress

The following minimum expectations about satisfactory rate of progress apply.

- **First year (or after completion of 18 course credits)**  
Completion of required courses. Filing of a plan of study, and guidance committee formation in GradPlan (see section VII.B.1, above).

- **Second year (34 credits)**  
Completion of the 2nd Year Project
- **Third year (42 credits)**  
Successful defense of comprehensive exam. Lead authorship of a conference paper.
- **Fourth and following years (42 course credits and 24 dissertation credits)**  
Successful dissertation defense. Lead authorship of a peer reviewed article published or in press.

Students will document progress toward meeting these expectations with a memo attached to their annual review form (section d. below) specifying the date in which the above milestones, if any, were met during the year and provide complete bibliographic references for all scholarly works completed since the previous year's evaluation. The student should document any other evidence of professional development or accomplishments during the year and outline a plan for completing program milestones in the coming year.

Students who reach the end of spring semester without meeting the minimum expectations as specified above will be advised that they are not making satisfactory progress. This determination will be made by the student's committee chair no later than the 13th week of spring semester. The student's committee chair will at that time, in consultation with the student and the other members of the student's committee, prepare a schedule for fulfillment of the relevant expectations by fixed deadlines in the following year. The plan will be signed by the student and the committee members and attached to the student's annual review form, to be submitted to the Program Director by the end of the 15th week of spring semester. Failure to meet the deadlines set forth in the student's plan may be considered grounds for removal from the program by the Executive Committee.

### 2.3 Committee Chair Evaluation

As part of the annual progress report (see following section), the student's committee chair will provide an overall rating of the student's a. Demonstrated mastery of research methods and concepts necessary to conduct original research in the field of Information and Media, and b. original contributions to knowledge in the field of Information and Media.

### 2.4 Annual Progress Report

Once a year, the student's committee chair and the graduate student will complete the appropriate portions of an [annual progress report form](#).

The committee chair and graduate student will meet to discuss this evaluation and, if applicable, sources of funding. The committee chair and the graduate student will sign the completed annual progress report, which will be submitted for review to the Program

Director. The annual evaluation by the student's committee chair should be completed by the 15th week of spring semester so it can be coordinated with the review of the student's progress by the Executive Committee. Graduate students who wish to appeal any part of the faculty advisor's evaluation may do so in writing to the chair of the academic unit and this appeal will be filed together with the annual progress report. The student's report of annual accomplishments and, if appropriate, the plan for fulfillment of unmet expectations will be attached to the report. This report will be filed with the Associate Dean and will be placed in the graduate student's file, together with any response that the graduate student may attach to the report of the Executive Committee.

The Associate Dean of Graduate Studies will review at least once a year the graduate student's progress in his or her research as well as plans for work in the coming year (GSRR 2.4 .8).

The Program Director will meet with individual graduate students upon request to review all aspects of the annual progress report. At this occasion, the graduate student has the opportunity to discuss 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 annual evaluation (see above). Recommendations based on this review will be communicated in writing to the student's committee chair and the graduate student within two weeks of the meeting, and that report will be placed in the graduate student's file.

### **C. Student Records**

An electronic file is maintained for each student in the office of the I&M Ph.D. The file includes the admission material, copies of the student's annual evaluations, and copies of written correspondence directed to the student pursuant to the provisions of this handbook. Students have a right to view their files in the graduate program coordinator's office during the hours that person is present. They may request copies of their files; a nominal fee may be charged to defray copying expenses.

Students may challenge information in their files. They may do so in a letter that details this challenge, and that letter is kept in the student's file.

### **D. Reasonable Progress**

Students are expected to make reasonable progress in their degree programs. In part, this means meeting various program and university requirements, including:

1. Maintaining acceptable grades and consistently moving closer to completion of the program.
2. Filing an approved program of study by the end of the second semester in the program.
3. Passing the comprehensive exam, no later than the fifth year in the program.

4. Completing all degree requirements, no later than the eighth year in the program.

Failure to meet these requirements can result in removal from the program or other sanctions as required by the Graduate School. Students can appeal for extensions of various university and unit deadlines. The appeal process consists of making a request to the I&M Ph.D. Program Director, which includes a detailed timeline indicating deadlines for completion of specific tasks and program requirements. The request and timeline must be endorsed by the student's advisor. Ultimately, the request must be approved by the Graduate School.

A student may file a request for a leave of absence. Circumstances that warrant a leave include pregnancy and childbirth; illness, divorce, and other non-academic circumstances that could legitimately delay a student's progress. The request for a leave must be made by a student's advisor and reviewed by the I&M Ph.D. Executive Committee. If approved, the duration of the leave must be specified in writing.

### **E. Waiver and Transfer of Courses**

Students may request to waive program requirements and transfer courses. Waiver requests require signature approval of the I&M Ph.D. Program Director. In general, the standard for a student to qualify for waiver of a required course is proof of having previously taken a graduate-level course that is essentially the same as the course sought to be waived. Performance in the course must have been, at a minimum, a grade of 3.0 (B or the equivalent). Proof may be made via a course syllabus, copies of research papers, additional letters from past instructors, etc. If a required course is waived, a student will take another course in its place; in other words, a waiver does not reduce the required number of courses unless a transfer of credits is also approved.

Up to nine (9) credits may be transferred to reduce the total number of course credits required to complete the program with the approval of the Dean, the I&M Ph.D. Program Director, and the student's guidance committee. To be eligible the credits must: (1) be earned in graduate-level courses in which a grade of 3.0 (B or its equivalent) has been obtained, (2) be from an accredited university similar in quality to Michigan State University, (3) be consistent with the student's overall plan of study, and (4) have been completed within the time limits for the earning of the degree. If the transfer is granted subsequent to the initial submission of the plan of study, a revised plan must be submitted.

### **F. Comprehensive Exam Grading Policy**

The possible outcomes of the comprehensive examination include votes of pass, conditional pass, or fail. For a student to receive a pass, all faculty members on the guidance committee or all faculty except one must vote pass. For a student to receive a fail, two faculty must vote fail. For a student to receive a conditional pass, two faculty must vote conditional. A conditional pass indicates that the committee wishes further evidence of the student's ability, and the result has not been either a pass or a fail. A pass means the student is formally accepted as a candidate for the

Ph.D. degree (ABD status). A fail means that the student is either recessed or withdrawn from the program (as decided by the Executive Committee).

In the case of a conditional the committee will stipulate the conditions in a statement that constitutes an agreement regarding additional work required. Additional work may be academic study, revision of a paper or submission of a different paper, or additional written examination questions. In any case, another oral examination and meeting will be scheduled in which the guidance committee will determine if the conditions have been met. The outcome of the second oral examination must take place no later than a calendar year following the first, although the guidance committee may set an earlier date if it chooses.

### **G. Independent Study**

Occasionally a student's program of study and research cannot be accommodated within the existing curriculum. When that is the case, a directed study under the supervision of a faculty may be appropriate. Since a directed study is available only in the elective portion of a student's program of coursework, guidance committee approval must be obtained prior to enrollment in a directed study. The university "Application for Independent Study Form" may be accepted by the guidance committee, but the guidance committee is free to require a more specific statement if it wishes.

## **8. Departmental Policies: Integrity and Safety in Research and Creative Activities**

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### **Intent**

Integrity in research and creative activities is based on sound disciplinary practices as well as on a commitment to basic values such as fairness, equity, honesty and respect. Students learn to value professional integrity and high standards of ethical behavior through interaction with members of their academic unit and their faculty advisor and by emulating exemplary behavior. All university and college standards for ethical conduct are enforced by the Information and Media Executive Committee. University standards are detailed in Article 3 of the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities document found online and in Spartan Life and the Student Handbook and Resource Guide. Discussion of Academic Integrity is presented below, followed by the Guidelines.

### **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 a work copied from another person's manuscript or notes, spoken words, sounds, or images.
2. Part or all of a work 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 Spartan Life 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.
5. The number of cases of scientific misconduct due apparently to unintentional plagiarism continues to be substantial. "Ithenticate", the anti-plagiarism software, is available on [Desire 2 Learn](#) 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: <http://tech.msu.edu/ithenticate/>. Students should familiarize themselves with the Guidelines for Integrity in Research and [Creative Activities](#) on the Graduate School webpage. It is reprinted below from Michigan State University Research Integrity, Vol. 7 No. 2 Spring 2004:

### **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.

### **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 coworkers.**

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.

### **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.

## Academic Misconduct

The following statement of university policy addresses principles and procedures to be used in instances of academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards, and falsification of academic or admission records, herein after referred to as academic misconduct.

1. The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars. The university expects both instructors and students to honor these principles and, in so doing, to protect the validity of university education and grades. Practices that maintain the integrity of scholarship and grades include providing accurate information for academic and admission records, adherence to unit-approved professional standards and honor codes, and completion of original academic work by the student to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. To encourage adherence to the principles of truth and honesty, instructors should exercise care in planning and supervising academic work and implement proctoring standards appropriate to the design of the course. Citing or otherwise acknowledging all ideas that are not your own, including anything that you copy directly or that you paraphrase, modify or "sample."
2. If an instructor alleges a student has committed an act of academic misconduct, the instructor is responsible for taking appropriate action. Depending on the instructor's judgment of a specific instance, the instructor may give the student a penalty grade. A penalty grade may be a reduced score or grade for the assignment or a reduced grade for the course. [For a definition of "penalty grade", see [Student Rights and Responsibilities \(SRR\) 11](#), and [Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities \(GSRR\) 8.118.7](#) Never "downloading" anything from the Internet into your work product without acknowledging the source.
3. When an instructor gives an undergraduate or graduate student a penalty grade for academic misconduct, the instructor must complete and submit an Academic Dishonesty Report (available on the Registrar's Form Menu under Instructor Systems). The report will be sent to the student, the student's dean, the Dean of the Graduate School (for graduate students) or Dean of Students (for undergraduate students) and be added to the student's academic record provisionally. It will remain in the student's record unless: a) the student successfully grieves the allegation; b) the instructor filing the report requests it be removed; or, for undergraduates only, c) upon conferral of their degree if only one report has been filed, the student has successfully completed the required course on academic integrity, and no additional sanctions were requested.
4. When completing the Academic Dishonesty Report, if the instructor gives a failing grade in the course, the instructor may request the student's academic dean to impose sanctions in addition to the failing grade.
5. When in the judgment of the student's academic dean, a sanction in addition to a penalty grade is warranted (e.g., dismissal from a unit or program), the dean may call for an academic disciplinary hearing. In calling for an academic disciplinary hearing, the student's academic dean may act independently or in response to a request by the instructor. [See [SRR 7.V](#), [GSRR 5.5](#), and [Medical Student Rights and Responsibilities \(MSRR\) 5.3.1](#)]
6. A student accused of academic misconduct may request an academic grievance hearing to contest the allegation before the appropriate hearing board. In cases

involving academic misconduct, no student may be dismissed from a course or program of study without an academic disciplinary hearing.

7. On the first offense of academic misconduct, the student must complete an educational program on academic integrity and academic misconduct provided by the Dean of Students for undergraduate students or the Dean of the Graduate School for graduate students.
8. In cases involving undergraduate students in which the student's academic dean, or designee, calls for an academic disciplinary hearing, the student's academic dean will refer the case to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students will notify the student in writing of the call for a disciplinary hearing and will invite the student to a meeting to determine the appropriate judiciary for the hearing. (See [SRR 7.V.](#))
9. In cases involving graduate students in which the student's academic dean, or designee, calls for an academic disciplinary hearing, the student's academic dean will inform the student and then refer the case to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School will notify the student in writing of the call for a disciplinary hearing and will invite the student to a meeting to discuss the hearing process. (See [GSRR 5.5.](#))
10. Either party may appeal a decision of an administrative disciplinary hearing or a disciplinary hearing board to the appropriate appellate board. (See [SRR 7.VII.](#), [GSRR 5.4.12.](#), and [MSRR 5.8.](#))

## Resources

"MSU Guidelines on Authorship", (<http://vprgs.msu.edu/michigan-state-university-guidelines-authorship>)

"Integrity in Scientific Research: Creating an Environment that Promotes Responsible Conduct", National Academies Press, Washington, D.C., 2002, 216 pp  
(<http://www.nap.edu/books/0309084792/html>)

"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](http://www.msu.edu/unit/vprgs/research_data.htm))

## Notes

1. Michigan State University "Mission Statement" approved by the Board of Trustees on June 24-25, 1982, (<http://president.msu.edu/mission/>)
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/documents/index.htm>)
3. MSU Faculty Handbook, Chapter VI, "Research and Creative Endeavor- Sponsored Research and Creative Endeavor"
4. (<http://www.hr.msu.edu/documents/facacadhandbooks/facultyhandbook/genstatementRESEARCH.htm>)
5. Office of Science and Technology Policy, "Notice of Final Policy", 65 CFR 76260.

## Ethical Treatment of Human Subjects

Students are required to obtain a faculty sponsor and seek the approval of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects prior to beginning any research or creative projects involving human beings (this includes any internships or independent studies). They must also register as investigators with IRB and take an on-line certification course. Additionally, students should consult their advisors before undertaking any creative or research project to determine if IRB clearance is required. Such clearances may take 1-7 weeks, or more, to obtain and are specifically required for theses and projects.

Directions and application forms are available at <http://hrpp.msu.edu/>.

## 9. Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution

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### Intent

The University has established a judicial structure and process for hearing and adjudicating alleged violations of recognized graduate student rights and responsibilities (GSRR, LSRR, and MSRR, Article 5). The first venue to resolve such conflicts informally or formally rests within the academic unit. Because the faculty advisor-graduate student relationship is so important, special attention should be given to the resolution of conflicts between a graduate student and their faculty advisor.

### A. Student Conduct

The first avenue for settlement, in the case of conflict, shall be between the faculty member(s) and student(s) involved in the case. That is, the student(s) shall discuss the problem with the faculty member(s) from whom redress is sought and concerted attempts to arrive at a settlement shall be made.

The I & M Ph.D. Program Director will serve as mediator/arbitrator in situations when the conflict has not been resolved. The Program Director will also assist in cases when students whose major professor are in administrative positions.

In the case that no positive resolution is achieved, please follow the following procedures:

### 1. 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:**

Office of the University Ombudsperson 354 Farm Lane Room 129 North Kedzie Hall  
(517) 353-8830  
[ombud@msu.edu](mailto:ombud@msu.edu)

## **B. I&M Ph.D. Program Appeals Procedure**

Should informal discussion fail to resolve the grievance, the student may appeal to the formal mechanism described below. The phrase "unit administrator" shall refer to the I&M Ph.D. Program Director. The word "faculty" shall refer to the Information and Media Ph.D. faculty. The phrase "department/school" refers to the I&M Ph.D. Program.

Each right of an individual places a reciprocal duty upon others: the duty to permit the individual to exercise the right. The student, as a member of the academic community, has both rights and duties. Within that community, the student's most essential right is the right to learn. The University has a duty to provide for the student those privileges, opportunities, and protections which best promote the learning process in all its aspects. The student also has duties to other members of the academic community, the most important of which is to refrain from interference with those rights of other which are equally essential to the purposes and processes of the University. (GSRR Article 1.2)

*The Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University (AFR) and the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR) documents establish the rights and responsibilities of MSU students and prescribe procedures to resolve allegations of violations of those rights through formal grievance hearings. In accordance with the AFR and the GSRR, Information and Media has established the following Hearing Board procedures for adjudicating academic grievances and complaints. (See GSRR 5.4.1.)*

### **1. Jurisdiction of Information and Media Hearing Board**

- a. The Hearing Board serves as the initial Hearing Board for academic grievance hearings involving graduate students who allege violations of academic rights or seek to contest an allegation of academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards or falsifying admission and academic records). (See GSRR 2.3 .9 and 5.1.1.)
- b. Students may not request an academic grievance hearing based on an allegation of incompetent instruction. (See GSRR 2.2.2 and 2.2.4.)

### **2. Composition of the Hearing Board**

- a. The Department shall constitute a Hearing Board pool no later than the end of the tenth week of the spring semester. Hearing Board members shall be members of the I&M Ph.D. Executive Committee and student representatives designated by each of the three participating departments who shall serve for a period of one year (renewable). (See GSRR 5.1.3 and 5.1.6.)
- b. The Chair of the Hearing Board shall be the faculty member with rank who

shall vote only in the event of a tie. In addition to the Chair, the Hearing Board shall include an equal number of voting graduate students and faculty, including the unit administrator, or designee. (See GSRR 5.1.2, and 5.1.5.)

- c. The department will train hearing board members about these procedures and the applicable sections of the GSRR. (See GSRR 5.1.3.)

### 3. Referral to Hearing Board

- a. After consulting with the instructor and appropriate unit administrator, graduate students who remain dissatisfied with their attempt to resolve an allegation of a violation of student academic rights or an allegation of academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards or falsifying admission and academic records) may request an academic grievance hearing. When appropriate, the Department Chair, in consultation with the Dean, may waive jurisdiction and refer the request for an initial hearing to the College Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.3.6.2.)
- b. At any time in the grievance process, either party may consult with the University Ombudsperson. (See GSRR 5.3.2.)
- c. In cases of ambiguous jurisdiction, the Dean of The Graduate School will select the appropriate Hearing Board for cases involving graduate students. (See GSRR 5.3.5.)
- d. Generally, the deadline for submitting the written request for a hearing is the middle of the next semester in which the student is enrolled. In cases in which a student seeks to contest an allegation of academic misconduct and the student's dean has called for an academic disciplinary hearing, the student has 10 class days to request an academic grievance to contest the allegation. (See GSRR 5.3.6.1 and 5.5.2 .2.)
- e. If either the student (the complainant) or the respondent (usually, the instructor or an administrator) is absent from the university during that semester, or if other appropriate reasons emerge, the Hearing Board may grant an extension of this deadline. If the university no longer employs the respondent before the grievance hearing commences, the hearing may proceed. (See GSRR 5.4.9.)
- f. A written request for an academic grievance hearing must (1) specify the specific bases for the grievance, including the alleged violation(s), (2) identify the individual against whom the grievance is filed (the respondent) and (3) state the desired redress. Anonymous grievances will not be accepted. (See GSRR 5.1 and 5.3.6.)

### 4. Composition of the Hearing Board

- a. After receiving a student's written request for a hearing, the Chair of the Department will promptly refer the grievance to the Chair of the Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.3.2, 5.4.3.)
- b. Within 5 class days, the Chair of the Hearing Board will:
  - Forward the request for a hearing to the respondent.

- Send the names of the pool of Hearing Board members to both parties and, to avoid conflicts of interest between the two parties and the Hearing Board members, request written challenges, if any, within 3 class days of this notification.
  - Rule promptly on any challenges, impanel a Hearing Board and send each party the names of the Hearing Board members. If the Chair of the Hearing Board is the subject of a challenge, the challenge shall be filed with the Dean of the College, or designee. (See GSRR 5.1.7.)
  - Send the Hearing Board members a copy of the request for a hearing and the written response and send all parties a copy of these procedures.
- c. Within 5 class days of being established, the Hearing Board shall review the request, and, after considering all requested and submitted information:
- Accept the request, in full or in part, and promptly schedule a hearing.
  - Reject the request and provide a written explanation to appropriate parties, e.g., lack of jurisdiction. (The student may appeal this decision.)
  - Invite the two parties to meet with the Hearing Board in an informal session to try to resolve the matter. (Such a meeting does not preclude a later hearing.) (See GSRR 5.4.6.)
- d. If the Hearing Board calls for a hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall promptly negotiate a hearing date, schedule an additional meeting only for the Hearing Board should additional deliberations on the findings become necessary, and request a written response to the grievance from the respondent.
- e. At least 5 class days before the scheduled hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall notify the respondent and the complainant in writing of the (1) time, date, and place of the hearing; (2) the names of the parties to the grievance; (3) a copy of the hearing request and the respondent's reply; and (4) the names of the Hearing Board members after any challenges. (See GSRR 5.4.7.)
- f. At least 3 class days before the scheduled hearing, the parties must notify the Chair of the Hearing Board the names of their witnesses and advisor, if any, and request permission for the advisor to have voice at the hearing. The chair may grant or deny this request. The Chair will promptly forward the names given by the complainant to the respondent and vice versa. (See GSRR 5.4.7. 1.)
- g. The Chair of the Hearing Board may accept written statements from either party's witnesses at least 3 class days before the hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.9.)
- h. In unusual circumstances and in lieu of a personal appearance, either party may request permission to submit a written statement to the Hearing Board or request permission to participate in the hearing through an electronic communication channel. Written statements must be submitted to the Hearing Board at least 3 class days before the scheduled hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.9c.)
- i. Either party of the grievance hearing may request a postponement of the hearing. The Hearing Board may either grant or deny the request. (See GSRR 5.4.8.)

- j. At its discretion, the Hearing Board may set a reasonable time limit for each party to present its case, and the Chair of the Hearing Board must inform the parties of such a time limit in the written notification of the hearing.
- k. Hearings are closed unless the student requests an open hearing, which would be open to all members of the MSU community. The Hearing Board may close an open hearing to protect the confidentiality of information or to maintain order. (See GSRR 5.4.10.4.)
- l. Members of the Hearing Board are expected to respect the confidentiality of the hearing process. (See GSRR 5.4.10.4. and 5.4.11.)

## 5. Pre-Hearing Procedures

The Hearing will proceed as follows:

- a. Introductory remarks by the Chair of the Hearing Board: The Chair of the Hearing Board introduces hearing panel members, the complainant, the respondent and advisors, if any. The Chair reviews the hearing procedures, including announced time restraints for presentations by each party and the witnesses, and informs the parties if their advisors may have a voice in the hearings and if the proceedings are being recorded. Witnesses shall be excluded from the proceedings except when testifying. The Chair also explains:
  - In academic grievance hearings in which a student alleges a violation
  - Of academic rights, the student bears the burden of proof. In hearings in which a graduate student seeks to contest allegations
  - Of academic misconduct, the instructor bears the burden of proof. All Hearing Board decisions must be reached by a majority of the
  - Hearing Board, based on a "preponderance of the evidence." (See GSRR 8.1.18.)
  - For various other definitions, see GSRR Article 8.)
- a. If the complainant fails to appear in person or via an electronic channel at a scheduled hearing, the Hearing Board may either postpone the hearing or dismiss the case for demonstrated cause. (See GSRR 5.4.9a.)
- b. If the respondent fails to appear in person or via an electronic channel at a scheduled hearing, the Hearing Board may postpone the hearing, hear the case in the respondent's absence, or dismiss the case. (See \ GSRR 5.4.9-b.)
- c. If the respondent is absent from the University during the semester of the grievance hearing or no longer employed by the University before the grievance procedure concludes, the hearing process may still proceed. (See GSRR 5.3.6.1.)
- d. To assure orderly questioning, the Chair of the Hearing Board will recognize individuals before they speak. All parties have a right to speak without interruption. Each party has a right to question the other party and to rebut any oral or written statements submitted to the Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.4.10.2.)
- e. Presentation by the Complainant: The Chair recognizes the complainant to present without interruption any statements relevant to the complainant's case, including the redress sought. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at

the complainant by the Hearing Board, the respondent and the respondent's advisor, if any.

- f. Presentation by the Complainant's Witnesses: The Chair recognizes the complainant's witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, any statement directly relevant to the complainant's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the respondent, and the respondent's advisor, if any.
- g. Presentation by the Respondent: The Chair recognizes the respondent to present without interruption any statements relevant to the respondent's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the respondent by the Hearing Board, the complainant, and the complainant's advisor, if any.
- h. Presentation by the Respondent's Witnesses: The Chair recognizes the respondent's witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, and statement directly relevant to the respondent's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the complainant, and the complainant's advisor, if any.
- i. Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Complainant: The complainant refutes statements by the respondent, the respondent's witnesses and advisor, if any, and presents a final summary statement.
- j. Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Respondent: The respondent refutes statements by the complainant, the complainant's witnesses and advisor, if any, and presents a final summary statement.
- k. Final questions by the Hearing Board: The Hearing Board asks questions of any of the participants in the hearing.

## 6. Post-Hearing Procedures

### a. Deliberation:

After all evidence has been presented, with full opportunity for explanations, questions and rebuttal, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall excuse all parties to the grievance and convene the Hearing Board to determine its findings in executive session. When possible, deliberations should take place directly following the hearing and/or at the previously scheduled follow-up meeting. (See Section IV.D above.)

### b. Decision:

- In grievance (non-disciplinary) hearings involving graduate students in which a majority of the Hearing Board finds, based on a "preponderance of the evidence," that a violation of the student's academic rights has occurred, and that redress is possible, it shall recommend an appropriate remedy to the Department Chair. Upon receiving the Hearing Board's recommendation, the Director shall implement an appropriate remedy, in consultation with the Hearing Board, within 3 class days. If the Hearing Board finds that no violation of academic rights has occurred, it shall so inform the Chair. The Chair of the Hearing Board shall promptly forward copies of the final decision to parties and the University Ombudsperson. (See GSRR 5.4.11.)

- In grievance (non-disciplinary) hearings involving graduate students in which the Hearing Board serves as the initial hearing body to adjudicate an allegation of academic dishonesty and, based on a "preponderance of the evidence," the Hearing Board finds for the student, the Hearing Board shall recommend to the Chair of the Department that the penalty grade be removed, the Academic Dishonesty Report be removed from the student's records and a "good faith judgment" of the student's academic performance in the course take place. If the Hearing Board finds for the complainant (instructor), the penalty grade shall stand and the Academic Dishonesty Report regarding the allegation will remain on file, pending an appeal, if any to the College Hearing Board within 5 class days of the Hearing Board's decision. If an academic disciplinary hearing is pending, and the Hearing Board decides for the complainant, the graduate student's disciplinary hearing before either the College Hearing Board or the Dean of The Graduate School would promptly follow, pending an appeal, if any, within 5 class days. (See GSRR 5.5.2.2, 5.4.12.3, and 5.5.2 .2)

**c. Written Report:**

The Chair of the Hearing Board shall prepare a written report of the Hearing Board's findings, including recommended redress or sanctions for the Complainant, if applicable, and forward a copy of the decision to the appropriate unit administrator within 3 class days of the hearing. The report shall indicate the rationale for the decision and the major elements of evidence, or lack thereof that support the Hearing Board's decision. The administrator, in consultation with the Hearing Board, shall then implement an appropriate remedy. The report also should inform the parties of the right to appeal within 5 class days following notice of the decision, or 5 class days if an academic disciplinary hearing is pending. The Chair shall forward copies of the Hearing Board's report and the administrator's redress, if applicable, to the parties involved, the responsible administrators, the University Ombudsperson and the Dean of The Graduate School. All recipients must respect the confidentiality of the report and of the hearing board's deliberations resulting in a decision. (See GSRR 5.4.12 and 5.5.2.2)

## 7. Appeal of the Hearing Board Decision

- Either party may appeal a decision by the Hearing Board to the College Hearing Board for cases involving (1) academic grievances alleging violations of student rights and (2) alleged violations of regulations involving academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, professional standards or falsification of admission and academic records.) (See GSRR 5.4.12.)
- All appeals must be in writing, signed and submitted to the Chair of the College Hearing Board within 5 class days following notification of the Hearing Board's decision. While under appeal, the original decision of the Hearing Board will be held in abeyance. (See GSRR 5.4.12, 5.4.12.2 and 5.4.12.3.)
- A request for an appeal of a Hearing Board decision to the College Hearing Board must allege, in sufficient particularity to justify a hearing that the initial Hearing Board failed to follow applicable procedures for adjudicating the hearing or that findings of the Hearing Board were not supported by the "preponderance of the evidence." The request also must include the redress

sought. Presentation of new evidence normally will be inappropriate. (See GSRR 5.4.12.1, 5.4.12.2 and 5.4.12.4.)

## 8. Reconsideration

If new evidence should arise, either party to a hearing may request the appropriate Hearing Board to reconsider the case within 30 days upon receipt of the hearing outcome. The written request for reconsideration is to be sent to the Chair of the Hearing Board, who shall promptly convene the Hearing Board to review the new material and render a decision on a new hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.13.)

## 9. File Copy

The Chair of the Department shall file a copy of these procedures with the Office of the Ombudsperson and with the Dean of The Graduate School. (See GSRR 5.4.1.)

# 10. Work Related Policies

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## Intent

Teaching assistants are referred to the current GEU contract and to GSRR 4.2.1 - 4.2.8 for work-related policies and details of their health care plan. Copies of the contract and related health care policy may be obtained in business office of the student's home department.

### A. Appointments

Half-time and quarter-time assistantships are granted by the three participating departments, and not by the I&M Ph.D. Office. The initial appointment offer is normally made at the time that admission to the program is offered. Research and teaching assistantships are awarded based on merit and unit research and teaching needs. They are renewable on a semester-by-semester basis depending upon performance, unit needs, and the availability of funds.

Ordinarily a student remains a graduate assistant with the initially appointing department throughout the period specified in their letter of appointment, but normally for a period of no more than four years. (Note: The MSU graduate catalog states that the Ph.D. is expected to require 3 years beyond the bachelor's degree to complete). Each teaching assistantship appointment is for one semester. Therefore, each assistantship will be renewed each semester for a maximum of four years so long as performance is satisfactory and there are no financial exigencies precluding reappointment.

The department chairperson or school Unit Coordinator will obtain a written evaluation of the student's assistantship each semester. These reports are maintained by the department employing the student. When a Ph.D. student has the principal responsibility for teaching a course or section of a course, the department chairperson shall appoint one faculty member to supervise the teaching assistant each semester of the appointment. In the absence of a designated faculty member, the chairperson or Unit Coordinator will serve as supervisor. The faculty supervisor should visit the classroom at least once during the first semester the Ph.D. student teaches the course. Following the visit, a report should be compiled by the faculty visitor for discussion with the assistant. Whenever a Ph.D. student teaches a course, student evaluation

forms are presented to the department chairperson or Unit Coordinator at the end of the term. When a Ph.D. student assists a faculty member in teaching a course, separate written term-end reports by the faculty member should be prepared and discussed by the two.

If an assistantship involves research responsibilities, the student is evaluated by the supervising faculty member. Unacceptable performance can result in loss of a student's assistantship. Students and departments should consult university guidelines for further information.

The University requires that, each March and November, departments notify their graduate assistants that their appointments either are or are not being renewed for the following semester. The student's faculty supervisor provides a written evaluation each semester. Assistantships may be terminated at any time and pay reduced for gross negligence, such as failure to perform assigned duties or, for teaching assistants, any serious dereliction of the Code of Teaching Responsibility. Faculty supervisors may require students to keep timecards and/or maintain regular office hours, at their option.

Graduate students are appointed to assistantships on a quarter-time, half-time, or three-quarter-time basis. Graduate assistants must be registered each semester in which they hold an assistantship. Graduate assistantships are available only to students who are actively pursuing graduate degree programs and who are making satisfactory progress toward their degrees. The determination of what constitutes satisfactory progress is made by the Information and Media Ph.D. Program Executive Committee or by a student's guidance committee as appropriate. Failure to maintain minimum academic standing requires no committee action to determine if work is unsatisfactory.

## B. Work Rules

### 1. Minimum Work Hours

Normally during a semester, the weekly hours of graduate assistant duties will average:

- |                       |               |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| a. Quarter-time       | 10 hours/week |
| b. Half-time          | 20 hours/week |
| c. Three-quarter time | 30 hours/week |

### 2. Maximum Work Hours

International students cannot work more than 20 hours per week. However, domestic students can work up to 29 hours per week.

### 3. Minimum Credit Registration

- |                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| a. Quarter-time       | 6 credits |
| b. Half-time          | 6 credits |
| c. Three-quarter time | 3 credits |

**NOTE:** Minimum total may include CAS 999 credits.

### 4. Maximum Credit Registration

Normally during a semester, the weekly hours of graduate assistant duties will average:

- |                       |            |
|-----------------------|------------|
| a. Quarter-time       | 16 credits |
| b. Half-time          | 12 credits |
| c. Three-quarter time | 8 credits  |

**NOTE:** Minimum total may exclude CAS 999 credits.

5. **Registration Standards**

No deviation from minimum registration is allowed except in summer sessions, when students must register for a minimum of three credits. Graduate assistants must be enrolled in graduate level courses unless the guidance committee and program Unit Coordinator has granted written permission otherwise. Visitor credits do not count toward the minimum. Any deviation from the maximum credit load rule must have the approval of the guidance committee chairperson, program Unit Coordinator, and dean of the college prior to registration for the semester in which additional hours are to be taken.

6. **Term of Appointment and Leave**

Teaching and research assistants are expected to report for duty one week prior to the beginning of classes and to remain on duty until the day after final grades are submitted each semester. Sick leave requires documentation from a licensed physician and assistants are responsible for arranging, in advance, with their faculty supervisors for the completion of their duties while on sick leave. Permission for late arrival or early departure or for temporary leave (such as to attend a professional conference) must be obtained in writing, in advance, from the student's faculty supervisor who will forward the request to the Chair of the home unit for approval.

Graduate teaching assistants (TAs) should refer to the medical leave policies in GEU contract Article 18 and other graduate assistants refer to [Academic Programs](#).

[RA Adoption and Parental Leave Policy](#)

MSU TAs, faculty and staff are eligible for adoption and parental leave, in addition to pregnancy and illness leave. RAs did not have a similar provision in place.

7. **Jury Duty**

An employee who loses time from work during his/her normal schedule of work because of jury duty or is called to testify pursuant to a court-issued subpoena provided the employee is not a party to the legal action or the subpoena does not require the employee to testify against the University, shall be paid for such time lost at his/her base rate of pay. Jury duty fees shall be offset against such pay as follows:

- a. Employee serving on jury duty, who are absent from work for two weeks or less, will receive their regular pay and will not be required to submit proof of jury duty payment to the University. They must, however, still submit proof of jury duty service to their supervisor.
- b. Employees serving on jury duty who are absent from work for more than two weeks will be required to submit proof of jury duty payment to their supervisor to facilitate the offset and adjustment of

their regular, straight-time base pay by jury duty payments or witness fees received from the court.

The employee will report for available work as soon as reasonable following release from jury duty but no later than the start of the next workday.

#### 8. Grief Absence Policy

It is the responsibility of the student to:

- a. Notify their advisor/major professor and faculty of the courses in which they are enrolled 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.
- c. Complete all missed work as determined in consultation with the advisor/major professor and faculty.

It is the responsibility of 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.
- c. Make reasonable accommodations so that the student is not penalized due to a verified grief absence.

If employed as an RA or TE, 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 GEU contract Article 18.

#### 9. Outside Work

Outside work for pay is permitted as long as it does not interfere with the student's regularly assigned assistantship duties or academic progress.

#### 10. Facilities

Teaching and research assistants will have shared office spaces and access to telephones in placing and receiving local calls. Mailboxes are provided by the home unit. All students are required to have their own computers. Students are expected to furnish their own office supplies and reimburse their unit for photocopying, except as directly related to their teaching or research responsibilities.

#### 11. English Language Testing: MSU Policy Affecting International Teaching Assistants (ITAs)

MSU candidates for TA appointments who were required to demonstrate English proficiency as a condition for regular admission to Michigan State University must also demonstrate that they meet a minimum standard of proficiency in spoken English before they can be assigned teaching work that involves oral communication with undergraduate students. Those ITAs who received a waiver of the TOEFL or of other accepted tests of English proficiency for admission, must also meet the requirement of proficiency in spoken English before they are assigned to teaching work that involves oral communication with undergraduate students. To meet this requirement, those ITAs may use **any** of three options listed below:

1. Presenting a TOEFL iBT speaking section score of 27 or higher.
2. Receiving a score of 50 or higher on the [MSU Speaking Test](#)
3. Taking [AAE 451 or AAE 452](#) (ITA language support courses) and receiving a score of 50 or higher on the [ITA Oral Interaction Test \(ITAOI\)](#)

Individual exceptions from these requirements (on a case-by-case basis in rare circumstances) will be considered by the Graduate School in consultation with the ELC upon the request of the department and with the endorsement of the Associate Dean of the College.

## C. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

### 1. Background

Michigan State University (MSU) College Communication Arts and Sciences (CAS) strives to foster a research environment of ethical and responsible research conduct. CAS discourages research misconduct and responds promptly to allegations or evidence of possible research misconduct. This document outlines the CAS policy on training and regulation of integrity in research and publication.

The Federal and Michigan State University Offices of Research Integrity outline procedures to help ensure the quality and integrity in research. These bodies recommend a combination of self-regulation, adherence to individual and professional standards, and reference to research traditions and best practices that characterize academic research institutions.

### 2. Purpose

This policy is to establish a plan for complying with Section 7009 of the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science (COMPETES) as implemented by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the NIH Responsible Conduct of Research Notice (NOT-OD-10-019), to provide training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral researchers supported by

NSF and NIH funding to conduct research and research-related activities. This policy also extends to all individuals from CAS who engage in any type of research activity.

Responsible Conduct of Research is defined as conducting research in ways that fulfill the professional responsibilities of researchers, as those

responsibilities are defined by their professional organizations, Michigan State University (MSU) and, when relevant, governmental and other entities that support and regulate research. Research integrity is defined as the quality of possessing and steadfastly adhering to high professional principles, standards, and obligations, as prescribed by professional organizations, MSU, and, when relevant, governmental and other entities that support and regulate research. Research Ethics is defined as the critical study of the moral problems associated with, or that arise in the course of, pursuing research.

### 3. Applicability

This policy applies to the following individuals, henceforth referred to as “Researchers”:

- a. Graduate and postdoctoral students - now considered a requirement for graduation.
- b. Undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers supported by NSF funding to conduct research and research-related activities.
- c. Scholars receiving NIH Institutional Research Training Grants, Individual Fellowship Awards, Career Development Awards (Institutional and Individual), Research Education Grants, Dissertation Research Grants, or other grant programs with a training component.

### 4. Procedure

Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research is essential in the preparation of future scholars and professionals. An understanding of the issues concerning the conduct of research in an increasingly complex world has become critical in successfully navigating the research landscape.

In the first year, all new graduate and graduate professional students will complete 4 CITI online modules within the first year of enrollment in their program: Completion of this requirement will be tracked in SABA.

- a. Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research
- b. Authorship
- c. Plagiarism
- d. Research Misconduct

### 5. Discussion-Based Training

#### Enrollment Prior to 2020

All graduate and graduate professional students must complete a minimum of 6 hours of discussion-based training prior to receiving their degrees. These hours can be completed at any point in the graduate program, including during the first 2 years (e.g., as part of a course), or as part of the ongoing training requirement (for doctoral students). Specifics about the number of hours required, the content, and the timing of this training will be defined in the individual department/program or college plan.

Applicable parties are required to complete 6 hours of training the first year and will be responsible for documenting the completion of their training using the SABA System.

#### Enrollment 2020 and Beyond

The 6 discussion-based training hours must be completed **prior** to becoming a PhD candidate, i.e., before passing your comprehensive examination.

### 6. Tracking

For researchers funded by grants, the Principal Investigator (PI) is responsible for encouraging attendance and documenting and confirming researcher compliance with this policy. The CAS Office for Research will facilitate collection of compliance information. Researchers will earn a certificate of completion after attending each Research Integrity Workshop. Authorized copies of these will be retained in the grant file as evidence of compliance.

This policy, which matches the NSF requirements, takes effect 1/1/2013. It revises the prior CAS policy that required 8 hours of training in the first 12 months to 6 hours of training. This new policy also limits the number of training options from what was contained in the prior policy.

**NOTE:** All documented training that began prior to 1/1/2013 will be grandfathered in for compliance purposes.

### 7. Initial Training

The initial 6 hours of training will consist of the requirements listed below:

- a. CITI Modules Year 1
  - Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research
  - Authorship
  - Plagiarism
  - Research Misconduct
- b. 6 hours discussion-based training (by completion of the degree)
- c. CITI Modules Year 2
  - Complete 3 additional from specific list
- d. Year 3 and forward
  - 3 Hours of annual refresher training

**Tracking:** Tracking for the initial training will be handled as indicated above under “Procedure”.

### 8. Refresher Training

The refresher training (minimum of 3 hours annually after the initial 6-hour training requirement after the first year) can consist of any of the following:

- a. CAS Research Integrity workshops
- b. Completion of on-line courses sponsored by [Epigeum](#) which address research integrity from the perspective of individuals in Natural & Physical Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, Social & Behavioral Sciences, Arts & Humanities, and Engineering & Technology. Individuals can

register for and access these courses at no cost through their Desire2Learn (D2L) account.

- c. Log on to [Desire2Learn \(D2L\)](#) and click on D2L under the MSU Links column. Find a Group under My D2L Groups. Enter Research and Scholarly Integrity in the search field and click on Search. Research and Scholarly Integrity should appear on the search result. Click Enroll by PIN. On the pop-up window, enter the PIN SPARTY. Click Subscribe. Return to the D2L homepage, the group Research and Scholarly Integrity will be listed under your D2L Groups (instructions).

**Tracking:** Tracking for the initial training will be handled as indicated above under “Procedure”.

#### 9. Overall, what do I need to do?

1. Participate in five hours of training, as indicated in this document, within my first year of employment or first year as a graduate/postdoctoral student.
2. Maintain three hours of training each year after the initial training
3. Make sure I have signatures from my PI or my major professor
4. Make sure the training is recorded in SABA and in GradPlan

#### 10. Policy Violations

Researchers who are employed by Michigan State University on grants covered by this policy who do not demonstrate compliance within their first 12 months are subject to termination from the federal funded project.

#### 11. Endnotes

- a. **Location of the Graduate School**, Chittenden Hall, 466 West Circle Drive, East Lansing, MI 48824-1044
- b. **Summer Only Option:** This option is only for Ph.D. students after passing comps and being appointed as an RA. This summer appointment option does not cover tuition.
- c. **Mandatory Training:** All TAs and RAs must complete the on-line training about the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy. To access the training, login to the ORA training website. Click “Register,” “Complete Registration” and then “Launch” to begin the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct (RVSM) Policy - Faculty, Staff Training. (If it indicates that you have already registered, use “In Progress Training”, then “Launch.”). You will want to reserve approximately 30 minutes to complete all assignments. If you need assistance, contact the Helpdesk at (517) 884-4600 or [train@ora.msu.edu](mailto:train@ora.msu.edu).
- d. **GradPlan:** All Ph.D. students are required to use GradPlan. GradPlan is the only way to process final degree certification.
- e. **Graduate Assistantships:** Level 3 status is granted after 5 semesters in your program.

## 11. University Resources

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### Graduate School Resources

- [Diversity, equity, & inclusion programs](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Forms](#)
- [Funding](#)
- [GradPlan](#)
- [Graduate life & wellness](#)
- [Mentoring](#)
- [Policy information](#)
- [Professional development](#)
- [Research](#)
- [Research integrity](#)
- [Teaching](#)
- [Theses and Dissertation](#)
- [Traveling scholar opportunities](#)
- [University Committee on Graduate Studies](#)

### University Resources

- [Burgess Institute for Entrepreneurship & Innovation](#)
- [DEI Training](#)
- [Facilities and Housing](#)
- [Inclusion & Intercultural Initiatives](#)
- [MSU Center for Statistical Training and Consulting](#)
- [MSU Culinary Services](#)
- [MSU Libraries](#)
- [MSU Writing Center](#)
- [OISS](#)
- [Olin Health Center](#)
- [RCPD](#)
- [RVSM, SARV, Bystander](#)
- [Student Affairs](#)
- [Support Services](#)
- [University Outreach & Engagement](#)

### College and Department Resources

- [Centers and Labs](#)
- [College of Communication Arts and Sciences](#)
- [Program Forms](#)
- [Information and Media Ph.D. Program](#)
- [Information and Media Faculty](#)
- [Information and Media Students](#)
- [Program Forms](#)
- [Responsible Conduct of Research \(RCR\)](#)
- [Thematic Research Areas](#)