

# Master Degrees Graduate Student Handbook

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

## Forward

It is not expected that all answers will be found in this text. Unforeseen questions will arise and answers will be needed. Students should begin addressing their questions to the Associate Director or assigned major professor. In most cases, the student's major professor, the Associate Director or the Graduate Secretary will be able to provide the required information. Complex issues may require the advice and action by the SPDC Direct and faculty.

Students have the option of following degree requirements set forth in the School of Planning, Design and Construction which are in effect during their first semester of enrollment or degree requirements which are published subsequent to their enrollment.

*Updates and corrections to this handbook will be posted on the School of Planning, Design and Construction website, [School of Planning, Design and Construction Home Page](#). (This information is important in reading this document.)*

## General Graduate Program Requirements

### Introduction to SPDC

The School of Planning, Design and Construction (SPDC), jointly administered by the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the College of Social Science, is composed of four major disciplines:

- Construction Management,
- Interior Design,
- Landscape Architecture, and
- Urban & Regional Planning.

Through the College of Agricultural and Natural Resources the School offers graduate programs leading to:

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

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

- Masters in Urban & Regional Planning.

The graduate student population of the School is characterized by diversity. There is a substantial representation of domestic and international students from a variety of countries in Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Many students, both domestic and international, have completed undergraduate degrees in construction management, interior design, landscape architecture, and urban planning or degrees in related disciplines such as architecture, engineering, social science, business, and environmental design fields. Students from natural science degrees, along with professional degrees in law, medicine, and other fields are encouraged to apply.

Graduates of the School of Planning, Design and Construction are sought by employers domestically and internationally. Graduates with advanced degrees are more likely to select education, research, or management positions than those with bachelor degrees, and less likely to be placed in entry-level positions.

Facilities for advanced study and research are located on the top three floors of the Human Ecology Building, which is immediately east of the MSU Student Union. These facilities include multiple studio and computer laboratories, state of the art lecture halls, faculty offices, workrooms, and dedicated graduate student research

and office space. Galleries for temporary displays and critique-presentations are located on two floors of the building.

*Please note: SPDC is no longer admitting students for the Master of Arts in Interior Design Facilities Management. To earn a master's degree under the guidance of Interior Design faculty, students are encouraged to apply to the Master of Arts in Environmental Design. Current students in the Master of Arts in Interior Design Facilities Management may complete their degree in Interior Design and Facilities Management. (This information is important in reading this document.)*

## Completing Application

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

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

### Prospective students

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

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

- Fall Semester Admission – February 15.

- Spring Semester Admission – August 15.

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

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

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

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

### Applicants from Chinese Universities

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

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

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

### Applicants interested in applying for 2 Graduate Programs

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

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

## Master Degree Components and options

All graduate students engage in a combination of formal coursework as well as independent efforts that result in a thesis, Plan B paper, or final examination. SPDC graduate degree programs are structured around the following components:

- Core courses,
- Elective courses, and

- Research component, Plan A (Thesis) or Plan B (Non-Thesis).

## Plan A

Students are required to prepare a thesis. The thesis, based on original research, is designed to demonstrate the student's familiarity with the tools of research and scholarship in the field, the ability to work independently, and the ability to present and defend the results of a significant research effort. The thesis must be acceptable to and approved by the student's guidance committee and the candidate must pass an oral thesis defense. The quality of the thesis is expected to be comparable to journal publications in the student's area of study.

## Plan B

There are two options:

### **Option one**

Complete a Plan B paper designed to demonstrate the student's familiarity with the tools of research and scholarship in the field, and the ability to present and defend the results of a minor scholarly effort. The Plan B paper must be acceptable to and approved by the student's Plan B guidance committee and the candidate must pass an oral defense. The quality of the paper is expected to be comparable to conference presentations in the student's area of study.

### **Option two**

Under Plan B is to take a set of approved courses plus a final examination. Options for Plan B differ by degree and not every degree offers both options.

*Specific degree requirements for each major are defined in the Program Overview area of this handbook. (This information is important in reading this document.)*

## Transfer Courses

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

## Credit Sharing Policy

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

## Independent Study

At Michigan State University an independent study is a planned study that is highly individualized and not addressable through any other course format. In essence, a student must design a full course for him/herself with the help of a faculty member.

Students electing to undertake an independent study must select a faculty member to supervise the project. After the faculty member agrees to supervise the study, the student must submit an, [Application for Independent Study](#) to the faculty member/instructor for the study. After the instructor's approval, the application must be signed by the major professor or the Associate Director and then submitted to the Graduate Secretary. When the application is completed and approved, an override will be issued and the student must register for the appropriate course for the number of credits agreed upon.

The independent study must:

- Consist of work not described in the MSU Description of courses book in any other format;
- Relate to a subject for which the student has adequate preparation;

- Be directed by a faculty member with whom there is periodic contact and consultation throughout the study;
- Not exceed a maximum of four credits of independent study per semester or eight semester credits in a single academic year, subject to School, College and Graduate School restrictions;
- Be applied for on the Application for Independent Study form;
- Be approved by the instructor and the School before the student enrolls for the course; and
- Be enrolled during the regular enrollment period.

Ideally a student should begin designing the independent study course with the prospective faculty member one semester before registering for the course.

### Study Abroad/Travel Abroad

Study abroad programs are designed to be of benefit to students of all disciplines. In some SPDC programs students can fulfill certain course requirements with study abroad credits; this fosters completion of the degree program while gaining valuable, overseas experience. SPDC offers a variety of study abroad options.

For additional information contact:

Office of Study Abroad  
 Michigan State University  
 International Center  
 427 N. Shaw Lane, Room 109  
 East Lansing, MI 48824-1035  
 Phone: (517) 353-8920  
[Study Abroad Home Page](#)

## General Requirements

All on-campus graduate students are expected to attend the School of Planning, Design and Construction fall semester orientation. The orientation program includes an overview of the graduate degrees and of School policies and procedures. The major goal is to familiarize students with the School and provide an opportunity for them to meet their fellow graduate students. During orientation students will be introduced to the School's graduate faculty. An overview of faculty research interests and activities, as well as any special research opportunities that currently exist, will be presented. The orientation session helps students plan their courses and identify potential members of their guidance committee.

*For all degree programs it is strongly suggested that graduate students map out their coursework and requirements early as many courses are taught only one semester per year and others may have prerequisites. Within the first academic year graduate students must file an Academic Program of Study, signed by their major professor or academic advisor with the Graduate Secretary. Once submitted, changes to the Academic Program of Study must be approved by the student's guidance committee. Students in degrees administered by the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources must also have approval of the Dean. (This information is important in reading this document.)*

### Selection of Major Professor

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

### Formation of Guidance Committee

A guidance committee is selected by the student with advice from the major professor or graduate academic advisor. Members of the committee act as mentors, advisors, and evaluators for the student's program and research. They approve the Academic Program of Study and the thesis or final examination. In the rare case when

the student needs to change his or her Guidance Committee, a written request must be addressed to the Associate Director explaining the reason for the change. All committee members are regular faculty of MSU or specialists that have been approved by The Graduate School to serve on guidance committees.

### Academic Performance

Students will receive a written evaluation of their academic progress, performance, and professional potential at least once an academic year. This evaluation will assist students to define their strength and weaknesses so that the student can work on improvement of weaker performance areas (refer to Graduate Students' Rights and Responsibilities.)

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

### Plan A Thesis Proposal

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

### Plan A Final Oral Examination

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

- The student must be enrolled during the semester in which the exam is taken.
- The student must provide each of the guidance committee members a copy of the *thesis two weeks prior to the exam. (This information is important in reading this document.)*
- The student must schedule a time for the exam and a conference room and notify the Graduate Secretary of the exam date, time and location, at least two weeks prior to the exam so that an announcement may be posted to the public.

### Plan A Submission of Thesis

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

## Plan B Thesis Proposal, Defense and Final Examination

### Plan B Thesis Proposal

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

### Plan B Final Examination, Non-Paper Option

Under this option students must complete a final examination or evaluation. The examination or evaluation is administered by a committee appointed by the School of Planning, Design and Construction. In order to pass the exam, the student must receive a positive vote from the majority of the committee members.

### Plan B Submission of Examination, Paper Option

A Plan B Paper must be submitted and defended in a Final Oral Examination administered by the student's guidance committee. In order to pass the exam, the student must receive a positive vote from the major professor and all but one of the guidance committee members.

### Plan B Submission of Report

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

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

The policy for embargos of thesis and dissertations has been changed, but continues to be restricted to requests involving potential patents. What is different is that the period of the embargo is restricted to six months and the holding of the document is now done by ProQuest after the electronic thesis/dissertation is submitted after the approval of the Graduate School. The Graduate School now permits the submission of supplementary materials to ProQuest. These supplemental materials will not be reviewed by the Graduate School for formatting requirements, but they must be acceptable by ProQuest and comply with ProQuest's criteria and storage limits. All supplementary materials need the written approval of the thesis committee chair.

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

### Certification for Graduation

In order to be certified to graduate, students must verify their graduation status with the SPDC Associate Director. Student will follow with applying for graduation with the Office of The Registrar by completing the [Application for Graduation Form](#). If the student does not graduate during the intended semester, a new application must be submitted for the semester of intended graduation. Following is detailed information on the [Final steps to complete Graduate Degree](#).

### Commencement Ceremony

The Graduate Advanced Degree Ceremonies will be on Friday of Finals week: 3:30 PM in the Breslin Center. Graduates and faculty should arrive one hour early to put on gowns and be properly ordered for the procession. Students who will be December graduates will participate in the December ceremony. Students who will graduate in Spring or Summer semesters will participate in the ceremony held at the end of Spring semester. To be listed in the Ceremony Program students who will graduate in Fall, should apply for graduation at the beginning of September and Spring/ Summer graduates should apply in January.



# Student Responsibilities and Expectations

It is the responsibility of ALL graduate students to:

- Learn and adhere to University and academic unit rules, procedures and policies, including those outlined in this Graduate Handbook, in Academic Programs, Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities, and Academic Freedom for Students at MSU. These publications are available on the [Graduate School Website](#).
- Select a major professor and form a Guidance Committee that meets University and School requirements, keep the members of their Committee informed regarding their academic progress.
- After consultation with the major professor or Associate Director, complete and file the Academic Progress Report/Annual Evaluation form each spring semester. The form is available at, [Graduate School Annual Evaluation Forms](#).
- Follow disciplinary and scholarly codes of ethics in course work, research, and professional activities found on the [Student Rights and Responsibilities page on the Spartan Life OnLine website](#).
- Follow high ethical standards in accordance with University and federal guidelines in collecting and maintaining data, including seeking regulatory approval for research before any research project begins.
- Provide the School with copies of research-related documents (such as permits, approvals, grant proposals, research proposals) within the prescribed deadlines.

## Academic Standards

### Grades

The student must earn a grade of 2.0 or higher in each course in the approved Academic Program of Study. Any course in the approved Academic Program of Study for which the grade earned falls below 2.0 must be repeated. In addition, students in degree programs administered by the College of Social Science shall not have more than two 3-credit courses with grades below 3.0.

### Cumulative Grade-Point Average

The student must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.0 in the courses listed in the approved Academic Program of Study.

### Annual Evaluation

Graduate students receive a periodic evaluation of their academic progress, performance, and professional potential. The major professor will meet with the graduate student at least once a year during spring semester to review the graduate student's progress concerning his or her research or creative activity as well as plans for work in the coming year (GSRR 2.4.8). A letter/written report on the results of this review will be signed by the Major Professor and Guidance Committee. This report will be filed with the major professor and a copy filed in the student's academic file together with any response the student may have to the report of the guidance committee.

### Probation Status

A student is placed on probation status if the student's cumulative grade-point average for the courses on the Academic Program of Study is below 3.0. Should a student's cumulative grade-point average fall below 3.0 after having completed half of the courses in the Academic Program of Study, the student may be enrolled in probational status in the master's degree for one additional semester. If at the end of the additional semester the student's cumulative grade-point average is 3.0 or higher, the student may continue to enroll in the master's degree program. If at the end of the additional semester, the student's cumulative grade-point average is still below 3.0, the student will be dismissed from the School.

All students must meet the academic criteria set by the School of Planning, Design and Construction. In addition to meeting the grade criteria required by the School, an annual evaluation of each graduate student is prepared

during the spring semester. The major professor is responsible for the preparation of the evaluation for the program and its communication to the student.

The following outline is used for the evaluation:

- Academic Ability:
  - Individual grads and grade-point average.
  - Progress on special problem topics, thesis or dissertation.
- Analytical Ability:
  - Student's initiative in the choice of a research topic.
  - Student's initiative in the analysis of a research topic.
  - Student's performance in the execution of research.
- Communication:
  - Student's ability in oral communication.
  - Student's ability in written communication.

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

A student is placed on probation if the student's cumulative grade-point average for the courses in the approved academic program of study is below 3.0.

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

Should a student's cumulative grade-point average fall below 3.0 after having completed 16 or more credits in courses in the approved academic program of study, the student will be placed on probationary status in the master's degree program for one additional semester. If at the end of the additional semester the student's cumulative grade-point average is 3.0 or higher, the student will be placed on full graduate status for the master's degree program. If at the end of the additional semester the student's cumulative grade-point average is still below a 3.0, the student will be dismissed from the program. In addition, for degrees offered through the College of Social Science the accumulation of grades below 3.0 (including N grades in the P–N grading system) in more than two courses of three or more credits each removes the student from the degree program; this policy does not apply to courses below the 400 level unless the courses are required for the student's academic program.

### **Grief Absence Policy**

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

MSU GEU CBU Article 18. Students who believe their rights under this policy have been violated should contact the University Ombudsperson.

### Course Waiver

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

## Academic Records

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

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

## Time Limit to Complete Degree

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

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

- Five years for students in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources,
- Six years for programs in the College of Social Science, and
- Applications for extensions of periods of time toward the degree must be submitted by the School for approval by the Dean of the College and the Dean of The Graduate School.

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

## Polices Regarding Integrity and Safety in Research

### Integrity in Research and Creative Activities

The conduct of research and creative activities by faculty, staff, and students is central to the mission of Michigan State University "Mission Statement" approved by the Board of Trustees on April 18, 2008, [MSU Mission Statement on the Office of the President website](#) and is an institutional priority. Faculty, staff, and students work in a rich and competitive environment for the common purpose of learning, creating new knowledge, and disseminating information and ideas for the benefit of their peers and the general public. The stature and reputation of MSU as a research university are based on the commitment of its faculty, staff, and students to excellence in scholarly and creative activities and to the highest standards of professional integrity. As a partner in scholarly endeavors, MSU is committed to creating an environment that promotes ethical conduct and integrity in research and creative activities.

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

Breaches in professional ethics range from questionable research practices to misconduct (MSU Faculty Handbook, Chapter VI, “Research and Creative Endeavor—Procedures Concerning Allegations of Misconduct in Research and Creative Activities”). The primary responsibility for adhering to professional standards lies with the individual scholar. It is, however, also the responsibility of advisors and of the disciplinary community at large. Passive acceptance of improper practices lowers inhibitions to violate professional ethics. Students should also refer to MSU Graduate School’s “Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities.” Integrity in research and creative activities is based not only on sound disciplinary practice but also on a commitment to basic personal values such as fairness, equity, honesty, and respect. These guidelines are intended to promote high professional standards by everyone—faculty, staff, and students alike.

### Key Principles

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

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

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

## Office of Radiation, Chemical and Biological Safety (ORCBS)

The use of hazardous materials in research, teaching, and outreach activities is subject to state and federal laws and guidelines. The Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies has been assigned responsibility to see that appropriate practices are followed where hazardous materials are involved, to maintain a safe environment for campus personnel, to protect the surrounding community, and to assure the MSU meets its obligations under the law.

Oversight of activities involving hazardous substances is provided by the ORCBS. ORCBS is assisted by faculty committees in the area of radiation safety, chemical safety, and biological safety. The Radiation Safety Committee has responsibility and authority under federal law for specific actions.

The ORCBS provides live and online training classes throughout the year to educate the employees and students of Michigan State University on safe work practices. Completion of these courses by MSU personnel ensures that the university is fulfilling local, state and federal regulations in radiation, chemical, biological, hazardous waste, and environmental safety. For more information about courses contact the ORCBS at (517) 355-0153.

## Human Subjects Research

A student whose research involves human subjects must receive approval for their project from the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) prior to initiating data collection for their master’s thesis, pre-dissertation research, or doctoral dissertation. HRPP is an Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Federal and University

regulations require that all research projects involving human subjects be reviewed and approved by an IRB before initiation. Under the regulations, research is defined as a formal investigation designed to develop or contribute to general knowledge. A human subject of research is an individual (1) from whom an investigator obtains data by interaction or intervention or (2) about whom the researcher obtains confidential information.

Depending upon the level of risk to subjects in the protocol, HRPP assigns the student's application to one of three review categories (exempt from full review, expedited review, and full review) and sends it to one, two or five reviewers, respectively. If the reviewer(s) is satisfied that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are adequately protected, he or she approves it. However, if the reviewer has concerns, the reviewer returns written comments to the HRPP office for transmission to the investigator. The investigator must then send a response to each comment, in writing, to HRPP which will forward it to the reviewer(s). If the proposal is either an exempt or expedited proposal, an approval letter can be issued as soon as the reviewer(s) approves. When a proposal receives full (five-member sub-committee) review, an approval letter is issued after the proposal is discussed and approved by vote of the full committee at its monthly meeting. More information can be found at, [MSU Human Research Home Page](#).

Copies of the HRPP application form and the official notification of HRPP approval must be kept in the student's academic file maintained by the School's Graduate Secretary and in the files maintained by the student's major professor. The student also should keep copies in his/her own personal files. Failure to satisfy the University standards and HRPP regulations is considered grounds for dismissal from the program. A copy of the approval must be included as an appendix in the thesis or dissertation.

## Michigan State University Guidelines on Authorship

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

### Authorship

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

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

Note: These criteria follow closely those recommended by several professional associations. See especially the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, *Annals of Internal Medicine* 1988; 108: 258-65.)

### Acknowledgment

Contributions that do not justify authorship should be acknowledged separately in the notes to the manuscript. These may include general supervision of a research group, assistance in obtaining funding, or technical support.

### "Honorary Authorship"

A claim of authorship by, or assignment of authorship to, persons who may have been associated in some way with a study but do not meet the four criteria in item 1 may constitute an unethical research practice.

### Graduate Student Authorship

"Faculty should be especially aware of their responsibility to safeguard the rights of graduate students to publish the results of their research." (MSU Research Handbook, 1985, p. 16, section 4.3.1.)

## Senior Author and Order of Authorship

The senior author is generally defined as the person who leads a study and makes a major contribution to the work. All the authors at the outset of a project should establish senior authorship, preferably in a written memorandum of understanding. This memorandum of understanding should reference the authors' agreement to abide by their departments' policy on authorship or this University default policy on authorship. At the outset of the study the Senior Author should discuss the outline of work and a tentative Order of Authorship with the study participants. As projects proceed, agreements regarding authorship may need to be changed. It is the responsibility of the senior author to assure that the contributions of study participants are properly recognized.

## Disputes over Authorship

Disagreements over authorship, e.g. who has a right to be an author or the order of authorship, should be resolved by the Senior Author in collegial consultation with the other authors. When this process cannot reach resolution, the Senior Author should arrange with his or her chairperson for arbitration by a knowledgeable and disinterested third party acceptable to all the authors. If the authors cannot agree on a mutually acceptable arbitrator, then the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies shall appoint an arbitrator. During the arbitration process all the authors are expected to refrain from unilateral actions that may damage the authorship interests and rights of the other authors.

## Accountability

Every author listed on a publication is presumed to have approved the final version of the manuscript. Each author is responsible for the integrity of the research being reported.

## Plagiarism

The word plagiarism is derived from the Latin plagiarist, an abductor, and plagiary, to steal. The expropriation of another author's text, and the presentation of it as one's own, constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism, in turn, constitutes misconduct in scholarship under University policies and procedures. Plagiarism in scholarly projects should be reported to one's chairperson, dean, or the University Intellectual Integrity Officer (American Historical Association, Statements on Standards, 1993, p. 13).

## Distribution

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

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

# Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution

## Student Conduct

The University expects student conduct and behavior to reflect qualities of good citizenship. The out-of-classroom activities of Michigan State University students should reflect favorably upon the institution and should indicate the personal integrity of the individual. See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide for specific policies, ordinances and regulations that define some of the relevant University expectations. Students planning to use the Human Ecology Building after normal building hours must sign a Code of Conduct agreement available at the SPDC School Office, Room 101 Human Ecology.

## Conflict Resolution

Conflicts involving a graduate student may be handled informally, or at the request of a party or parties, formally. Student's rights and responsibilities, including grievance procedures, are detailed in the document: Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University. Procedures more specifically designed for graduate students are to be found in the publication Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities available in the Graduate School Office Room 118 Linton Hall. It can also be downloaded at [Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities on the Graduate School website](#).

Grievance procedures outlined in these documents shall be followed and the College Advisory Council shall be responsible for the interpretation and execution of these procedures in the College. Students also have access to the University Ombudsman for help with conflict resolution. A template and additional information on grievance procedures and resources available to students may be found at, [How to File a Request for an Academic Grievance Hearing from the MSU Office of the University Ombudsperson website](#).

## Assistantship Polices

### Selection of Graduate Assistants and Teaching Assistants

Graduate Assistants and Teaching Assistants are appointed on a quarter-time, half-time, or three-quarter-time basis for 18-19 weeks each (depending on number of University holidays) for Fall and Spring semesters and 12-13 weeks (depending on number of University holidays) for Summer semester. Graduate assistants are selected based on students' qualifications, background, and research or teaching needs of faculty and the School. Faculty members review application folders and make recommendations to the School's Director/Associate Director who makes the final appointment.

### Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantship support for students is determined on an individual basis depending upon recommendations, availability of funds, fellowship and scholarship support, and academic record. Assistantships are reviewed annually by the Associate Director of the School and may be renewed if satisfactory progress is being made and funds are available. Graduate assistantship support will be limited to two years for Master students, and four years for Ph.D. students. To request an extension of assistantship support, students may petition the Director/Associate Director of the School with an accompanying letter from the major professor.

*If you have an assistantship, you are required to enroll for a minimum of six credits at the Master's level and three credits at the Ph.D. level during Fall and Spring semesters and three credits in Summer semester for both Master's and Ph.D. degrees. At the Ph.D. level, once you complete your comprehensive exams, the following semesters you need to only be enrolled for a minimum of one credit. (This information is important in reading this document.)*

### Expectations

#### **Teaching Assistants**

Teaching Assistants (TAs) play a vital role in the educational mission of MSU. Disciplinary knowledge and instructional skills are key requisites for being a successful teacher, but teaching assistants are also expected to conform to ethical and professional standards described in the MSU Code of Teaching Responsibility. TAs must treat students with respect, deal with conflict fairly and promote a classroom atmosphere that encourages free and meaningful exchange of ideas.

#### **Research Assistants**

Research Assistants (RAs) at Michigan State University play a vital role in the research and outreach missions of MSU. Disciplinary knowledge and research/laboratory skills are key requisites for conducting research, but research assistants are also expected to conform to ethical and professional standards described in the MSU Faculty Handbook Section IV: Research and Creative Endeavors. This section includes information on working with

animal and human subjects, radiation, chemical, and biological safety, and adherence to federal guidelines on data generation, management and control. Sections of the Academic Freedom Report for MSU Students and the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities document also contain valuable information.

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

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

## **Responsibilities**

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

## **Appointed Levels**

### **Level I**

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

### **Level II**

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

### **Level III**

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

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

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

## **Evaluation**

Graduate teaching assistants (TAs) are evaluated at the end of each semester by the faculty on record for the course to which the TA has been assigned. Graduate research assistants (RAs) are evaluated by the faculty member who hires the graduate student. Graduate assistants are given specific assignments by their faculty supervisor for



the semester for which the student is being funded. The faculty supervisor evaluates the student's performance based on assignments given at the beginning of the semester.

### Termination

Graduate Assistants can be terminated if:

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

### Periods of Employment

Graduate assistants Employment are as follows:

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

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

### Health Coverage

Michigan State University offers graduate assistants health insurance coverage. 'Student only' coverage is automatically provided at no cost to graduate assistants. Michigan State University will provide a full twelve-month coverage for assistantship appointments of at least nine months. Students may also enroll a legal spouse, or other eligible individual (OEI), and/or children. Questions regarding enrollment, premium payment and coverage should be directed to the Aetna Student Health, (800) 859-8452. Questions or issues that cannot be resolved with Aetna Student Health may be directed to the MSU Benefits office at 1407 South Harrison Road, Room 140 Nisbet Building, (517) 353-4434 extension 170 or extension 144.

### Right to Work

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

### Leave Time

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

## **Additional Opportunities**

### Internships

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

program. Students enrolled in the Masters in Construction Management, and the Masters in Environmental Design may not use an internship for academic credit.

### **Online Workshops about Teaching**

Both faculty and graduate students can access nine online modules on improving your classroom teaching. The Graduate School purchased access for 3 years from Epigeum, [a Spin-off company from Imperial College of London](#). These are high-quality interactive modules on a variety of topics related to teaching and learning. For more information and to access the modules visit: [Teaching Assistant Program through The Graduate School website](#).

## **General Information and Recommendations**

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

# Master of Arts in Environmental Design: An Interdepartmental Graduate Program in Environmental Design

## Program Overview

The purpose of the Master of Arts in Environmental Design is to train prospective or practicing professionals to address the complex interdisciplinary nature of environmental design. Students will develop a highly individualized plan of study with a focus in design areas such as: design process, historic preservation and conservation, environment and behavior, design communication media, lighting, healthcare design, universal design, culture and design, golf course architecture, landscape reclamation, visual quality modeling, landscape restoration, interiorscapes, wellness/therapeutic garden design, landscape development systems, plant management systems, adaptive reuse facilities for tourism and recreation, site design safety, park and tourism development, design with ecological systems, green roof design and sustainable design.

## The Master of Arts in Environmental Design (MED) Addresses Four Areas of Professional Development:

- Review the Thesis and Dissertation ELECTRONIC Submission page from [The Graduate School website](#). It should be formatted in the same manner as the Plan A Thesis.
- Acquisition of in-depth knowledge in the area of environmental design theory.
- Development of problem solving skills within an interdisciplinary professional context.
- Development of technological expertise and knowledge base in a selected area of environmental design.
- Advanced ability in graphic, written, and oral communications skills.

The program is planned to provide an alternative to traditional professional degrees by addressing the needs of students with undergraduate design backgrounds who wish to work in an interdisciplinary setting while pursuing an area of individual interest.

## Program Components/Plan Options

Students in MED must carefully consider choosing a Plan A or Plan B option for their academic program of study.

### Plan A

The purpose of the Plan A thesis is to facilitate student endeavors related to environmental design science, conducting a research investigation, and publishing results. Plan A also prepares the student for pursuing a PhD.

Plan A students must complete a minimum of 6 credits of Master's Thesis Research (899) in one of the following departments/programs:

- Horticulture;
- Interior Design;

- Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resources Studies; and
- Landscape Architecture.

They must also:

- Complete a written thesis, and
- Pass an oral examination in the form of a presentation open to the public with a question and answer period, which will be administered by the student's guidance committee.

### Plan B

Students in Plan B complete a Master's Practicum (898) which allows the student to explore, through planning and design, the creation and practical application of precedents, normative theories processes, technology, ordinances, philosophies, and related ideas. Such studies facilitate specialization in a planning and design topic and prepare the student with a professional area of expertise.

Plan B students must complete a minimum of 6 credits of Master's Thesis Practicum (898) in one of the following departments/programs:

- Horticulture;
- Interior Design;
- Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resources Studies; and
- Landscape Architecture.

They must also:

- Complete a final report, and
- Pass an oral examination in the form of a presentation open to the public with a question and answer period, which will be administered by the student's guidance committee.

## Degree Requirements

The MED students must complete a total of 33 credits for the degree under either Plan A (thesis option) or Plan B (practicum option).

A minimum of 17 credits must be at the 800 level or above, distributed as follows:

- IDES 892: Research Fundamentals (3 credits).
- LA 816: Environmental Design Theory (3 credits).
- LA 817: Environmental Design Studio (3 credits).
- LA 883 Environmental Design Seminar (3 credits).
- Elective Courses (12-15 credits):
  - 899 Master's Thesis Research- Plan A (6-9 credits) or
  - 898 Master's Thesis Practicum- Plan B (6-9 credits).

Total: (Minimum) 33 credits.

Currently the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources suggest that students take no more than 6 hours of 899 or 898. It is strongly suggested that students limit themselves to 6 hours of 899 or 898.

## Plan A

Student must also:

- Complete a written thesis;
- Prepare, present and complete a final presentation open to the public; and
- Pass an oral examination administered by the student's guidance committee.

## Plan B

- Complete a final report, and
- Pass an oral examination, in the form of a presentation open to the public with a question and answer period which will be administered by the students guidance committee.

# Sample Academic Program of Study

## Fall Semester I

- IDES 892 (3 credits).
- LA 816 (3 credits).
- Elective (3 credits).

Total: 9 credits.

## Spring Semester I

- Elective (3 credits).
- LA 883 (3 credits).
- Elective (3 credits).

Total: 9 credits.

## Fall Semester II

- LA 898 or LA 899 (3 credits).
- LA 817 (3 credits).
- Elective (3 credits).

Total: 9 credits.

## Spring Semester II

- Complete a final report.
- Pass an oral examination, in the form of a presentation open to the public with a question and answer period which will be administered by the student's guidance committee.
- LA 898 or LA 899 (3 credits).
- Elective (3 credits).

Total: 9 credits.

Total for all semesters: 33 credits.

## Required Academic Program of Study

All students are required to complete and submit a formal plan of study, which is called the Academic Program of Study. An Academic Program of Study with signatures from all guidance committee members must be submitted to School Office before the end of the second semester of study. It is strongly suggested that students develop their program of study as early as possible during the first year of study. Once submitted, changes to the Academic Program of Study must be approved by both the student's guidance committee, the Associate Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Courses related to the student's area of design interest are chosen in consultation with, and approved by, the student's guidance committee. The program of study may include courses related to statistical methods and research techniques. In addition, the program of study may include technology classes such as Bio-Engineering, Geographic Information Science/Systems (GIS), Global Positioning Systems (GPS), and remote sensing. Other program of study choices may include courses concerning topics addressing the student's area of specialization and interest. Interdisciplinary seminar classes are strongly recommended. Directed independent study, readings, and term papers related to highly specialized topics also are suitable.

## Advising and Guidance Committee

In both Plan A and Plan B, a student's guidance committee is composed of the student's major professor and other members of the Environmental Design faculty or other approved MSU Graduate Faculty. Plan A students are required to have at least 3 faculty members on their committee with at least 2 from MED, while Plan B students are required to have at least 2 faculty members. The guidance committee gives guidance during the practicum experience or research investigations and determines the results of the oral examination.

It is strongly urged that a student identifies members of his/her guidance committee in consultation with her/his major professor by the end of the first semester of classes. This will allow the committee to give advice concerning course work and research activities. In forming the committee, the student is encouraged to meet with their major professor and develop a list of potential committee members. The student should then make an appointment to visit with the potential committee members. The process involves the consensus of both the student and potential committee members. The composition of the guidance committee will be submitted to the Associate Director for approval by the end of the second semester of study.

The composition of the guidance committee (excluding the major professor) can change providing a faculty member is willing to step down and a new member is found. This should be accomplished with the approval of the student's major professor. A Request to Change the Academic Program of Study must be submitted (see the appendices for the form) to the School Office.

If a student's major professor leaves the university or is unable to continue advising, a new major professor must be identified by mutual consent of both faculty and student. If a different major professor in the MED program accepts the student, the student may continue their existing program of study. However, if a new major professor cannot be found, the student will be advised to complete their degree under the supervision of a major professor appointed by the Associate Director.

### MED Faculty Available to Act as a Major Professor or Member of a Student Guidance Committee:

**Dr. April Allen, Assistant Professor**

NCIDQ Certificate No. 013314

Interior Design

MSU School of Planning, Design and Construction

Human Ecology Building

552 W. Circle Drive, Room 201N  
East Lansing, MI 48824-1030  
Ph: (517) 432- 3239  
FAX: (517) 432- 8108  
[allenapr@msu.edu](mailto:allenapr@msu.edu)

Research interests: history of interiors, historic preservation, sustainability, creativity and visualization.

**Dr. Jon Bryan Burley, ASLA, Associate Professor**

Landscape Architecture  
MSU School of Planning, Design and Construction  
Human Ecology Building  
552 W. Circle Drive, Room 302B  
East Lansing, MI 48824  
Ph: (517) 353- 7118  
FAX: (517) 432- 8108  
[burleyj@msu.edu](mailto:burleyj@msu.edu)

Research interests: landscape reclamation, restoration, habitat design, landscape planning, spatial modeling, design theory, visual quality, landscape science, and research methods.

**Dr. Pat Crawford, ASLA, Associate Professor**

Landscape Architecture  
MSU School of Planning, Design and Construction  
Human Ecology Building  
552 W. Circle Drive, Room 101  
East Lansing, MI 48824  
Ph: (517) 432- 1148  
FAX: (517) 432- 8108  
[crawf203@msu.edu](mailto:crawf203@msu.edu)

Research interests: participatory design, park planning and design, design pedagogy, universal design.

**Dr. Suk-Kyung Kim, Associate Professor**

Interior Design  
MSU School of Planning, Design, and Construction  
Human Ecology Building  
552 W. Circle Drive, Room 201B  
East Lansing, MI 48824  
Ph: (517) 353- 9367  
FAX: (517) 432- 8108  
[kimsk@msu.edu](mailto:kimsk@msu.edu)

Research interests: housing, health care research, sustainable design, environment behavior studies.

**Dr. Eunsil Lee, Associate Professor**

Interior Design  
MSU School of Planning, Design, and Construction  
Human Ecology Building  
552 W. Circle Drive, Room 201L  
East Lansing, MI 48824  
Ph: (517) 432- 3249  
FAX: (517) 432- 8108  
[leeunsi@msu.edu](mailto:leeunsi@msu.edu)

Research interests: human perception and behavior in relation to culture, sustainable lighting design, workplace design and performance, evidence based design.

**Dr. Patricia L. Machemer, Associate Professor**

Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning  
MSU School of Planning, Design and Construction  
Human Ecology Building  
552 W. Circle Drive, Room 404  
East Lansing, MI 48824  
Ph: (517) 353- 9047  
FAX: (517) 432- 8108  
[machemer@msu.edu](mailto:machemer@msu.edu)

Research interests: landscape planning and management, land cover change, growth management, participatory design.

**Dr. Robert E. Schutzki, Associate Professor**

MSU Horticulture  
Plant and Soil Science Building  
1066 Bogue St, Room A218  
East Lansing, MI 48824  
Ph: (517) 355- 5191, Ext. 1337  
[schutzki@msu.edu](mailto:schutzki@msu.edu)

Research interests: environmental horticulture, planting design, landscape specifications, landscape contracting.

**Dr. Brad Rowe, Professor**

MSU Horticulture  
Plan and Soil Science Building  
1066 Bogue St, Room A212  
East Lansing, MI 48824  
Ph: (517) 355- 5191, Ext. 1334  
[rowed@msu.edu](mailto:rowed@msu.edu)

Research interests: environmental horticulture, planting design, landscape specifications, landscape contracting.

## Thesis Defense and Final Oral Examination

The final master's presentation and evaluation is the culmination of a student's graduate education and training and reflects not only on the accomplishments of the graduate student but also on the quality of the graduate program. A Plan A approved thesis or a Plan B practicum becomes a single-author publication and contributes to the body of knowledge within MED.

The student presentation concerning the results of the thesis or practicum is presented in a seminar that is open to the academic and public community. At the end of the presentation, an open question and answer period will follow.

Upon completion of the presentation and question and answer period, all visitors will be asked to leave, and the student's committee may ask further questions. Then the student will be asked to leave the room so the committee may confer. When the committee has made its decision the student will be asked to return to the room and the committee will discuss their decisions/conditions/results with the student.

To ensure fairness in the examination procedures and maintenance of academic standards, the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and/or Director of the School of Planning, Design and Construction may appoint an outside member to the examining committee. The outside member of the committee will read and critique the thesis/practicum, will participate in the oral part of the exam, and will submit a report to the Dean and/or the Director.



## Plan A

The final draft of the thesis must be submitted to each guidance committee member at least two weeks before the thesis presentation. Students must be registered during the semester in which they give their oral thesis presentation.

## Plan B

The Plan B practicum must be submitted to each guidance committee member at least two weeks before the thesis presentation. Students must be registered during the semester in which they give their oral thesis presentation. A bound copy or electronic copy of the practicum (with all corrections made) should be given to each guidance committee member according to their preference, and an electronic PDF to the School of Planning, Design and Construction (submitted to the graduate secretary). The size and format for the document should accommodate drawings, plans, and related documents. A CD of images may also accompany the document to give full-sized detail to graphic presentations, digital movies, and other communicative material. In addition, the student must comply with all university requirements regarding Plan B submittals and graduation.

# Degree Calendar and Progress Checklist

## Prior to Attending the First Semester of Classes

- Activate your NetID and MSU E-mail account. MSU E-mail is the official mode of communication at MSU. Students are advised against forwarding their MSU E-mail accounts to other outside accounts. MSU uses e-mail for a variety of official communications related to employment, student, and safety concerns. For instance, notices regarding a tuition bill are sent to a student's MSU e-mail account. It is important to [activate your NetID](#) because your MSU account is the only e-mail account to which official notices are sent. Students use their PID and PAN for activation, [Activate here](#).
- Attend the required SPDC graduate student orientation. Students are encouraged to participate in orientation activities offered by the Graduate School (and for international students, by the Office of International Studies and Programs).
- Contact the Master's Program Director and/or assigned faculty advisor when you arrive in East Lansing to discuss degree requirements, to plan your courses (especially those for the first semester), and to discuss other student-related concerns.
- Register for classes. Master's students must be registered for a minimum of 9 credits per semester (6 if hired as a graduate assistant) to be considered "full time". International students must register for a minimum of 9 hours to fulfill visa requirements.

## First Semester

- Select Guidance Committee members with your major professor (Plan A and Plan B Report Students) .
- Schedule and hold a meeting with your Guidance Committee to discuss your academic and professional goals and the courses you intend to take. You may wish to discuss preliminary ideas for a Plan A Thesis or Plan B Project.
- If Provisional Acceptance: Meet all provisional requirements as specified in letter of acceptance (or plan developed with your faculty advisor or Associate Director).

## Second Semester

- Finalize your Academic Program of Study; complete and submit a Masters Academic Program of Study form and if a Plan A or Plan B report student, with appropriate signatures from all Guidance Committee members. A copy of your completed, approved form will be placed in your permanent academic file.

- Prepare a written draft of your Plan A Thesis or Plan B Project proposal. Discuss it with your major professor and secure his/her approval prior to submitting it to your Guidance Committee.

### Second or Third Semester

- Revise your proposal based on the feedback from your major professor and schedule a meeting of your Guidance Committee to discuss your proposal. Provide each member of your Guidance Committee with a copy of your proposal at least two weeks prior to the committee meeting.
- Schedule and hold a meeting of your Guidance Committee to discuss and approve your proposal and review progress on your academic program.
- Secure approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), as appropriate to your research, by completing the Human Subject Research Application Form found on the [MSU Human Research Protection Program website](#).

### Last Semester

Preparing for Thesis Defense/Practicum Project Final Examination:

- Check deadline dates for that semester as they pertain to completing the MS degree at, [The Graduate School website](#).
- Enroll for a minimum of one (1) credit in the semester in which you plan to defend your thesis/report or take your final exam.
- Check StulInfo to be sure all DFs (deferred grades) have been converted to grades and that your GPA is at least 3.00.
- Complete and submit the online Application for Graduation early in the semester of planned graduation, [Apply now](#). You must apply for graduation even if you do not plan to attend the ceremony, in order for final paperwork to be sent to the departmental graduate secretary and your degree to be conferred
- Review the Thesis and Dissertation ELECTRONIC Submission page from [The Graduate School website](#). Although it is not required that the Plan B Report be submitted to The Graduate School, it should be formatted in the same manner as the Plan A Thesis.
- Prepare for commencement; see guidelines and checklist provided by the University, [Commencement Guidelines](#).

Completion of Thesis/ Practicum Project:

- Complete all requirements in the 2014 Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertation Formatting Guide PDF found at [The Graduate School Website](#) (Not required for Plan B practicum).
- Submit a draft of your Thesis or Practicum Project to your major professor and Guidance Committee members at least 2 weeks before your defense.
- Edit your draft, as needed. MS- Plan A students should refer to the 2014 Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertation Formatting Guide PDF found at [The Graduate School Website](#).
- Schedule a seminar/examination time with your Guidance Committee for presenting and defending your work. This seminar is an open session to which students and faculty in the School of Planning, Design and Construction are invited. You may schedule a conference room with the Graduate Secretary.
- Announce the date of your thesis or project presentation. Contact the Graduate Secretary at least 2 weeks prior to the seminar. The Graduate Secretary will notify faculty and students of your presentation by email and/or posted flyers prior to the seminar.

- Provide your Major Professor and each member of your Guidance Committee a copy of your Thesis or Project at least 2 weeks prior to the seminar.
- Present and defend your Thesis or Report at the seminar.
- Modify your thesis/report as required by your guidance committee.
- If Plan A, prepare the final copy of your thesis according to the guidelines at [The Graduate School website](#).
- If Plan A, prepare an abstract of your thesis to be filled with "Dissertation/thesis Abstracts:"
  - If Plan A, Submit a copy of your thesis to the Graduate School via the process described at, [Thesis and Dissertation ELECTRONIC Submissions page on The Graduate School website](#). If you are a Plan B student and completed a Practicum Project, the Graduate School does not receive a copy; and
  - Distribute both digital and hardbound copies of your thesis/practicum project to the Graduate Secretary, your Major Professor, and Guidance Committee members. Individual committee members may request an alternative format, such as softbound, unbound, or digital.

Final Logistics:

- Read and comply with the Thesis and Dissertation ELECTRONIC Submissions to ensure that you have meet all the requirements and submitted forms and other paperwork found at [The Graduate School website](#).
- Submit your Exit Survey as instructed under #3 on the [Thesis and Dissertation ELECTRONIC Submissions page on The Graduate School website](#).
- Complete all final forms/ questionnaires required by The Graduate School. Pay final fees.

# BLA with the Master of Environmental Design (MED)

The Landscape Architecture Program at Michigan State University offers both an accredited four-and-a-half-year Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA) Degree and a five-year dual degree program, which combines the accredited BLA with the Master of Environmental Design (MED) degree. The BLA degree program is structured around a dynamic design studio sequence and classroom learning environment. Core BLA classes and design studios are complimented by the natural and social sciences and the arts and humanities. An eight-week Study Abroad experience is integrated into the curriculum sequence in the spring semester of year three for which both BLA and dual degree BLA/MED students are eligible. Blending creativity, design, site engineering and technical skills, and developing well rounded professionals are at the heart of the curriculum. BLA/MED requires 154 credit curriculum with minimum 130 BLA credits, 33 MED credits (24 plus 9 linked credits).

## Year I

### Fall Semester

- LA 140: Graphics & Two Dimensional Design Studio (4 UG credits).
- LA 200: Introduction to LA (3 UG credits).
- MTH 116: College Algebra & Trigonometry (5 UG credits).
- WRA 1XX: Tier I Writing (4 UG credits).

### Spring

- LA 141: Graphics & Three Dimensional Design Studio (4 UG credits).
- PDC 120: Planning & Design Digital Graphics (2 UG credits).
- HRT 212: Landscape Plants II (3 UG credits).
- ISS 2XX: Integrative Studies (4 UG credits).
- PLB 105: Plant Biology (3 UG credits).
- PLB 106: Plant Biology Laboratory (1 UG credit).

### Summer

- LA GCU: AutoCAD Proficiency (0-3 UG credits).

## Year II

### Fall

- LA 242: Creating Space Studio (4 UG credits).
- LA 230: Construction Materials & Methods (4 UG credits).
- HRT 211: Landscape Plants I (3 UG credits).
- CEM 141: Chemistry (4 UG credits).
- CEM 161: Chemistry Lab (1 UG credit).

## Spring

- LA 243: Place Making Studio (4 UG credits).
- LA 231: Landscape Site Engineering (4 UG credits).
- HRT 311: Planting Design (4 UG credits).
- ISS 310: People & Environment (4 UG credits).

## Year III

### Fall

- LA 344: Connections of Scale Studio (5 UG credits).
- LA 332: Advanced Landscape Site Engineering (4 UG credits).
- IAH 20X: Arts & Humanities (4 UG credits).
- EC 20X: Micro/Macro Economics.

### Spring

- LA 345: Design Development Studio (5 UG credits).
- LA 390: Landscape Architecture Field Studies (3 UG credits).
- LA 421: Drawing as Knowing (4 UG credits).

## Year IV

### Fall

- LA 447: Juried Design Studio (5 UG credits).
- LA/HRT/PRR/HED 816: Environmental Design Theory (3 GR credits).
- IDES 892: Research fund. For Human Environment & Design (3 GR credits).
- XX: Electives (6 UG credits).

### Spring

- LA 448: Regional Environmental Design Studio (2 UG credits).
- UP 424: GIS for Planners & Designers (3 UG credits).
- LA/HRT/PRR/HED 883: Environmental Design Seminar (3 GR credits).
- IAH 21x: Arts & Humanities (4 UG credits).
- XX: Electives (4 UG credits).

## Year V

### Fall

- LA 817: Environmental Design Studio (3 GR credits) or
- LA 449: Landscape Architecture Design Studio (3 UG credits).
- LA 480: Professional Practice (3 UG credits).
- LA 899/898: Thesis Practicum (3 GR credits).
- XX: Electives (4-BLA only to 7-DUAL credits).

BLA Total: 130 Credits.

## Spring

- LA 899/898: Thesis Practicum (3 GR credits).
- XX: Electives (6 GR credits).

MED Total: 9 linked credits from BLA plus 24 additional graduate credits.

## Curriculum Summary

### Undergraduate Student: 69 UG Credits

- 4 semesters.
- Freshman: Fall, Spring and Summer Semesters; Sophomore: Fall and Spring Semesters.

### BLA Undergraduate Students: 28 UG Credits

- 2 semesters.
- Junior: Fall and Spring Semesters.

### Dually Enrolled Students: 33 UG Credits

- 3 Semesters.
- Senior: Fall and Spring Semesters; Super Senior: Fall Semester.
  - BLA Complete end of 9<sup>th</sup> semester 15 GR Credits.

### MED Graduate Student: 9 GR Credits

- 1 Semester.
- Graduate in Spring Semester:
  - MED Complete end of 10<sup>th</sup> semester.
  - 9 credits of qualifying 400-level and above linked BLA/MED.

### 10 Semesters: BLA/MED 154 Credits

- Counting of up to 9 linked credit hours in the MED is only with approval of the guidance committee.
- A minimum of 6 credit hours in Graduate standing must be in residence at the MSU campus.
- A minimum of 9 credit hours must be enrolled in at Graduate standing.
- Courses taken during dual enrollment (undergraduate status) do not count towards requirements 2 and 3.

This is only a guide for completing the BLA degree. Students must meet with their academic advisor each year to ensure proper course scheduling for timely completion of the degree.