REVISED SEPT 2014

General Orientation for New Grad Program Directors and Grad Secretaries 2014

Items will also be covered in an orientation program Thursday, October 9, 8:30AM
Lincoln Room, Kellogg Center

** marks NEW information this year

Admissions:

Online applications are completed by students logging on to the GRAD APPLICATION page http://grad.msu.edu/apply/ from the Graduate School homepage (grad.msu.edu). All graduate programs have a link from the application page.

**GAMS—Graduate Admissions Management System is in use! This is the only way to have access to electronic letters of recommendation and all recommended action forms will be submitted to Admissions via GAMS starting Fall 2015!

**CDGDC verification of transcripts for Chinese applicants was modified:

APPLICATIONS FROM CHINA

During the application process, applicants submit certified copies (sealed and stamped by institutions) of all post-secondary transcripts, graduation certificates and degrees directly to the MSU Department to which they are applying. MSU requires these documents in the original language (Chinese) as well as an official English translation.

Effective Spring 2015, Michigan State University will require all incoming ADMITTED students pursuing degrees or who have earned degrees from universities in China to submit a verification report (English version) through the China Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Development Center (CDGDC) for their final bachelor degree transcripts (大学成绩单) and bachelor degree (本科学位证书). Check with the website of the graduate program office in which you were admitted, as some departments will REIMBURSE you for the cost of the verification once you register at MSU. All verification reports need to be sent to the MSU Office of Admissions directly by CDGDC. For those Master degree granted student, we only need the undergraduate level verification report from CDGDC.

Please refer to the CDGDC website for more information: http://www.chinadegrees.cn/en/

Ph.D. public data are on the application website. http://grad.msu.edu/apply/PHDdata.aspx . Information for Fall 2012 is posted. Updated information will be posted in Summer 2015. Last year 1000 individuals viewed these pages.

Academic Integrity and Criminal Conduct question (#24): Office of Admissions screens this question. For academic integrity answers of “yes”, departments with college approval may accept the student. For criminal conduct answers of “yes”, departments and colleges may request a meeting of the Director of Admissions; appropriate other MSU personnel as needed, the Dean
of the Graduate School, and representatives from the department and college to consider admission.

Minimum TOEFL / IELTS scores are required to help ensure student success. These minimum standards are set by the faculty and graduate students on the University Committee on Graduate Studies with expert knowledge contributed by the staff and faculty of the English Language Center. Waivers are possible:  http://grad.msu.edu/forms/docs/EngLangWaiver.pdf

The Grad School, Admissions, and Int’l Studies and Programs partnered to provide a recruiter for sponsored international students. Julie Sinclair will recruit around the globe in strategic areas that have sponsored grad student programs. Depts/programs have a level of financial support required to admit these students. http://oiss.isp.msu.edu/students/sponsored/

Student data:

GradInfo is the web-app that has data on all M and D students in the past 10 years, plus current students. It also has dynamic data generated for completion rates, time-to-degree, demographics, enrollment counts, median GRE scores (if applicable), degree award counts, and initial placement (and subsequent placement for Ph.D. students as the GS has an ongoing project using social media to find current placements). These data are useful in academic program review and are data that comprise part of the metrics used by the Office of the Provost.

https://login.msu.edu/?App=J3200 Access is controlled by your college security administrator and requires updated FERPA training offered through the Office of the Registrar:
http://www.reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Notices/PrivacyGuidelines.asp

GradInfo is the source of the PUBLIC Ph.D. data on the Grad Applications page: http://grad.msu.edu/apply/PHDdata.aspx, along with data your programs provide.

Protecting student data: FERPA:
http://www.reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Notices/PrivacyGuidelines.asp

**GradPlan is the web-interactive system for Ph.D. students to create and store their Ph.D. Degree Plans and subsequent graduate program activities. Students can link to the log-in page: https://gradplan.msu.edu. User guides for staff and faculty are also on this page. By Spring 2017, this will replace all Reports of the Guidance Committees comp exam and dissertation defense and will be the only pathway for final degree certification for Ph.D. students.

Graduate Assistants:

All MSU employees, including graduate assistants, are pre-screened by HireRight:
http://www.hr.msu.edu/documents/facacadpolproc/CriminalCheckFAQ.htm. The University will rely on the background check conducted by the U.S. DHS in lieu of a University background check for individuals coming to MSU directly from residence outside the US. However, these students will still need to complete the HireRight information in order for us to determine whether they are coming to the University directly from residence outside the United States.
*** (revised) Unit Procedure for Graduate Assistant (GA) background check:

1. Use the Teaching Assistant (TA) appointment/re-appointment and Research Assistant (RA) appointment/re-appointment letters available on the Graduate School’s website for all offers of employment to Graduate Assistants, and include the "Consumer Disclosure And Authorization Form."

2. The Graduate Assistant must sign and date the "Consumer Disclosure And Authorization Form". Completed consent forms should be attached to the GA appointment paperwork in the EBS system. Completed consent forms may also be sent to Human Resources, Attn: Sarah Powell, Graduate Assistants, 110 Nisbet, via e-mail to GraduateAssistants@hr.msu.edu, or via fax to 517-432-3862.

3. Communicate to the Graduate Assistant that the background check will take three to seven days to process. Once the background check has been completed, the GA appointment paperwork will be processed if all other necessary documents have been received.

MSU is improving its record for federal I-9 requirements. GAs appointed must be on campus to provide I-9 information within 3 days or the appointment will be cancelled and a new start date established when the student arrives. Stipend pay, of course, is recalculated based on a new appointment period.

Other policies (credit load, etc.) governing GAs at MSU may be found in the Academic Programs catalog: http://www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.asp?Section=111#s354

**Teaching Assistants:**

TAs are covered by a collective bargaining agreement with the Graduate Employees Union. This contract covers all graduate students who are TEACHING assistants. Find the collective bargaining agreement here: http://grad.msu.edu/2011-2015GEUContract.pdf

- **QUESTIONS?** Call Kathie Elliott or Jim Nash in Employee Relations: 884-0135. Please talk with Kathie or Jim prior to any grievance communication or hearing with a TA and his/her union rep. There is a defined process!

- There are required template letters to use for appointment, reappointment and non-appointment. Find them on the “forms” page http://grad.msu.edu/forms/.

TAs must have a minimum score of 50 on the SPEAK test to be eligible to teach. SPEAK is given by the English Language Center at the beginning of each semester. Students with a 45 are eligible for an appeal. Appeals must be requested by the department. A dept rep, a Grad School rep and ELC rep(s) will determine the level at which the student may participate in teaching. ELC sets up the appeals. Tony Nunez coordinates for the Grad School. Each dept may request an appeal for one student/semester with a score of 40.
Melissa McDaniels will be convening a group of faculty this fall to talk about possible changes to the format of TA Seminar for 2015. Please watch for notices about the 2015 program in February.

There is a pool of **200 credits (each year) for TAs** (not RAs or TEs) to apply to receive (paid for by the Provost). These are required credits beyond the 9-9-5 tuition package.  
http://grad.msu.edu/tuitionpool/  This is the **final** year for this. GEU & MSU are negotiating a new contract this year.

If you have any questions about the TA program, please go (or direct TAs) to grad.msu.edu/tap.  
Also, a whole array of teaching resources are available to graduate students and postdocs at www.careersuccess.msu.edu/teaching.

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**Research Assistants:**

RAs are covered by policies in the Academic Programs catalog:  
http://www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.asp?Section=111#s354

RAs are also covered by the Grad Student Rights and Responsibilities document, Article 4:  
http://grad.msu.edu/gsrr/

**Health insurance benefits associated with grad assistant appointments:**  
http://www.hr.msu.edu/benefits/studenthealth/

**Health insurance benefits associated with graduate FELLOWSHIP appointments:**  
As of July 1, 2013, units are no longer able to directly enroll a graduate student in the health insurance plan. Students must enroll themselves in the base plan. Units may provide a fellowship to the student to cover the cost of the plan. The base plan and the GA plan have the same benefits. The base plan has higher premium sharing and co-pay costs.

**Planned for Summer 2015:** an option to hire an RA (only…not TA, not TE, and not any combo) on a **summer** appointment with **stipend only**, no tuition credits –although likely able to enroll for 1 credit if needed—and no health insurance (e.g., no fringe charges). The student must have had a spring appointment (for the health insurance).

**Important information for you to share with STUDENTS:**

Responsible Conduct of Research education is required. Find out more:  
http://grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/

Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities:  http://grad.msu.edu/gsrr/
Doctoral students now have access to GRADPLAN: an entirely web-based application that permits a student to prepare the (required) Report of the Guidance Committee and other documents that circulate to faculty electronically. ALL program information for doctoral students will be kept in GradPlan, including waiver requests, GS acceptance of the final document, and the final degree certification from the Registrar’s Office. All Ph.D. students expecting to complete by Spring 2017 and thereafter should use GradPlan.
https://gradplan.msu.edu/gradPlanHome.action

Career Success http://careersuccess.msu.edu is the comprehensive source of information for planning for careers and professional development. The GS also has 2 Ph.D.-level career specialists to work with your students on using Career Success and receiving individualized assistance. You can link to Career Services and Graduate Student Life and Wellness via Career Success.

The generation of individual development plans (IDPs) for graduate students and postdocs is now required by many funding agencies including NIH and NSF, and is being recognized as an excellent model for mentoring graduate students. The Graduate School and Postdoctoral Office endorse this practice and provide web-supported tools for creating comprehensive IDPs that integrate discipline-specific activities as well as those that promote general professional skills. For more information visit, http://grad.msu.edu/caffe

Graduate Office Fellowships:

This pool of MSU general fund dollars is allocated by the Graduate School to support M and D students.

ALL of these funds are awarded using a fellowship form and provided directly to the student’s MSU account. The account number may not be used for any other reason, including travel vouchers. Klomparens and Melissa del Rio coordinate for the Grad School.

Categories: http://grad.msu.edu/funding/

General allocations are made to each college based on the number of graduate students enrolled the previous fall semester and weighted 3:1 D:M students. An additional factor is the number of degrees granted across the college the previous year. The final factor is the Average GPA of the entering class of students the previous fall semester. ALL funds must be spent by mid-end of April each year. Colleges (and units) decide how the funds are spent.
Also allocated similarly are funds to support students during the SUMMER, Funds must also be spent by mid-April each year.

Dissertation completion fellowships are allocated by the colleges based on the number of Ph.D. students and on the past record of completions by students awarded those funds. The typical award is $6,000 in a semester, but colleges may decide to increase or decrease that amount. The goal is WRITING the dissertation, so a student should not have any more than a ¼ GA to occupy his/her time.

“egradfellows” is the system of automatic routing using FTU for the more than 7,000 fellowship forms annually.

University Distinguished and Enrichment Fellowship program is also fully-funded from this account. http://grad.msu.edu/universityfellowships/ Judith Stoddart coordinates.

UDF/UEF supplementary funds are provided to each college depending on the number of UDF and UEF students enrolled each FALL semester. For some colleges, the GS awards the additional amounts directly to the students and in others; the college itself awards these amounts. One obligation of departments with University Fellows is to provide the same stipend amount for the years in which the unit is funding the student that the Graduate School provided in year 1.

Educational Opportunity Fellowships are available for students with documented undergraduate indebtedness. Applications come to the Graduate School and are awarded by the MSU Office of Financial Aid. http://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/eof.aspx

Travel fellowships: http://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/travel.aspx (Nunez)

Emergency fellowships: http://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/emergency.aspx (Jackson)

TOP UP awards for students receiving competitive, national/international fellowships from proposals written by the individual student: http://grad.msu.edu/funding/docs/externallyfundedgraduatefellowships.pdf (Klomparens)

MORE! See the funding website: http://grad.msu.edu/funding/

The GS has a single source of GAs to support an inclusive graduate student population: Academic Achievement Graduate Assistantships (AAGAs). http://grad.msu.edu/aaga/ Some of these are offered to students who participated in the Summer Research Opportunities Program (a CIC program) http://grad.msu.edu/srop/ and were accepted into MSU programs.

**Thesis and dissertation processing:**

In 2010 the Graduate School moved to a completely electronic system of checking documents and forwarding them to the ProQuest document depository. http://grad.msu.edu/etd/ ALL documents come electronically. NO paper has been accepted since early 2011.