

# Graduate Handbook

for

## Degrees in Biosystems Engineering

Michigan State University  
Dept. of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering

<http://www.egr.msu.edu/age/BE/>

Dr. James F. Steffe  
Graduate Program Director  
209 Farrall Hall  
East Lansing, MI 48824  
Ph: (517) 353-4544  
steffe@egr.msu.edu

Dr. Ajit K. Srivastava  
Department Chairperson  
215 Farrall Hall  
East Lansing, MI 48824  
Ph: (517) 353-7268  
srivasta@egr.msu.edu

*UPDATED: SEPTEMBER, 11, 2009*  
*(approved by a vote of the BAE faculty)*

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## 1. Program Overview

Biosystems engineers apply the basic sciences, mathematics, engineering sciences, and technology to design sustainable solutions to problems with a critical biological component. Biosystems engineers work to ensure an adequate and safe food supply while efficiently utilizing natural resources and protecting the environment. Specific application areas include food and biomass production systems, food processing systems, processing systems for utilization and conversion of biological products, water and waste management systems, natural resource and environmental protection, and a range of other biological challenges that require engineering expertise. The department offers both Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degree programs with majors in Biosystems Engineering.

The purpose of the **Master of Science** program in Biosystems Engineering is to prepare graduates for advanced career opportunities that require disciplinary expertise beyond that available in the Bachelor of Science degree. Specifically, the Plan A (thesis option) program introduces the student to research methods, and the student is expected to execute, analyze, and publish an original research project under the close guidance of the major advisor. In contrast, the Plan B (non-thesis option) program is suited for those who do not plan a research-related career, but desire additional skills and knowledge obtained through advanced coursework. Most students complete Plan A programs.

The purpose of the **Doctor of Philosophy** program in Biosystems Engineering is to prepare graduates for advanced careers that require demonstrated research skills and comprehensive knowledge of the discipline. Therefore, the program is suitable only for those students who have demonstrated outstanding ability and potential in the field, either by high quality work in an M.S. degree or by exceptional achievement in a B.S. degree with additional technical and professional accomplishments. The student is expected to demonstrate in-depth and comprehensive knowledge of the discipline and skills in disseminating that knowledge through teaching and/or training experiences. Additionally, the student must demonstrate the ability to plan, conduct, manage, and publish independent, original research, via the dissertation and peer-reviewed manuscripts.

## 2. Program Components and Roadmap to Your Degree

### 2.1. Master of Science Degree

The typical path for the Master of Science degree in Biosystems Engineering is as follows. This path is for the Plan A (with thesis) option that is most often selected.

- Gain admission to the program at which time your major advisor is appointed.
- Develop a plan of study with your major advisor.
- Complete the required course work and your thesis research.
- Defend your thesis in an oral examination. Most students finish the program within two years.

## 2.2. Doctor of Philosophy

The typical path for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Biosystems Engineering is as follows.

- Gain admission to the program at which time your major advisor is appointed.
- Develop a plan of study with your Guidance Committee before the end of your second semester. Your major advisor is normally the chairperson of the Guidance Committee.
- Pass your oral and comprehensive examinations.
- Submit two papers to refereed journals.
- Complete your thesis research, write your dissertation, and defend it in an oral examination. Most students finish the program within four years.

## 2.3. English Language Proficiency

TOEFL scores are required for all international applicants. The University requires all international applicants to submit their scores from the TOEFL Exam to the English Language Center at Michigan State University: <http://elc.msu.edu/index.html>. Applicants must receive the following minimum scores: a) Internet-based test: score of 80 with no subscore below 19 for reading, listening and speaking; and no subscore below 22 for writing; or b) Paper-based test: score of 550 with no subscore below 52; or c) Computer-based test: score of 213 with no subscore below 19. The Biosystems Engineering Program does not admit students who do not meet this minimum standard.

## 3. Degree Requirements in Biosystems Engineering

### 3.1. Master of Science

#### 3.1.1. Admission

To be considered for admission to the Master of Science degree program in Biosystems Engineering, an applicant must take the Graduate Record Examination (General Test) and have the scores sent to the department.

##### 3.1.1.1. Regular Status

Admission to the master's degree program in Biosystems Engineering with regular status may be granted by the department, subject to the availability of resources and the approval of the dean, upon consideration of the likelihood that the applicant will be able to complete a master's degree program successfully. To be admitted to the master's program in Biosystems Engineering, an applicant must have:

- A grade-point average not lower than 3.00 for the final two years of the undergraduate program, or standing in the upper quarter of the graduate class in the student's major.
- A bachelor's degree, either:
  - from an accredited program in engineering, or

- from a related science-oriented program in which the applicant has shown very high academic achievement, as certified by the department. In particular, an applicant without an engineering degree must demonstrate the abilities and experience necessary to succeed in the core courses (BE 815, 825, and 835).

#### 3.1.1.2. Provisional Status

Admission to the master's degree program in Biosystems Engineering with provisional status may be granted by the department, subject to the approval of the dean:

- To an applicant qualified for regular admission, except that collateral courses (background courses) are deemed necessary, or
- To an applicant whose record is incomplete.

If collateral courses are required, the minimum acceptable grades and the semesters by which those courses must be completed will be specified on the admission form. Biosystems Engineering 490 and 890 may *not* be used to satisfy collateral course requirements. The provisional status will be changed to regular status when the conditions specified on the admission form have been met, as certified by the department and approved by the dean.

#### 3.1.1.3. Linked Bachelor's-Master's Degree in BE

The department welcomes applications from Michigan State University Biosystems Engineering undergraduate students in their junior and senior year. Admission applications must be made during the prior Spring semester for an anticipated Spring graduation or the prior Fall semester for an anticipated Fall graduation to allow admission before the final semester as a Biosystems Engineering undergraduate. Admission to the program requires a minimum undergraduate grade-point average of 3.50 and an approved program of study for the Master of Science degree in Biosystems Engineering at the time of admission. Admission to the Linked Bachelor's-Master's Program allows the application of up to 9 credits toward the master's program for qualifying 400-level and above course work taken at the undergraduate level at Michigan State University or an external accredited institution. The number of approved credits, not to exceed 9, are applied toward the credit requirement of the master's degree. Credits applied to the Linked Bachelor's-Master's Program are not eligible to be applied to any other graduate degree program.

#### 3.1.2. Program Filing

The student's program of study (coursework) must be approved before the student completes 6 credits of graduate work for the student to continue to enroll in the master's degree program. The subject matter and instructor must be specified for

every independent study, special problem, or selected topics course that is included in the student's approved program of study.

After the Plan A or Plan B option has been selected by the student and approved, the student may not pursue the other option without approval of the department.

The following changes are not permitted in a student's approved program of study:

- Adding or deleting a course for which a grade has already been assigned under any of the three grading systems (numerical, Pass-No Grade, or Credit-No Credit).
- Adding or deleting a course for which grading was postponed by the use of the DF-Deferred marker.
- Adding or deleting a course which the student dropped after the middle of the semester and for which "W" or "N" or "0.0" was designated.
- Adding or deleting a course during the final semester of enrollment in the master's degree program.

### 3.1.3. Requirements for the Master of Science Degree

The program is available under both Plan A (with thesis) and Plan B (without thesis). The student's program of study is developed in consultation with the major professor and must be approved by the department. In addition to meeting the requirements of the University, the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the College of Engineering, the student must meet the requirements specified below.

#### 3.1.3.1. Requirements for Both Plan A and Plan B

The student must complete:

- A total of 30 credits in 400, 800, and 900 level courses. At least 20 of the 30 credits must be at the 800-900 level. Not more than 4 credits of BE 890 (Special Problems) may be counted toward the requirements for the degree under Plan A; and not more than 6 credits of BE 890 may be counted toward the requirements for the degree under Plan B.
- BE 815, BE 820, BE 825, BE 835, and BE 892.

#### 3.1.3.2. Additional Requirements for Plan A

The student must:

- Complete at least 6 (and no more than 8) credits of the 30 credit total requirement with BE 899 (Master's Thesis Research) credits.
- Pass a final oral examination over the written thesis. The final examination is administered by the Department and conducted by

three regular university faculty members (at least two of which must be Biosystems Engineering faculty).

- Provide to the major professor, and to the department, a hard-bound copy of the thesis made from the original unbound manuscript submitted to the Office of The Graduate School. Arrangement for delivery of the copies shall be made when the original manuscript is submitted to the Office of The Graduate School. Note: the MSU publishing agreement for thesis with ProQuest provides an “Open Access Publishing Option” as an alternative to the traditional publishing option available to students. The Open Access option gives ProQuest the authorization to make the electronic version of the document accessible to all via the internet, including the selling of the document by commercial retailers and the accessibility to the work via search engines. A student selecting the Open Access option will not be eligible to receive royalties.
- Provide to the major professor a manuscript (based on the MS thesis) suitable for submission to a refereed journal for publication.

#### 3.1.3.3. Additional Requirements for Plan B

The student must pass the final examination administered by the department over the course work in the student’s approved program of study. The examination may include both a written and an oral component. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain detailed information about this examination from the department.

#### 3.1.4. Academic Standards

- *Grades.* The student must earn a grade of 2.0 or higher in each course in the approved program of study. The student must repeat any course in the approved program for which the grade earned was below 2.0.
- *Cumulative Grade-Point Average.* The student must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.00 in the courses in the approved program of study.
- *Probational Status.* A student is placed on probational status if the student’s cumulative grade-point average for the courses in the approved program of study is below 3.00. A student in probational status is not allowed to carry more than 7 credits per semester or to enroll in any course the primary focus of which is independent study.

#### **Retention In and Dismissal from the Program.**

- *Cumulative Grade-Point Average.* Should a student’s cumulative grade-point average fall below 3.00 after having completed 16 or more credits in courses in the approved program of study, the student may be enrolled in probational 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 3.00 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 a 3.00, the student will be dismissed from the program.

- *Academic Progress and Performance.* Each student's academic progress and performance toward the completion of their degree program is evaluated spring semester of each year. Students must be making adequate progress in the completion of required courses; and MS (Plan A) students must be making adequate progress in the research required to complete their degree. A student who is not making satisfactory academic progress or appears to lack the potential to complete the program will be placed on academic probation. Students on probation will be dismissed if academic progress and performance do not improve. The overall evaluation process is described in Sec. 7.

### 3.1.5. Continuation from MS to PhD Program

Plan A students who complete the M.S. degree in BE at MSU and are favorably recommended by the M.S. guidance committee to continue for Ph.D. studies should complete the "Request to Continue for a Ph.D. in Biosystems Engineering" form obtained from the Graduate Secretary. Students who complete the M.S. degree in BE at MSU and who are not recommended for Ph.D. studies by the M.S. guidance committee must reactivate their file to be considered for admission into the Ph.D. program. Their file will be considered as part of the regular review process conducted by the department.

Plan B students may submit an application to the department for acceptance into the Ph.D. program following the standard application procedures and timelines.

## 3.2. Doctor of Philosophy

### 3.2.1. Admission

To be considered for admission to the Doctor of Philosophy degree program in Biosystems Engineering, an applicant must take the Graduate Record Examination (General Test) and have the scores sent to the department.

#### 3.2.1.1. Regular Status

Admission to the doctoral degree program with regular status may be granted by the department, subject to the availability of resources, and upon consideration of the likelihood that the applicant will be able to complete a doctoral program successfully.

To be admitted to the doctoral program in Biosystems Engineering, an applicant should have a master's degree and must:

- Have either a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering or a master's degree in engineering.
- Demonstrate evidence of ability and resolution to complete a doctoral program, as attested by the department upon review of the applicant's academic record, test scores, experience, reference statements, professional qualifications, proposed studies, and other relevant information.

Admission to the doctoral program without a master's degree, or the equivalent thereof, requires special approval by the department.

#### 3.2.1.2. Provisional Status

Admission to the doctoral degree program in Biosystems Engineering with provisional status may be granted by the department, subject to the approval of the dean:

- To an applicant qualified for regular admission, except that collateral courses (background courses) are deemed necessary, or
- To an applicant whose record is incomplete.

A student who is admitted to the Doctor of Philosophy degree program without a Master of Science degree in engineering may be required to complete collateral courses, in addition to the courses that are required for the doctoral degree. If collateral courses are required, the minimum acceptable grades and the semesters by which those courses must be completed will be specified on the admission form. Biosystems Engineering 490 and 890 may *not* be used to satisfy collateral course requirements. The provisional status will be changed to regular status when the conditions specified on the admission form have been met, as certified by the department and approved by the dean.

#### 3.2.2. Program of Study (coursework)

The student's program of study (coursework) shall be submitted for approval to the Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering and to the dean by no later than the end of the student's second semester of enrollment in the doctoral program. The subject matter and instructor must be specified for every independent study, special problems, or selected topics course that is included in the student's approved program of study.

The student's program of study must be approved for the student to continue to enroll in the doctoral degree program beyond the second semester.

### 3.2.3. Modification of the Program

The following changes are not permitted in a student's approved program of study:

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

### 3.2.4. Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree

In addition to meeting the requirements of the University, the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the College of Engineering, students must meet the requirements specified below:

- Complete a minimum total of 24 credits in BE 999 (Doctoral Dissertation Research).
- Complete a minimum of 38 additional course credits (excluding BE 899) past the B.S. degree, at the 400, 800, and 900 level. The specific courses that a student is required to complete will depend on prior academic background in relation to the selected area of study and research. These 38 credits must be approved by the student's guidance committee, and must include (unless previously taken) the following: BE 815, BE 820, BE 825, BE 835, and BE 892.
- Complete one course in a biological science at the 400 level or above. An approved list of courses will be maintained by the department.
- Complete one course in quantitative analysis or mathematics at the 400 level or above. An approved list of courses will be maintained by the department.
- Complete one course in statistics at the 400 level or above. An approved list of courses will be maintained by the department.
- Pass the doctoral qualifying examination (described in Sec. 6.3).
- Pass the doctoral comprehensive examination (described in Sec. 6.3) within five years of the date of first enrollment and at least six months prior to the final oral examination in defense of the dissertation. The examination may be retaken once.
- Submit at least two papers to refereed journals before scheduling the oral examination in defense of the dissertation. The student must be the primary author, and the manuscripts must be based on work completed during the PhD program.
- Pass the oral examination in defense of the dissertation. The examination

may be retaken once.

- Provide to the major professor, and to the department, a hard-bound copy of the dissertation made from the original unbound manuscript submitted to the Office of The Graduate School. Arrangements for delivery of the copies shall be made when the original manuscript is submitted to the Office of The Graduate School.

### 3.2.5. Academic Standards

- Grades. The student must earn a grade of 2.0 or higher in each course in the approved guidance committee report, including collateral courses and courses accepted in transfer. The student must repeat any course on the approved program for which the grade earned was below 2.0.
- Cumulative Grade-Point Average. The student must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.00 in courses in the approved guidance committee report, with the exception of collateral courses and courses accepted in transfer.
- Deferred Grades. A student may accumulate no more than three deferred grades (identified by the DF-Deferred marker) in courses other than those courses the primary focus of which is independent study.
- Probational Status. A student is placed on probational status if either or both of the following conditions apply:

- The student's cumulative grade-point average for the courses in the approved guidance committee report is below 3.00.
- The student has accumulated more than three deferred grades (identified by the DF-Deferred marker) in courses other than those courses the primary focus of which is independent study.

A student on probational status is not allowed to carry more than 7 credits per semester or to enroll in any course the primary focus of which is independent study.

- Retention In and Dismissal From the Program.
  - Cumulative Grade-Point Average. Should a student's cumulative grade-point average fall below 3.00 after having completed half of the courses in the approved guidance committee report, the student may be enrolled in probational status in the doctoral degree program for one additional semester. If at the end of the additional semester the student's cumulative grade-point average is 3.00 or higher, the student may continue to enroll in the doctoral degree program. If at the end of the additional semester the student's cumulative grade-point average is still below 3.00, the student will be dismissed from the program.
  - Deferred Grades. Should a student accumulate more than three deferred grades (identified by the DF-Deferred mark) in courses other than independent study, the student may be enrolled on probational status for one additional semester. If at the end of the

additional semester the student has no more than three deferred grades, the student may continue to enroll. If at the end of the additional semester the student still has more than three deferred grades, the student will be dismissed from the program.

- *Academic Progress and Performance.* Each student's academic progress and performance toward the completion of their degree program is evaluated spring semester of each year. Students must be making adequate progress in the completion of required courses, and in the research required to complete the PhD degree. A student who is not making satisfactory academic progress or appears to lack the potential to complete the program will be placed on academic probation. Students on probation will be dismissed if academic progress and performance do not improve. The overall evaluation process is described in Sec. 7.

#### **4. Selection of the Thesis/Dissertation Advisor**

Students may request a specific faculty advisor when applying for a degree program. The request should be made, in writing, to the Graduate Program Director and sent to the department. The selection of the thesis/dissertation advisor is made by the department at the time of admission, and the student's request will be considered as part of the overall application packet. Confirmation of the assignment to a major professor is made shortly after arrival. After admission to the program, a request for a change of major professor must be made, in writing, to the department chairperson.

#### **5. Formation of the Guidance Committee**

The student's guidance committee consists of at least four regular faculty members and is appointed by the department chairperson in consultation with the student and the appropriate faculty members, and with the approval of the dean. At least two members of the guidance committee shall be from the Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering and at least one member shall be from a different department, preferably from either the College of Engineering or the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The chairperson of the guidance committee will be appointed by the department chairperson after consultation with the student and the person recommended to chair the committee.

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

##### **6.1. Master of Science Final Oral Exam**

All Master's students (Plan A) are required to pass a Final Oral Exam covering their thesis topic. The student's committee administers this examination. The following items constrain the Final Oral Exam:

- The student must be enrolled during the semester in which the exam is taken. All students defending their thesis in the Summer need to be registered for at least one credit during that Summer, regardless of their

being enrolled in the preceding Spring semester.

- The student must provide each of the committee members with a copy of the thesis 2 weeks prior to the exam.
- The student must schedule a time for the exam and a conference room at least 2 weeks prior to the exam.
- The student must give the Graduate Secretary at least a 2 week notice of the exam so that an announcement may be posted for others that may want to attend.

## 6.2. Submission of Master's Thesis (Plan-A)

After a M.S. student has passed the oral exam, the next step is typically revising/completing the thesis. After the thesis has been approved by the student's committee it should be finalized in the layout specified by the MSU Graduate School. Students should obtain a copy of the "Formatting Guide for Masters Theses and Doctoral Dissertations" from the Graduate School: <http://grad.msu.edu/format.htm>. for details on the layout of the thesis. The M.S. Thesis must be written using SI (metric) units.

The Graduate School must be provided with one unbound copy of the thesis. You will need to have at least two bound copies made, which will be distributed to the major professor and the graduate secretary for department use. You may need additional bound copies if your other committee members wish to have a bound copy. The thesis must be turned in by the last day of final exams week to receive your degree that semester.

## 6.3. PhD Comprehensive Exam

When the prescribed course work is substantially complete as defined by the guidance committee, the doctoral student is eligible to take the comprehensive examination covering the major and related fields. At least one component of the comprehensive examination must be written and must be maintained in the department (by the Graduate Secretary) for at least three years. Students must be registered during the semester(s) in which they take comprehensive examinations.

The comprehensive examination is initiated, and organized, by the student's major professor and conducted by the guidance committee. All guidance committee members will submit questions as part of the written examination, which must cover the disciplinary breadth and depth necessary to complete a PhD in Biosystems Engineering. The written portion of the comprehensive exam serves as the qualifying examination in Biosystems Engineering. A positive vote by the majority of the guidance committee is required to pass the written exam. The written exam may be retaken once. Students failing on the second attempt are dismissed from the program.

At an appropriate time, following completion of the written questions, a meeting of the guidance committee will be scheduled for the purpose of completing the oral

phase of the comprehensive examination. The student must prepare a detailed written dissertation research proposal (including an extensive literature review of the research topic), and deliver it to the guidance committee at least two weeks prior to the exam. This proposal provides the basis for the oral examination. The oral exam may be retaken once. Students failing on the second attempt are dismissed from the program.

For students who were enrolled in the Spring and are taking their comprehensive exams during the immediate Summer semester, the department can request a waiver of the requirement that the student be enrolled for at least one credit the semester of the comprehensive exam. These requests are to be directed to the Graduate School and must be endorsed by the student's department and college.

The comprehensive examination must be passed within five years and all remaining requirements for the degree must be completed within eight years from the time of a student's first enrollment as a doctoral student. Should the degree requirements not be completed within this eight year period, the doctoral comprehensive examination must be passed again.

Full time status for doctoral students is defined as a minimum of 1 credit for those students who: a) Have successfully completed the comprehensive examination and are actively engaged in dissertation research: or b) Are doing department-approved off-campus fieldwork related to preparation of their dissertation.

#### 6.4. Defense of Doctoral Dissertation (Final Oral Exam)

The defense of the dissertation is conducted and evaluated by the guidance committee. Other interested faculty members may attend the examination, but not vote. The defense of the dissertation must be scheduled for a date not earlier than two weeks after the dissertation and abstract have been submitted to the chairperson of the guidance committee, other guidance committee members, and any appointed examiner. The following items constrain the Final Oral Exam:

- The student should be enrolled during the semester in which the exam is taken. All students defending their dissertation in the Summer need to be registered for at least one credit during that Summer, regardless of their being enrolled in the preceding Spring semester.
- The student must provide each of your committee members with a copy of the dissertation 2 weeks prior to the exam.
- The student must schedule a time for the exam and a conference room at least 2 weeks prior to the exam.
- The student must give the Graduate Secretary at least a 2 week notice of the exam so that an announcement may be posted for others that may want to attend.

## 6.5. Submission of Doctoral Dissertation

After a Ph.D. student has passed the oral exam, the next step is typically revising/completing the dissertation. After the thesis has been approved by the student's committee it should be finalized in the layout specified by the MSU Graduate School. Students should obtain a copy of the "Formatting Guide for Masters Theses and Doctoral Dissertations" from the Graduate School: <http://grad.msu.edu/format.htm>. for details on the layout of the thesis. The Ph.D. Dissertation must be written using SI (metric) units.

The Graduate School must be provided with one unbound copy of the dissertation. The student will need to have at least two bound copies made which will be distributed to the major professor and the graduate secretary. The student may need additional bound copies if your other committee members wish to have a bound copy. The dissertation must be turned in by the last day of final exams week to receive your degree that semester. Note: the MSU publishing agreement for dissertations with ProQuest provides an "Open Access Publishing Option" as an alternative to the traditional publishing option available to students. The Open Access option gives ProQuest the authorization to make the electronic version of the document accessible to all via the internet, including the selling of the document by commercial retailers and the accessibility to the work via search engines. A student selecting the Open Access option will not be eligible to receive royalties

## 7. Annual Evaluation of Academic Performance

An evaluation of the performance of each graduate student is made in the spring semester of each year. The major professor is responsible for the preparation of this evaluation for the department and its communication to the student.

The following outline is used for the evaluation:

- Academic Ability
  - Individual grades and grade point average
  - Progress on special problems topics or 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 departmental requirements, he/she shall be notified by the department chairperson or a delegated

representative. When the deficiencies affect the student's status in a degree program, he/she shall be promptly informed.

Students may challenge the outcomes of the annual evaluation, or any other aspect of information that is added to their files, by writing a letter to the chairperson of the department. The letter will be added to the student's file.

## 8. Integrity and Safety in Research and Creative Activities

### 8.1. 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 (Michigan State University "Mission Statement" approved by the Board of Trustees on June 24-25, 1092, (<http://www.msu.edu/unit/provost/resources/mission.html>)) and is an institutional priority. Faculty, staff, and students work in a rich and competitive environment for the common purpose of learning, creating new knowledge, and disseminating information and ideas for the benefit of their peers and the general public. The stature and reputation of MSU as a research university are based on the commitment of its faculty, staff, and students to excellence in scholarly and creative activities and to the highest standards of professional integrity. As a partner in scholarly endeavors, MSU is committed to creating an environment that promotes ethical conduct and integrity in research and creative activities.

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

Breaches in professional ethics range from questionable research practices to misconduct (MSU Faculty Handbook, Chapter VI, "Research and Creative Endeavor--Procedures Concerning Allegations of Misconduct in Research and Creative Activities", <http://www.hr.msu.edu/HRsite/Documents/Faculty/Handbooks/Faculty/ResearchCreativeEndeavor/vi-miscon-toc.htm>) The primary responsibility for adhering to professional standards lies with the individual scholar. It is, however, also the responsibility of advisors and of the disciplinary community at large. Passive acceptance of improper practices lowers inhibitions to violate professional ethics.

Integrity in research and creative activities is based not only on sound disciplinary practice but also on a commitment to basic personal values such as fairness, equity, honesty, and respect. These guidelines are intended to promote high professional standards by everyone-- faculty, staff, and students alike.

## Key Principles

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

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

Students and faculty are encouraged to read the complete text of “Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities” at <http://www.grad.msu.edu/staff/mentoreport.pdf>

### 8.2. 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 that 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.

It is University policy that faculty members and principal investigators (PIs) are responsible for the day-to-day safety and well-being of all personnel engaged in activities under their aegis. Administrative officers, and ORCBS, are responsible for making available to faculty information needed to maintain a safe working environment, for providing safety training, for keeping project directors informed about changes in regulations, and for assaying laboratories and work areas for radiation, chemical, or biological hazards.

All individuals who work with hazardous substances must accept shared responsibility for operating in a safe manner once they have been informed (a) about the extent of risk and (b) about safe procedures that should be followed.

The ORCBS provides live and on-line 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.

Your training requirements will depend on your specific job duties. Some general guidelines are listed below:

- Required for all laboratory employees engaging in the use of hazardous chemicals (and supervisors of the employees): Chemical Hygiene and Laboratory Safety; Hazardous Waste Refresher (required annually after completion of Chemical Hygiene & Laboratory Safety course) and Security Awareness.
- Required for all employees working with radiation: Radiation Safety Initial; Radiation Safety Refresher (required annually following completion of the Radiation Safety Initial course).
- Required for all employees with a reasonable anticipated risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens/human blood/bodily fluids: Bloodborne Pathogen Initial; Bloodborne Pathogen Refresher; (required annually following completion of the Bloodborne Pathogen Initial course)

If you require assistance determining which courses you should complete, please contact the ORCBS at 355-0153.

Any research involving human subjects must abide by the appropriate university requirements. For additional information contact the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS): <http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/>

Any research involving animals must abide by the appropriate university requirements. For additional information contact Michigan State University Laboratory Animal Resources (ULAR) :<http://www.msu.edu/unit/ular/>

## 9. Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution

### 9.1. 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.

## 9.2. 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*. An excellent source of information regarding grievance procedures is also available from the Office of the Ombudsman:  
<http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/>

Graduate students may pursue a grievance issue at the department level by notifying (in writing) the Chairperson. If this occurs, the Chairperson will appoint a grievance committee consisting of three people: the chairperson of the Academics Committee, the graduate student representative to the Academics Committee, and the Graduate Program Director. This committee will investigate the grievance issue and make a written report to the department Chairperson. If any of the designated committee members has a conflict of interest in the grievance, the department Chairperson will appoint a substitute committee member.

## 10. Work Related Policies

### 10.1. Assistantships

Assistantship support for students is determined on an individual basis depending upon recommendations, availability of funds, fellowship and scholarship support, and grade record. A graduate assistant's responsibilities require an average of 10 hours per week for a quarter-time appointment, and 20 hours per week for a half-time appointment. Assistants are expected to meet regularly with their major professor or project coordinator; and, if requested, submit regular progress reports.

Assistantships are reviewed annually by the Department Chairperson and may be renewed if satisfactory progress is being made and funds are available. Graduate assistantship support will be limited to two years for M.S. students, and four years for Ph.D. students. To request extension of assistantship support, students may petition the Department with an accompanying letter from the major professor. A student's assistantships will be terminated if his/her GPA is below 3.0. All courses including collateral will be used to compute the GPA.

### 10.2. Office Space for Graduate Students

**Definition of Space.** Available office space is defined as rooms dedicated solely for graduate student offices: currently rooms 5, 6, and 7 in FAE. This policy does not include any square footage in faculty laboratories. Faculty members are responsible for all space assignments in their labs.

**Allocation of Available Office Space.** Vacant office space will be assigned by the Graduate Secretary on the basis of graduate student seniority based on degree program (PhD students have priority over MS students) and number of semesters enrolled in the BE graduate program (priority increases with the number of semesters enrolled). Also, students continuing from a MS to a PhD program have priority over new PhD students.

**Reclaiming Space.** The Graduate Secretary will verify that graduating students are properly “checked-out” of their office space. Students will not receive final degree certification until keys are returned, and the office space is “cleaned-up” and ready for the next occupant.

Inactive students (temporarily, or permanently, withdrawn from MSU) are not entitled to office space.

### 10.3. Who to Ask for Help

It is not expected that all the answers will be found in this text. Unforeseen questions will arise and answers will be needed. In most cases, the student's major professor, the Graduate Program Director, or the Graduate Secretary will be able to provide the required information. Complex issues may require the advice and action of the department chairperson, certain departmental committees, and the faculty.

## 11. University Resources

Other important sources of information at MSU include the following:

- Academic Programs  
<http://www.reg.msu.edu/UCC/AcademicPrograms.asp>
- Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities  
<http://www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/>
- MSU/GEU Contract  
<http://www.grad.msu.edu/geu/agree.pdf>
- Guidelines for Graduate Student Advising and Mentoring Relationships  
<http://www.grad.msu.edu/staff/mentoreport.pdf>
- Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities  
<http://www.grad.msu.edu/staff/mentoreport.pdf>
- International Studies and Programs regarding safety in world travel:  
<http://keywords.msu.edu/viewpathfinder.asp?id=31>
- MSU Travel Clinic: <http://www.travelclinic.msu.edu/>
- Career and Professional Development Resources: <http://grad.msu.edu/cpd.htm>