

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**  
**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY**

**PH.D. HANDBOOK**

Approved by the Faculty of the Department of Political Science

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the main missions of the Department of Political Science at MSU is the education of doctoral students. This educational process is a cooperative effort involving students, faculty, and administrative personnel. This handbook will serve as a guide to that educational process, detailing opportunities available to students and their responsibilities in the program. It spells out current requirements and the steps associated with normal progress in the pursuit of the doctoral degree.

The faculty and staff are willing and able to assist you in securing an education. I will be happy to meet with you to discuss any problems you may have or any suggestions you may wish to offer.

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## **I. OVERVIEW OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**

### **A. Goals and Objectives**

The primary goal of the doctoral program of the Department of Political Science is to produce graduates who become scholars and teachers at leading research institutions. To reach this goal several specific objectives must be achieved.

First, the doctoral student must develop expertise in the subject matter of one of the major and one of the minor fields of political science covered by the Department. The Department offers a major field of study in American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Public Policy, and Political Philosophy, and a minor field of study in American Politics, Comparative Politics, Public Policy, International Relations, Political Philosophy, and Research Methods.

Second, the doctoral student must develop expertise in research design and quantitative methods.

Third, the doctoral student must develop expertise in the research enterprise. While the particular nature of the expertise depends on the student's chosen fields of political science, in general the student is expected to learn how a research program is developed and conducted. The doctoral student must also develop advanced skills in the research tools relevant to the subject of the student's doctoral dissertation.

Fourth, the doctoral student must develop expertise in written and oral communication. Expertise in written communication will be developed through writing papers for courses, conferences, and scholarly journals, and through writing the doctoral dissertation. Expertise in oral communication will be developed through participation in classroom discussions and debates, through conference presentations, through involvement in departmental professionalization sessions, seminars, and colloquia, through oral presentations of the dissertation proposal and defense, and (where feasible) through experience as a teaching assistant and graduate instructor.

In support of these objectives for the doctoral student, the Department seeks to provide an environment which supports the conduct of high quality scientific and scholarly research and which is responsive to valid academic needs and desires.

### **B. Program Highlights**

- Year 1: Coursework, Selection of Guidance Committee
- Year 2: Coursework
- Year 3: Completion of required coursework, Comprehensive Examination(s), Third-Year paper and review, selection of Dissertation Chair and Committee
- Year 4: Written Dissertation Proposal and Oral Defense of Proposal, Dissertation writing
- Year 5: Dissertation writing, job applications

## **II. PROGRAM COMPONENTS**

### **A. Starting the Ph.D. Program**

All students begin taking courses in the Ph.D. program in the Fall semester. The Director of the Ph.D. Program serves as the main advisor to all first-year students in the Ph.D. program. The Director of the Ph.D. Program will also appoint a Faculty Mentor from the student's likely major field who, along with the Director, will advise the student on the student's program of study and on any other issues the student wants to discuss.

Prior to going through Fall semester registration, students should arrange a meeting with the Director of the Ph.D. Program to plan their courses and discuss selection of major and minor fields. The student should consult with the Ph.D. Program Director and Faculty Mentor throughout the first year for advice and questions regarding the program.

### **B. Coursework Requirements**

The Ph.D. program requires that students take a minimum of 45 semester credits in coursework. Core, major, and minor field courses are to be completed by the end of the fifth semester of enrollment, though students may continue to take elective and other courses as long as they are enrolled. The coursework is designed to prepare students for two main goals: 1) developing mastery in their major field of study to prepare for Comprehensive Field Examination, with additional breadth of coursework in the minor field and electives; 2) developing skills to define research questions and to design and conduct independent research as preparation for the dissertation.

### **C. Plan of Study**

The Plan of Study includes the coursework a student plans to complete each semester of enrollment in the program. Additionally, the program of study includes the timeline for completion of key milestones in the program including: 1) Comprehensive Field Examination; 2) Third Year Review; 3) Proposal Defense; 4) Dissertation Defense. Students should maintain close contact with the members of their Guidance Committees in order to obtain informal feedback on an ongoing basis regarding the Program of Study. Any changes to the degree program must be made in [GradPlan](#) and receive formal approval from the Director of the Ph.D. program.

### **D. Continuation in the Doctoral Program and Obtaining an M.A. Degree**

Students are admitted to the doctoral program on a probationary basis. After the Spring semester each year, the faculty will conduct an evaluation of every first-year student's overall academic performance. Students must gain the faculty's approval to continue in the doctoral program beyond the first year. By the end of the second year, the student may have met the degree requirements for an M.A. degree in Political Science. See [Section III.D of this Handbook for details on obtaining the M.A. degree.](#)

### **E. Comprehensive Field Examinations**

After completing the required courses and before writing a dissertation, students must pass a Comprehensive Field Examination in their Major Field. Students must successfully pass the Comprehensive Field Examination before the beginning of their fifth semester in the program. The goal of the Comprehensive Field Examination is that students will demonstrate mastery of major concepts and research findings in their chosen field of study. See [Section III.F of this Handbook for details on Comprehensive Field Examinations.](#)

#### **F. Third-Year Review**

After successfully completing the Comprehensive Field Examination(s), the faculty will conduct a review of each third-year student's academic record. A major part of this evaluation will be a paper written by the student. See [Section III.G of this Handbook for details on the Third-Year Paper and Review.](#)

#### **G. Dissertation**

After passing Comprehensive Field Examinations and undergoing the Third-Year Review, students must establish a doctoral dissertation committee, write a dissertation proposal, and successfully defend the proposal in an Oral Defense. Once the dissertation proposal is approved, students must conduct the research for the dissertation, write up the findings, present written drafts of the proposal to their committee, and successfully defend the completed project.

After passing Comprehensive Field Examinations and before defending a dissertation, all students must enroll in at least 24 but no more than 36 credits of PLS 999. All students using University services (faculty consultation included) for graduate work must be registered each semester. Minimum registration consists of one course of one credit. Students must complete 24 credits of PLS 999 by the end of their tenth semester.

#### **H. Program Changes**

If the department changes program requirements after a student is initially admitted to the Ph.D. program at the beginning of the Fall Semester of his/her first year, the student retains the right to complete the Ph.D. program under the rules in effect when the student is initially admitted to the Ph.D. program. However, the student may choose to adhere to the new standards that the department has adopted after initial enrollment in the Ph.D. program.

#### **I. Dual Degrees**

All dual-major doctoral degrees require an MOU and must be reviewed and approved by the Graduate Program Directors of the units involved, the Associate Deans for Graduate Studies of the Colleges involved, and the Dean of the Graduate School. A request for the dual major degree must be submitted within one semester following its development and within the first two years of the student's enrollment at Michigan State University. A copy of the Guidance Committee report must be attached. See the Graduate School website for details (<https://grad.msu.edu/interdisciplinaryprograms#:~:text=Dual%20Majors%20Doctoral%20Degrees,departments%20with%20a%20single%20dissertation.>)

### III. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

#### A. Coursework Requirements

The Ph.D. program requires that students take a minimum of 45 semester credits in coursework (which usually means at least 15 semester courses). The program has the following general course requirements:

- Research Methods—three semester courses (9 credits)
- Major Field—four semester courses (12 credits)
- Minor Field—three semester courses (9 credits)
- Electives—five semester courses (15 credits)

To make satisfactory progress in the program, a student will take at least 3 of the above courses each semester during their first four semesters, totaling 36 credits completed by the end of the second year.

*Note:* A student's Guidance Committee may require the student to take additional coursework (in research methodology or a foreign language, for example) if it is necessary for completion of the student's educational program or dissertation research.

#### 1. Required Core Courses in Research Methods

Students are required to take the following three courses in their first year:

- PLS 800: Proseminar in Research Methods (Fall or Spring Semester)
- PLS 801: Quantitative Techniques in Political Science I (Fall Semester)
- PLS 802: Quantitative Techniques in Political Science II (Spring Semester)

These three courses will give students an introduction to the fundamental theories and methods of political science research. They are requirements of the Ph.D. program unless the Director of the Ph.D. Program waives them in advance. Waivers may be granted in the following circumstances:

1. The student has taken an equivalent course in another graduate program.
2. The student is majoring in Political Philosophy and wishes to substitute PLS 802 with another course in research tools suitable to their course of study. These may include a foreign language, a course in philosophy, or a course in intellectual history. A petition for substitution must be made during the student's first semester in the program.

The waiver process must be completed *before* the course enrollment may be dropped. No waiver requests will be considered after the first week of each course. The procedure for obtaining a waiver is as follows:

1. Complete the Request for Waiver of Graduate Course Requirement form (<http://polisci.msu.edu/phd/academics/forms-handbook/>) and bring to the Director of the Ph.D. Program all supporting evidence of the course or courses you have taken (e.g., syllabi and other relevant materials) or wish to take which you think might be equivalent to one or more of the required courses. The Director of the Ph.D. Program will review these materials and may then request that you consult with the current Chair of the appropriate Field Committee.

2. The Director of the Ph.D. Program will then consider this evidence, may consult with the Chair of the Field Committee or the student's faculty advisor, and may require a written examination.
3. If the Director of the Ph.D. Program approves a waiver, this should be stated in writing and placed in the student's file.

## **2. Major and Minor Field Designations and Requirements**

Students can choose *one* of the following five areas for a major field specialization:

- American Politics
- Political Philosophy
- Comparative Politics
- International Relations
- Public Policy

In order to satisfy the major field requirements, students must complete at least four courses in the area—one of which must be the mandatory proseminar in that field—with a minimum grade of 3.5. These courses must be completed before the beginning of the student's fifth semester in the program.

Students can choose one of the following six areas for a minor field specialization:

- American Politics
- Political Philosophy
- Comparative Politics
- International Relations
- Public Policy
- Research Methods

In order to satisfy the minor field requirement, students must complete at least three courses in the area—one of which must be the mandatory proseminar in that field—with a minimum grade of 3.5. These courses must be completed before the end of the student's fifth semester in the program.

Students with a Minor Field in Research Methods must take at least two 900-level Research Methods courses in the department beyond PLS 800, PLS 801, and PLS 802.

Minor fields can also be specifically designed by faculty guidance committees to meet the interests and needs of particular students. Any individualized-designed minor fields must be approved by the Department's Graduate Studies Committee.

## **3. Elective Courses**

Fifteen additional credits in elective courses must be completed on top of the 30 credits of required, major, and minor field courses. These 15 credits may be in additional courses in research methods, the major, a minor, or other categories. Elective course requirements can also be taken in appropriate areas outside the department (subject to the approval of the student's Guidance Committee).



## **B. Guidance Committee**

Students are required to form a Guidance Committee by the end of their first year in the program. The Guidance Committee must consist of four faculty members: A Chair who serves as the student's main academic advisor for program planning, and at least three other faculty members. At least three of the four Guidance Committee Members must be regular members of the political science faculty, and there must be one faculty member representing the student's major field and one faculty member representing the student's minor field. See Section IV of this *Handbook* for further details on the Guidance Committee.

## **C. Evaluation for Continuation in the Ph.D. Program**

Students are admitted to the doctoral program only on a probationary basis. After the Spring semester of every year, the faculty will conduct an evaluation of every first-year student's overall academic performance. Students must gain the faculty's approval to continue in the doctoral program beyond the first year.

To assist in this process, individual faculty members are asked to prepare a written report on the performance of all first-year students at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters. A copy of each written report will be placed in each student's department records. The individual faculty reports will cover the following items:

1. The student's course grade
2. An evaluation of the student's overall performance in the course
3. If there was a lengthy written assignment, a statement that the student did or did not write a paper that was of the quality expected for a Master of Arts degree in Political Science.
4. One of the following three recommendations:
  - a. The student should be allowed to continue in the Ph.D. program.
  - b. The student should not be allowed to continue in the Ph.D. program but should be allowed to continue work toward a terminal M.A. degree.
  - c. The student should not be allowed to continue work toward a terminal M.A. degree.

The Graduate Studies Committee will conduct the initial analysis of each first-year student's record. The Graduate Studies Committee will consider the academic performance of students, the individual faculty reports of students, the assessments of graduate assistantship performances, and the prospects of students successfully completing the Ph.D. program. In order to be approved for continuation in the Ph.D. program, a student must have: (1) completed at least 15 credits in Political Science (including PLS 800-801-802 and 2 courses from the major/minor fields); (2) maintained an overall grade-point average of 3.25 or higher; (3) earned no grade lower than a 2.5 in any Political Science course; (4) constituted a Guidance Committee and received the approval of all committee members of the student's proposed program of study; (5) received positive assessments of graduate assistantship performance; and (6) compiled a set of faculty course evaluations which clearly suggest that the student shows sufficient promise of completing the Ph.D. in Political Science at Michigan State University; (7)

Completed the Department's Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training. In addition, first-year students who have two Incomplete or ET grades remaining on their record shall not be approved for admission into the Ph.D. program.

Based on its analysis, the Graduate Studies Committee will make one of the following recommendations to the faculty as a whole:

1. The student should be allowed to continue in the Ph.D. program.
2. The student should not be allowed to continue in the Ph.D. program, but will be permitted to complete a terminal M.A. degree.
3. The student should be denied an M.A. degree and will not be permitted to register for further coursework.

The Department faculty shall meet before the end of the Spring semester for the purpose of acting on the recommendations of the Graduate Studies Committee. Students who receive the approval of the faculty of the Department of Political Science can continue in the doctoral program. Students who do not receive the faculty's approval of Ph.D. status are not allowed to continue in the doctoral program beyond the first year and they will not have their assistantships renewed in the following semester. Students who are denied permission to continue in the Ph.D. program but who are allowed to complete the M.A. degree, can appeal to be admitted into the Ph.D. program on the basis of subsequent academic performance. Such appeals must be made to the Graduate Studies Committee after the completion of the M.A. degree.

#### **D. Obtaining an M.A. Degree**

By the end of the second year, a student may have accumulated enough credits and met other requirements to apply for an M.A. degree. There are five sets of requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Political Science:

1. Complete 30 semester credits of work in 400-, 800- and 900-level courses. A minimum of 24 semester credits of the 30 required must be in Political Science. Fewer than 24 credits are allowable as long as this is approved in writing by the Director of the Ph.D. program and by the student's Guidance Committee. Thus, as many as 6 semester credits from other departments may be applied to your program. Special reading courses (PLS 993) will not normally be used to contribute to the M.A. degree requirements.
2. Complete the PLS 800-801-802 required courses
3. Among the courses constituting the 30 credits offered for the degree, no grade can be lower than 2.5
4. Maintain an overall grade average of at least 3.25 for all coursework
5. On the faculty course evaluations, gain statements from at least two Political Science faculty members that the papers written for their respective courses were of the quality expected for an M.A. degree in Political Science. Note: If a paper was not of M.A. quality, the student shall have the opportunity to rewrite the paper and resubmit it to the faculty members who served as the relevant course instructors (for which the student wrote the papers) for a second evaluation. (However, the course grade would not normally be changed.)

To receive an M.A. once these requirements are met, the student must apply online for the degree by the first week of the semester in which the degree is to be granted. In order to apply for an M.A. degree, contact the Graduate Programs Assistant to request the coding for an M.A. degree from the College of Social Science. This must be done before you can apply online for your M.A. degree. Application for an M.A. degree is optional.

#### **E. Continuing in the Ph.D. Program**

During the second year in the program, students will continue working toward the completion of the required coursework and degree requirements. Students should be enrolled in 3 courses per semester during the second year in the program. During this time, students should maintain close contact with the members of their Guidance Committees in order to obtain informal feedback on an ongoing basis. Any changes to the degree program must be made in [GradPlan](#) and receive formal approval from the Director of the Ph.D. program.

The Department requires that students arrange a formal meeting of their Guidance Committees at least once per academic year. The Chair of the Guidance Committee is responsible for preparing a short report which indicates the student's progress to date, as well any potential problems in course selections or field designations, and recommendations to resolve these issues. A written copy of the committee's feedback must be provided to the student and to the Graduate Program Assistant.

Guidance Committees play an important role helping student's progress in the program and enabling them to attain their academic goals. So, the membership of a student's Guidance Committee should not be viewed as permanent. It is quite possible that a member of a Guidance Committee may be unavailable to serve in this capacity (e.g., because of sabbatical leave, field research outside of the country, assuming a faculty position at another institution, etc.). In other situations, students may need to change the composition of their committee because their interests have shifted or because of personality or professional conflicts.

Students must notify the Director of the Ph.D. Program if they want to make any changes in the composition of their Guidance Committees—either their Chair or the other members of their Committee. The Director of the Ph.D. Program will work with students and faculty to make appropriate changes. All changes in the directorship or membership of Guidance Committees must be submitted in [GradPlan](#).

Annual reports must be submitted by all students in the program each Spring semester (<http://polisci.msu.edu/phd/academics/forms-handbook/>). The Graduate Studies Committee will report at the Spring faculty meeting on any students in the Ph.D. program not making satisfactory progress.

## **F. Comprehensive Field Examinations**

After completing the required courses and before writing a dissertation, students must pass a Comprehensive Field Examination in their Major Field. Students must successfully pass the Comprehensive Field Examination before the beginning of their fifth semester in the program. Failure to meet these deadlines will result in removal from the program unless a waiver is approved by the Director of the Ph.D. Program.

### **1. Eligibility to Take the Comprehensive Field Examination**

Before taking the written Comprehensive Field Examination, students must have completed at least 36 credits of coursework approved by their Guidance Committees. Up to 9 of these credits may be taken in other departments. PLS 999 credits for dissertation preparation do not count toward this total.

Eligibility to take a particular Comprehensive Field Examination depends on meeting the following criteria:

1. Completion of all the required/core courses (PLS 800, 801, 802). If any of these required/core courses has not been available, the Director of the Ph.D. Program may waive this requirement as a prerequisite for taking the Comprehensive Field Examination, though the student must still complete the course or courses at a subsequent time.
2. Completion of the required proseminar and the required minimum number of courses in the Major Field. If taking any of these courses has not been feasible (e.g., since the required courses were not available to the student), the Director of the Ph.D. Program may waive any of these courses as a prerequisite for taking the Comprehensive Field Examination, though the student must still complete the course or courses at a subsequent time. In general, though, it is not wise for a student to take a Comprehensive Field Examination if he/she has not taken all the courses required for the major.
3. A minimum of 36 semester credits (with at least 27 of political science credits) of graduate level courses must be completed satisfactorily. PLS 999 (Dissertation Research) credits may not be used to meet these course requirements.
4. No grade lower than a 3.5 in courses counting toward the major or minor field and an overall grade point average of 3.25 in Political Science courses taken at MSU
5. Complete fulfillment of any other specific course requirements identified by the student's Doctoral Program Guidance Committee and listed in GradPlan
6. Registering for at least 3 credit hours during the semester(s) taking the Comprehensive Field Examinations
7. Certification by the Graduate Program Assistant of a student's eligibility to take the examinations (<https://polisci.msu.edu/assets/pdfs/Comprehensive-Exam-Eligibility.pdf>)
8. Petitioning the Graduate Program Assistant at the end of the semester prior to which they wish to take their Comprehensive Field Examination (<https://polisci.msu.edu/assets/pdfs/Petition-Take-Comprehensive-Exams.pdf>)

Requests for exceptions, delays, or extensions relating to any of the Comprehensive Field Examination requirements must be made to the Director of the Ph.D. Program. The Director of the Ph.D. Program will confer with the Graduate Studies Committee and the student's Guidance Committee concerning such requests. The Director of the Ph.D. Program will review and rule on student requests for extensions or changes in the comprehensive examination process.

All Ph.D. students are required to take their comprehensive examinations in the Major field in the Department of Political Science at Michigan State University. Comprehensive examinations taken at other institutions cannot be used in place of those given at MSU.

## **2. Administration of the Comprehensive Field Examinations**

The Department will offer Major Field Comprehensive Examinations during the two weeks prior to the start of courses of each Fall and Spring term. For each semester, the specific date of that semester's Comprehensive Field Examinations will be determined by the Director of the Ph.D. Program in consultation with the chairs of the Field Committees. All faculty and graduate students will be notified of the dates for the administration of the Comprehensive Examinations.

The Graduate Program Assistant is responsible for the actual administration of the examinations—i.e., collecting the exams from faculty, distributing exam questions, receiving examination answers from students, distributing student responses to field committee members, collecting faculty evaluations, and maintaining files of all previous examinations.

Each field examination will be supervised by a Field Committee. Selection of Field Examination Committees, including the Chair for each of Committee, will be determined by the Chair of the Department of Political Science in consultation with the Director of the Ph.D. Program.

If the Chair of the student's Guidance Committee is not a member of the Field Examination Committee in that student's Major Field, the student's Guidance Committee Chair will automatically serve as an additional member of the Major Field Examination Committee for that student.

Members of the Field Examination Committee formulate the questions for each Field Examination, and they determine the format and procedures for each Field Exam. *Students must be given some choice of the questions they will answer on comprehensive exams.* The Chairs of the Field Examination Committees will be responsible for collecting and assembling the questions for the comprehensive exams. The Chairs of the Field Examination Committees will also be responsible for communicating the format and procedures of each examination to the Director of the Ph.D. Program at least one month prior to the scheduled examination dates.

All committee members shall grade all questions regardless of which committee member wrote the question. The Committee as a whole shall determine the student's grade and submit the result of this evaluation to the Graduate Program Assistant on the appropriate departmental form. The grading options available to the Committee are "pass with distinction", "pass", "not

pass”, and “fail.” The “not pass” option indicates that the student provided the Committee with insufficient information to warrant either a “pass” or a “fail”, and requires that the student be tested further, either orally or in writing at the Committee’s discretion. The “not pass” option is not a substitute for the retake afforded a student who fails the examination.

Because of the difficulties of maintaining anonymity when only a small number of students are taking a Field Examination, Field Examination Committees will be notified of the name of the student writing each Field Examination. If a student turns in a Comprehensive Field Examination, it must be assigned a grade. If a Comprehensive Field Examination is not turned in at the designated time and place, it will be counted as a failure.

Changes in the format and procedures of written Comprehensive Field Examinations must be submitted to the Director of the Ph.D. Program and approved by the Chair of the Department.

### **3. Retaking a Comprehensive Field Examination**

If a student fails to pass the Comprehensive Field Examination in the major field, the student shall be allowed one retake of this Field Examination. This retake shall be completed no later than the beginning of the student’s sixth semester.

The Chair of the Field Examination Committee is responsible for making arrangements with the student and Graduate Program Assistant to administer a retake examination. A student who fails a retake may not continue in that field for the Ph.D. degree.

At any time, a student may petition the Director of the Ph.D. Program to change one field for examination. But any student who fails a retake may be required to leave the Ph.D. program. If a student petitions the Director of the Ph.D. Program to change one field for examination *after* failing a retake of a Comprehensive Field Examination, and if the Director of the Ph.D. Program approves the change in fields, the Director of the Ph.D. Program shall also specify a semester in which the Comprehensive Field Examination in the new field shall be taken.

### **4. Academic Dishonesty in a Comprehensive Field Examination**

If a department or unit decides that in addition to failing the comprehensive exam, an act of academic dishonesty deserves additional sanctions, e.g., not permitting a re-take of the comprehensive exam, thus resulting in dismissal from the program, then the guidelines provided by [Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) (GSSR), section 5.5 must be followed. To dismiss a student for reasons other than academic dishonesty, the department or unit should follow GSSR 2.4.9. If a student believes that the evaluation of his/her performance in the comprehensive exam was unfair, then the guidelines provided by GSSR 5.3 must be followed.

### **G. Third-Year Review**

In the Spring semester of the student’s third year (i.e., the student’s sixth semester in the program), the Graduate Studies Committee will conduct a comprehensive review of each third-year student’s academic record. During the third-year review process, each student will submit

a paper to the student's major field committee. For students who are doing a minor field in Research Methods, the Research Methods field committee will also review the third-year paper (in addition to the major field committee). The third-year paper must be submitted by the last day of classes of their fifth semester in the program. The field committee will evaluate the paper and submit an evaluation to the Graduate Studies Committee by the fourth week of January (the following semester). If the Chair of the student's Dissertation Committee is not a member of the major field committee, then the Chair will serve on the major field committee for the purpose of evaluating the third-year paper. The third-year paper should be a significant work of scholarship that demonstrates the student's potential to produce research suitable for presentation at professional conferences and for publication. It is appropriate to submit a seminar paper from a class, revised if necessary, or a paper prepared for presentation at a professional conference. If approved by the Chair of the student's Dissertation Committee, the dissertation proposal itself may be submitted.

In cases of failure to make satisfactory progress, the Graduate Studies Committee will consider appropriate measures, including suspension or withdrawal of funding, and removal from the program, and make a recommendation to the full faculty. The full faculty will vote on the recommendations of the Graduate Studies Committee during the Spring Semester. The Graduate Program Director will notify each student of the faculty's recommendation following the vote.

#### **H. Dissertation Proposal and PLS 999 Credits**

After passing the major field Comprehensive Field Examination, students must write and successfully defend a doctoral dissertation in order to complete their Ph.D. requirements.

##### **1. Required PLS 999 Dissertation Credits**

The University requires that students register for at least 24 credits but no more than 36 credits of PLS 999, Dissertation Research. After passing the Comprehensive Examinations, the student is considered to be enrolled if he/she takes just 1 credit of PLS 999 each semester. If a student completes the dissertation before this registration is completed, he/she must pay for the remaining hours. These credits are to cover the student's use of University facilities and the cost of faculty consultation while conducting dissertation research and writing.

All students using University services (faculty consultation included) for graduate work must be registered each semester. Minimum registration consists of three credits per semester for doctoral students with an assistantship, and six credits per semester for doctoral students without an assistantship. For students who have passed all required comprehensive exams and achieved All But Dissertation (ABD) status, the minimum requirement is one credit per semester. Students should complete 24 credits of PLS 999 by the end of their tenth semester in the program.

##### **2. Dissertation Proposal**

Students must prepare a written proposal of their dissertation project. They should work closely with their Dissertation Chair, as well as with other committee members, to identify the necessary components of the proposal, as well as the expected timelines for their completion. While the written proposal need not be extensive, it should indicate the following items: (a) The problem under examination; (b) the major variables which will be included; (c) the type of data and methods of data collection that will be used; (d) the setting or context of the research; (e) the major theoretical relationships which will be considered; and (f) a brief review of major relevant literature.

The Dissertation Committee is responsible for reviewing written drafts of the proposal and providing comments. After the proposal has been tentatively approved by each committee member, a meeting of the whole Dissertation Committee will be held at which the student gives an oral defense of the proposal. The Dissertation Chair will set the general parameters of this defense and advise the students of these guidelines. If the proposal is acceptable to all members of the Dissertation Committee, final approval is granted, and the student should proceed with the project. All of the members of the Dissertation Committee must find the dissertation proposal acceptable and indicate this in writing (via their signatures on the appropriate departmental form) before final approval of the proposal is given. A Dissertation Committee may schedule several oral defense meetings prior to its approval of a dissertation project. If the Committee indicates only provisional approval, signatures from all members of the Dissertation Committee are again required when final approval is granted. A copy of this approved proposal signed by the student and by the committee members must be given to the Graduate Program Assistant to be placed in the student's file ([https://polisci.msu.edu/\\_assets/pdfs/defense-proposal-form.pdf](https://polisci.msu.edu/_assets/pdfs/defense-proposal-form.pdf)).

The dissertation proposal should be completed, defended, and approved by the Dissertation Committee by the second week of the first semester of the student's fourth year in the program (i.e., the student's seventh semester in the program). The Dissertation Committee then supervises the subsequent dissertation research. Failure to complete, defend, and receive approval from the Dissertation Committee before the specified deadline will result in the loss of fifth-year funding unless a waiver is endorsed by the student's Guidance Committee and approved by the Graduate Studies Committee.

### **3. Dissertation Proposals Involving Human Subjects**

University and federal regulations require that *all* research directly or indirectly involving the gathering of data from human subjects—including interviews, and mail or telephone surveys—be reviewed and approved *before* initiation by the MSU [Human Research Protection Program](#) (HRPP).

Graduate students and the Chairs of their Dissertation Committees are jointly responsible for seeking prior review and approval by HRPP of dissertation research *before* it is initiated. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Graduate School accept a dissertation containing data from human subjects that does not have HRPP approval. Graduate students may contact the Graduate School or the HRPP office for application forms and detailed instructions.



**I. Doctoral Dissertation**

Once the dissertation proposal is approved, students must conduct the research for the dissertation, write up the findings, present written drafts of the proposal to their committees, and successfully defend the completed project (<https://polisci.msu.edu/assets/pdfs/Record-of-Dissertation.pdf>). An acceptable dissertation will contribution original research and a significant contribution of knowledge to the field of political science. The dissertation must be formatted and submitted following guidelines provided by the Graduate School (<https://grad.msu.edu/etd>).

**J. Receiving the Ph.D. Degree**

The student must submit a form in the first week of the semester during which the student expects to finish all the degree requirements.

**K. Job Placement**

Letters of recommendation should be on file with the Graduate Program Assistant. The Graduate Program Assistant will upload, email, or mail confidential letters to universities for job placement. Students should consult frequently with their Dissertation Chair and the Departmental Placement Director about job opportunities and prospects.

**L. Table Summarizing Degree Requirements by Year in the Program**

<b>First Year</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successfully completed the three core course sequence in research methods: PLS 800, PLS 801, PLS 802</li> <li>• Completed at least 15 credits (including two courses from the major or minor field)</li> <li>• Completed a total of six courses</li> <li>• Maintained an overall grade-point average (GPA) of 3.25 or higher and earned no grade lower than a 2.5 in any Political Science course</li> <li>• Selected and met with the Guidance Committee</li> <li>• Submitted and received approval of the GradPlan</li> <li>• Completed the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) requirements</li> <li>• Received positive assessments of graduate assistantship performance</li> <li>• Have been formally admitted into the PhD Program</li> <li>• Submitted an Annual Progress Report to the PhD Director by May 30</li> </ul>
<b>Second Year</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrolled in at least 6 courses (18 credits)</li> <li>• Completed the required coursework in the major field by the end of the Spring semester</li> <li>• Met with the Guidance Committee to review progress</li> <li>• Received certification from the Graduate Program Assistant that all requirements have been completed to be eligible to take the major field Comprehensive Field Examination before the start of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year</li> <li>• Submitted an Annual Progress Report to the PhD Director by May 30</li> </ul>
<b>Third Year</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successfully completed the Comprehensive Examination in the major</li> </ul>

	<p>field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed minor field coursework and all coursework identified in the degree program</li> <li>• Submitted materials for the third-year review, including the third-year paper</li> <li>• Selected a Dissertation Chair and Committee</li> <li>• Submitted an Annual Progress Report to the PhD Director by May 30</li> </ul>
<b>Fourth Year</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written a Dissertation Proposal and successfully passed an oral defense of the proposal by the second week of Fall semester</li> <li>• Enrolled in PLS 999. MSU requires 24 (and no more than 36) credits of 999 for graduation.</li> <li>• Submitted an Annual Progress Report to the PhD Director by May 30</li> </ul>
<b>Fifth Year</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed 24 credits of PLS 999. MSU requires 24 (and no more than 36) credits of 999 for graduation.</li> <li>• Written and defended a dissertation</li> <li>• Prepared a dossier for job placement</li> <li>• Applied for jobs</li> <li>• Submitted an Annual Progress Report to the PhD Director by May 30</li> </ul>

#### IV. SELECTION OF DISSERTATION ADVISOR

By the last day of classes of their fifth semester in the doctoral program, each student should identify a faculty member to serve as the Chair of the Dissertation Committee. Students can ask the Chair of the Guidance Committee to serve as the Chair of the Dissertation Committee, or they can select other faculty members whose research interests and skills are more in line with their intended dissertation projects. Students should select a faculty member who is an active member of the Department of Political Science at Michigan State University to serve as their Dissertation Advisor. Dissertation Advisors must be able and willing to supervise a dissertation research project as well as assist a student in other professional activities and pursuits. The Director of the Ph.D. Program will work with students to ensure that they select faculty who can provide them with appropriate advising, mentoring, supervision, and guidance. Faculty serving as Chair and members of dissertation committees should follow MSU Guidelines for Graduate Student Mentoring and Advising (<https://grad.msu.edu/msu-guidelines-graduate-student-mentoring-advising> ).

Students must also identify at least three additional faculty members to serve as members of their Dissertation Committee. The Composition of the Dissertation committee must be in accordance with University rules (see the section on “Planning a Doctoral Program and Appointment of a Guidance Committee” in the University’s on-line [Academic Programs catalog](#)). To summarize briefly:

- The Dissertation Committee must have at least *four* tenure stream MSU faculty members. (With the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in the College of Social Sciences, and the Chair of the Department, a non-tenure stream faculty member or academic specialist may be substituted for one of these faculty members.) Faculty from outside the Department may serve on a Dissertation Committee, but at least three members of the Dissertation Committee must be regular faculty members of the Department of Political Science. A faculty member from outside the Department of Political Science cannot serve as the Chair of the Dissertation Committee.
- Persons who are [not regular faculty at Michigan State University, but who can contribute to the student’s program](#), may serve as additional members of the Dissertation Committee and assist in the work of the committee.
- With the approval of the Department Chair, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in the College of Social Sciences an exception may be granted to allow an Emeritus faculty member to serve as one of the four required faculty members; in addition, an Emeritus faculty member may continue to serve as the Chair of a Dissertation Committee.
- Faculty on leave may be replaced if the Dissertation Committee Chair deems it advisable.
- Students should work with their Dissertation Chairs/Advisors to select committee members who can facilitate their dissertation research. The Director of the Ph.D.

Program can also provide advice and suggestions to students on the membership of Dissertation Committees.

- If a faculty member chooses to leave a committee, students should work with the Dissertation Chairs/Advisors to identify a suitable replacement.
- Students must notify the Director of the Ph.D. Program if they want to make any changes in the composition of their Dissertation Committees—either their Dissertation Chair or the other members of their Committee. The Director of the Ph.D. Program will work with students and faculty to make appropriate changes. All changes in the directorship or membership of Dissertation Committees must be done in GradPlan and all faculty involved must be notified of these changes.

After a student has obtained approval of the dissertation proposal, work should begin in earnest on the dissertation project. This work is coordinated by the Chair of the Dissertation Committee, but each member of the Dissertation Committee should participate in the process since each must approve the finished draft of each chapter. In fairness to the committee members, students should provide each faculty member with a copy at the time it is written and receives the approval of the Chair: the dissertation is a cooperative effort involving *all* members of the committee as writing proceeds.

## **V. FORMATION OF THE GUIDANCE COMMITTEE**

### **A. Timeline and Procedures for Forming the Guidance Committee**

During the first semester of the first year, the Director of the Ph.D. Program will meet with each incoming student to assist them in selecting a faculty advisor and a Guidance Committee. In order to facilitate this process, students will submit to the Director of the Ph.D. Program a brief statement of their overall program interests, focus, and objectives. On the basis of this information, the Director of the Ph.D. Program will suggest appropriate faculty members to serve as the student's main academic advisor and as members of the student's Guidance Committee.

### **B. Guidance Committee Composition**

The Guidance Committee consists of at least *four* faculty members. (With the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School and the Chair of the Department, a non-tenure-stream faculty member or academic specialist may be substituted for one of these faculty members.) At least three of the members must be regular faculty members of the Department of Political Science at Michigan State University. Both the major and minor fields must be represented: At minimum, there must be at least one political science faculty member from the major field and one political science faculty member from the minor field on the committee. One of the political science faculty must be identified as the Chair of the student's Guidance Committee.

### **C. Guidance Committee Meetings**

Students must meet with their Guidance Committees by the last day of April of their first year to plan the programs for their Ph.D. coursework. It is each student's responsibility to schedule this meeting. Students should have the following items available when their Guidance Committee meets:

- a statement of their academic goals
- a brief vita
- a suggested course of study for their major and minor fields in preparation for the Comprehensive Field Examination(s) (see the Guidance Committee Worksheet on the Political Science Department website: <http://polisci.msu.edu/phd/academics/forms-handbook/>)

The Guidance Committee evaluates the overall focus of the student's proposed program and assists in defining the student's research interests. The Guidance Committee approves the final selection of the fields that a student is proposing for their doctoral coursework. The Committee suggests coursework to aid in the preparation of major and minor fields. The Guidance Committee may require that a student take additional coursework, both within and outside the Department, to supplement the basic requirements for the doctoral program. The Guidance Committee evaluates the student's research plans and makes suggestions to facilitate the development of appropriate language and/or analytical skills.

### **D. Entering the Degree Program into GradPlan**

After the first meeting of the Guidance Committee, students must enter their proposed degree program into GradPlan. SIS (<https://student.msu.edu>) provides access to GradPlan, which is the online space for all doctoral student program planning, guidance committee reports and changes, comprehensive and final defense reports, submission of the dissertation to the Graduate School, and the final University degree certification. It provides electronic circulation for checking/approvals and generates automatic emails when needed.

The Director of the Ph.D. Program will review each student's degree program in GradPlan and approve electronically. Programs which are inconsistent with departmental or university policy will be returned to the student with specific information on areas of confusion, incompleteness, or incompatibility. The Director of the Ph.D. Program can ask the Graduate Studies Committee to review degree programs and provide advice in this process. It is the student's responsibility to correct any problems, obtain the approval of their Guidance Committee Members, and resubmit the appropriate changes in GradPlan.

Degree programs must be approved by the Director of the Ph.D. Program, the Chair of the Department of Political Science, and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in the College of Social Sciences. Students must have approved degree programs on file in GradPlan by the end of their first year of study in order to be formally admitted into the Ph.D. Program in Political Science. Students who are not formally admitted to the Ph.D. Program will not have their assistantships or fellowships renewed in the following semester.

Students are required to follow the degree plans (as listed in GradPlan) approved by their Guidance Committees. Students must make revisions in GradPlan and notify members of their Guidance Committees and the Director of the Ph.D. Program of any deviations from their degree plans.

#### **E. Additional Information**

See [Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) (GSSR) 2.4 for more information on MSU policies related to Guidance Committees, including information on how to change the composition of a constituted committee.

## **VI. DISSERTATION DEFENSE AND FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION**

### **A. Enrollment Requirements**

The University requires that students must be formally enrolled at MSU, for at least 1 credit hour, during the semester in which they defend their dissertation.

### **B. Dissertation Defense**

There must be an Oral Defense of the Dissertation. The Oral Defense should be held after all chapters of the dissertation have been approved by each member of the Dissertation Committee.

The dissertation must be defended at an Oral Colloquium open to all members of the Department including other graduate students and announced at least three days in advance by a Department email. The email message announcing your oral defense will be typed and distributed by the Graduate Program Assistant. Contact the Graduate Program Assistant two weeks prior to your defense to provide her with the date of your defense and the title of your dissertation. The defense must be held during daytime hours, during weekdays, and while classes are in session (including finals week). Students should be aware that any defense during the summer is at the discretion of the faculty members involved.

The Oral Defense shall consist of two parts. The first part is open to faculty members and members of the public without a vote. Only Dissertation Committee members may attend the second part of the Defense. There must be written approval of this presentation from an extraordinary majority of the committee; that is, a student will pass the final dissertation defense if no more than one member of the committee has a dissenting opinion during the oral dissertation defense. If more than one member of the Dissertation Committee fails to approve the dissertation, the defense must be repeated.

Members of the Dissertation Committee on campus for that academic year must be present at the dissertation defense. No substitution is permitted at this stage without approval of the Director of the Ph.D. Program. No more than one member of the committee may be a faculty member who has left the University or retired or a faculty member on leave. S/he may continue on the committee for one academic year but need not attend the final oral defense if this is inconvenient. This is the only exception to the rule that all *four* members of the committee must be present at the oral defense. Faculty members on leave for more than a year must be replaced as members of the Dissertation Committee.

### **C. Final Approval of the Dissertation**

Students must receive final written approval of the complete dissertation from an extraordinary majority of the Dissertation Committee; that is, the dissertation receives final approval if no more than one member of the Dissertation Committee dissents. The Committee has up to five weeks to complete the reading of a dissertation. Final approval occurs only after the extraordinary majority of the committee has approved the written dissertation and the dissertation defense.

#### **D. Dissertation Submission**

Upon final written approval of the dissertation, the dissertation must be prepared and submitted, according to University regulations, to the Graduate School Office. Information on electronic submission of your dissertation is located on the Graduate School website:

<https://grad.msu.edu/etd>.

#### **E. Receiving the Ph.D. Degree**

Submit the on-line graduation application form the first week of the semester you expect to complete your degree requirements. If you expect to complete your degree requirements during Summer semester, submit this application on or before the end of the first week of Spring semester. The on-line- graduation application form is located here:

<https://www.reg.msu.edu/StuForms/GradApp/GradApp.aspx>

Students are not required to enroll for classes during the semester in which their degree is actually granted, if this is later than the oral dissertation defense.

Upon completing their degree, students are required to fill out the Graduate School's doctoral exit survey: <https://grad.msu.edu/etd/required-paperwork-and-surveys>

#### **F. Placement Services for Doctoral Candidates**

Students should make an appointment with the Placement Director *before* entering the job market so that they may be advised about placement procedures and become informed about job openings. They should ask faculty members to provide letters of recommendation for them and give them to the Graduate Program Assistant. With these letters on file, recommendations can (with the faculty member's permission) be mailed, uploaded, or emailed quickly. Faculty members may wish to make changes and additions to their letters of recommendation to fit each separate job opening. No extensive Department placement efforts for Ph.D. candidates will be made until all requirements (with the exception of the dissertation) have been met.



## VII. DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES: ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE

### A. Assessments of Academic Performance

All graduate students in the Department of Political Science have a right to periodic evaluation of their academic progress, performance, and professional potential ([GSRR 2.4.8](#)). Therefore, the Department of Political Science has established procedures, designed to facilitate the review of graduate student performance on a regular, ongoing basis.

Students are required to meet with their Guidance Committees at least once each year until they pass their Comprehensive Field Examinations or leave the Ph.D. Program. It is each student's responsibility to initiate, schedule, and arrange the annual meetings of Guidance Committees. It is the responsibility of the Guidance Committee to review the student's progress in research activities, as well as plan for work in the coming year ([GSRR 2.4.8](#)).

By May 30<sup>th</sup> of each year in the program, students and the Chair of their Guidance/Dissertation Committees should complete and submit an Academic Progress Report (<http://polisci.msu.edu/phd/academics/forms-handbook/>) to the Director of the Ph.D. Program. The Director of the Ph.D. Program will then prepare an Annual Evaluation that assesses progress- including academic performance and professional conduct- in the program as of June 1<sup>st</sup>. Evaluations will normally be distributed to students and their Guidance/Dissertation Committee Chairs by July 15<sup>th</sup>. The Graduate Program Assistant will place copies of the Academic Progress Report and the Annual Evaluation in the graduate student's file.

In addition, each student will undergo formal first- and third-year reviews, as detailed in the above sections.

### B. Academic Credits and Grades

Graduate courses in political science are three semester credit hours except for variable credit reading courses (PLS 993) and dissertation research (PLS 999). Students holding graduate assistantships may take three graduate courses per semester, but they must complete at least two courses (6 hours of credit) each semester in order to retain their assistantship. Students holding fellowships should take three courses per semester, prior to writing their proposal and dissertation.

For students in the Ph.D. program, only those formally admitted to the Ph.D. program in political science after their first year shall be eligible for Departmental readings courses (PLS 993). All such courses shall include either one major research paper or several shorter papers. These papers shall be graded on the same criteria as those written for regularly scheduled seminars. Reading courses must be individually arranged with the instructor and must not parallel regularly offered courses. There is a form that must be completed before enrollment in PLS 993 ([https://polisci.msu.edu/\\_assets/pdfs/Permission-Register-PLS993.pdf](https://polisci.msu.edu/_assets/pdfs/Permission-Register-PLS993.pdf)).

MSU is a member of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC). Through this committee's "Traveling Scholar" program a doctoral student can take a limited number of courses at any Big Ten University or the University of Chicago. See the description of the Traveling Scholar Program requirements at: <https://www.btaa.org/resources-for/students/traveling-scholar-program/introduction>.

University grades are issued in numerical form, ranging from "0" to "4.0" in increments of 0.5. (There is, however, no grade of 0.5.) In Political Science, the shared understanding of what these grades mean is as follows:

- 4.0 indicates superior performance
- 3.5 indicates satisfactory performance
- 3.0 is the minimum acceptable grade, but a predominance of such grades suggests inability to complete the graduate program
- 2.5 or less indicates unsatisfactory performance.

Courses may also be taken on a Credit/No-Credit basis. If two or three graduate courses per semester are taken for credit and grades, it is possible to take other *non-PLS* courses of interest on the Credit/No-Credit system. The Credit/No-Credit system is intended to allow students to study in areas outside the major field of study without jeopardizing their grade point averages. An instructor will expect graduate students to perform at or above the 3.0 level in order to earn credit for the course. Students must register for the course in advance on this basis.

The University provisions for incomplete coursework are described in the following passage from the [Academic Programs catalog](#):

"When special or unusual circumstances occur, the instructor may postpone assignment of the student's final grade in a course by use of an I-Incomplete, a DF-Deferred, or an ET-Extension marker."

### **I-Incomplete**

The I-Incomplete may be given only when: the student (a) has completed at least 6/7 of the term of instruction but is unable to complete the class work and/or take the final examination because of illness or other compelling reason; and (b) has done satisfactory work in the course; and (c) in the instructor's judgment can complete the required work without repeating the course.

Provided these conditions are met, the instructor electing to give an I-Incomplete files an Agreement for Completion of (I) Incomplete at the time course grades are due ([https://reg.msu.edu/read/pdf/I\\_Agreement.pdf](https://reg.msu.edu/read/pdf/I_Agreement.pdf)). This agreement specifies what the student must do, and when, to remove the I-Incomplete. The department or school office gives a copy to the student and retains a copy for at least one year.

**The required work must be completed, and a grade must be reported to the Office of the Registrar, no later than the middle of the student's next semester in attendance** (summer session excluded) if that semester is within one calendar year following receipt of the I-Incomplete. Exception to this deadline: An instructor may submit an Administrative Action

stating that course structure necessitates delay of make-up grading until the end of the student's next semester in attendance.

**Failure to complete the required work by the due date** will result in a grade of I/0.0, I/NC or I/N, depending on the grading system under which the student was enrolled. (A student who does not register for Michigan State University courses subsequent to receipt of an I-Incomplete has one calendar year to complete the required work; after that, the I-Incomplete will become U-Unfinished and will be changed to I/U on the student's academic record, and the course may be completed only by re-enrollment).

**An extension of time for completion of the required work** may be approved by the college offering the course only by means of an Administrative Action documenting physician-certified illness or other extraordinary circumstances.

An Extension of Time is a formal agreement between the instructor and the student. After an Extension of Time has been filed, the work must be done by the deadline determined by the instructor or the I-Incomplete will be changed to I/0.0, I/NC, or I/N depending on the grading system under which the student was enrolled.

#### **DF-Deferred**

The DF-Deferred applies to the numerical, the CR-NC, and P-N grading systems.

Given only to graduate students who are doing satisfactory work but cannot complete the course work because of reasons acceptable to the instructor.

The required work must be completed and a grade reported within six months (190 calendar days from the last class day of the term of instruction), with the option of a single six-month extension (190 calendar days). If the required work is not completed within the time limit, the DF-Deferred will become U-Unfinished and will be changed to DF/U. This rule does not apply to graduate thesis or dissertation work.

#### **ET-Extension**

The ET-Extension applies to the numerical, the CR-NC, and P-N systems.

Given to undergraduate, graduate, and graduate-professional students only in courses specifically approved by the University Committee on Curriculum. Approval requires specification of the time period within which work must be completed. Courses that involve field experience or thesis work and courses in which work normally extends beyond one semester are the types of courses normally considered.

A final grade must be reported upon completion of the final course in the sequence or in the time approved for the completion of the work. If a final grade is not reported in these periods, the ET will be changed to ET/0.0, ET/NC or ET/N, depending on the grading system under which the student was enrolled. Ph.D. students who have more than one incomplete or deferred grade at the end of any given semester will be reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee which will recommend appropriate action up to and including dismissal from the program.

### **C. Academic Standing and Satisfactory Progress**

The minimum acceptable cumulative grade-point average for a doctoral student in the Department of Political Science is 3.25. A student who receives two 2.5 grades or one 2.0 grade or less will be reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee and may be dismissed from the program. A student receiving three 2.5 or two 2.0 grades in Political Science courses or who earns more than 8 credits below the grade of 3.0 will be dismissed from the program.

A student who maintains an acceptable cumulative grade-point average and satisfies the yearly program requirements is considered to be making satisfactory progress in the program (see “Table Summarizing Degree Requirements by Year in the Program” on p. 17 for annual expectations towards making satisfactory progress in this program). Students who are not making satisfactory progress in the program will be notified in their Annual Evaluation letters.

### **D. Time Limits**

University rules state that the Comprehensive Field Examinations, including any necessary repeats, must be passed within *five years* and that all remaining requirements for the degree, including the dissertation, must be completed within *eight years* from the time when a student begins the first class at MSU that appears on his or her doctoral program of study. University rules also state that students who do not complete their comprehensive exams prior to the 5<sup>th</sup> year must file an extension request to be reviewed and approved by the College of Social Science and the Graduate School. Should the degree requirements not be completed within this eight-year period, all of the Comprehensive Field Examinations must be passed again.

### **E. Dismissal from the Ph.D. Program**

All graduate students pursuing doctoral degrees in the Department of Political Science must meet the requirements and standards identified in this [Handbook](#). Students have a right to receive a notification in writing when academic progress or performance is judged to be unsatisfactory. See [Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities \(GSSR\) 2.4](#) for more information on MSU policies related to evaluation, progress, and dismissal. Dismissal from the Ph.D. program can occur:

- If a student does not receive formal approval from the faculty to continue in the Ph.D. program after the first year of study
- If a student is not making satisfactory academic progress in the program as identified by the student’s Guidance Committee and confirmed by the Graduate Studies Committee
- If a student has more than one incomplete or deferred grade at the end of any given academic semester
- If a student has not maintained the minimum acceptable grade point average for doctoral students in the Department (3.25), or has received grades that place their academic standing in jeopardy (as defined in Section C. above)
- If a student has not completed various phases of graduate work in accordance with the time limits specified by the department and the University
- If a student fails to meet the specific requirements or stated deadlines of the Guidance Committee or the Dissertation Committee

- If a student fails a retake in a major or minor field comprehensive examination
- If a student was found to have engaged in academic dishonesty in a comprehensive field examination
- If a student was found to have engaged in academic dishonesty in a course

Procedures for dismissal will be conducted in accordance with [GSSR sections 2 and 5](#). The department has a hearing board (see Appendix B) for adjudication of cases that cannot be resolved with informal and direct discussion. The hearing board will operate in accordance with [GSSR section 5](#).

#### **F. Waiver and Transfer Credits**

Graduate credits may be transferred from other accredited institutions or international institutions of similar quality if they meet all of the following university and departmental provisions:

- Only graduate-level courses in which at least a 3.0 (B) grade was received will be considered.
- Only graduate-level courses from other accredited institutions or international institutions will be accepted.
- Only graduate-level courses completed within the eight-year time limit approved for earning a doctoral degree at Michigan State University.
- Only graduate-level courses which are appropriate to a student's program of study will be approved by the Department.
- Only 9 credits can be transferred into a doctoral program.

In order to obtain departmental approval for transfer credits, students must submit syllabi for all of the courses that they would like to have transferred to the members of their Guidance Committees and the Director of the Ph.D. Program. It is the responsibility of a student's Guidance Committee to evaluate the desirability of transferring course requirements in terms of the student's particular program of study and career goals. If a student's Guidance Committee approves a student's request to transfer a course, then it is forwarded to the Director of the Ph.D. Program for review. The approval for transferring or waiving courses must be given by both the student's Guidance Committee and the Director of the Ph.D. Program. Departmental action on transfer course request will not be taken until a student has been formally admitted into the Ph.D. program (which occurs at the end of the first year of study).

Each student must complete all Ph.D. core courses and the proseminar in the major field of study at MSU. Exceptions to this policy will be made only in rare circumstances and must be approved by the Director of the Ph.D. Program and the student's Guidance Committee. In no case shall a student transfer more than nine hours of course credit into the Ph.D. program at MSU.

#### **G. Residence Requirements**

Students must spend at least one year registered in residence at Michigan State University beyond the awarding of the M.A. degree to be eligible for a Ph.D. A year of residence will be

made up of two consecutive semesters, involving the completion of credits at the level of full-time status of graduate work each semester. The Department does not have the authority to waive these requirements.

#### **H. Departmental Records**

The Graduate Program Assistant maintains an academic file on each student in the Ph.D. program. Academic files contain the records of each student's progress in the program, including application materials, assistantship letters, Guidance Committee plans, annual review materials, teaching assistant evaluations, grades, results of comprehensive exams, formation of Dissertation Committees, and all documentation pertaining to the preparation and defense of the dissertation. It will be helpful to students later if their files also contain information (i.e., vitas, research agendas, etc.) that faculty may use when asked to write letters of recommendation for them.

At minimum, students have the responsibility to see that the following are in their academic files:

1. Recommended Action Form for Admission to Graduate Studies
2. Any correspondence related to assistantship or fellowship support
3. Ph.D. Degree Plans in GradPlan
4. Any changes in the fields or courses initially agreed upon by a Guidance Committee, and subsequently approved by Guidance Committee members (if applicable)
5. Any Change in Guidance Committee Membership (if applicable)
6. Petition to Take Comprehensive Examinations
7. Report of Comprehensive Examinations and Final Evaluation
8. Record of Oral Defense of Dissertation Proposal
9. Record of Oral Defense of the Dissertation
10. Approval of Dissertation

Students have a right to access the materials in their own academic files as needed. In order to do this, they should submit a request to the Graduate Program Assistant.

The Department also maintains a second set of Personnel files for graduate students who are employed by the Department. Graduate student personnel files contain appointment forms and evaluations of student performance as teaching or research assistants. Students also have a right to access the materials in their own personnel files. According to the [Graduate Employment Union](#) (GEU) contract these requests must be in writing and each student is limited to three reviews of personnel files a year. The GEU contract is applicable to students in Teaching Assistantship positions; it is not applicable to Research Assistantships. In order to access one's personnel file, a student should submit a request to the Assistant to the Chair of the Department of Political Science.

## **VIII. DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES: INTEGRITY AND SAFETY IN RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES**

### **A. Professional Development**

The Ph.D. Program in Political Science is designed to prepare students to become active members of the political science community. In order to facilitate this, it is important that students become broadly educated and versed in academic science research. Therefore, students should attend talks, presentations, and colloquia held on the MSU campus, particularly those sponsored by the Department. Students should also attend any job presentations given by candidates who are interviewing for faculty or postdoctoral positions in the Department of Political Science. These presentations provide excellent opportunities for students to see firsthand how others present research.

Students should also gain experience in presenting their own research. Such experience can be developed through active participation in course seminars, departmental colloquia, practice job talks, and dissertation defenses. It is also important for students to become involved in the intellectual activities of the discipline of political science by attending professional conferences and meetings. Students should first become familiar with the norms and expectations of research presentations at professional meetings. Then, they should work closely with the faculty members of their Guidance Committees to assume a more active role in this process—i.e., presenting papers, preparing poster sessions, etc. The Department of Political Science strongly encourages student participation in professional conferences, and it will work with students to facilitate their involvement when appropriate.

### **B. Ethical and Professional Standards**

Political scientists share problems in common with practitioners of other scholarly disciplines. They also frequently encounter ethical problems unique to their professional careers. Accordingly, the American Political Science Association (APSA) has compiled “A Guide to Professional Ethics in Political Sciences.” The Guide contains a statement on professional ethics, and a list of ethical principles which are relevant for any and all aspects of political science scholarship. The Guide is available on-line on the APSA Web Page, and it should be reviewed by every political science graduate student (<http://www.apsanet.org>).

The Department of Political Science is committed to creating an environment that promotes ethical conduct and intellectual integrity within our graduate student population. All graduate students should practice intellectual honesty in their scholarship and teaching. In accordance with the [University’s Task Force Report on Research Mentoring](#), the Department believes that intellectual integrity entails a range of practices. These include: Honesty in proposing and reporting research; recognition and credit to prior research; confidentiality of the peer review process; disclosure of potential conflicts of interest; collegiality in scholarly interactions and sharing of resources; and adherence to fair and open relationships between coworkers.

Additionally, the department supports a professional environment of inclusivity and respect. We are committed to the expectations of the [MSU College of Social Science Code of Conduct](#). If

a graduate student experiences behavior they believe to be inconsistent with the values in the College of Social Science Code of Conduct, we encourage you to discuss it with the individual involved if appropriate or bring it to the Director of Graduate Studies or Department Chair.

### **C. Mentorship**

The Ph.D. program in political science is committed to fostering high quality mentoring practices in our department. The Director of the Ph.D. program is responsible for transitioning new students into the Ph.D. program and ensuring that they have access to advising on course selection and other academic matters until they are matched with a permanent faculty advisor. The Director of the Ph.D. program will also foster shared values and uphold the rights and responsibilities in situations where conflicts between faculty and graduate students arise. Faculty advisors have mentoring responsibilities involving professional training, ethical research practices, career development, and networking to support graduate student mentees. Graduate students are responsible for meeting and following the requirements for degree completion in the political science program, staying in regular contact with their faculty advisor, and practicing integrity and honesty in their research activities. Student can find detailed information and support for mentorship at MSU here:

<https://ombud.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/Mentoring-Graduate-Students-Guidelines.pdf>

### **D. Student Responsibilities**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures on ethical misconduct in research and creative activities (see the University's [Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities](#)), to report known acts of misconduct of which they have direct knowledge to university officials, and to protect the rights and privacy of individuals making such reports in good faith. Students who fail to satisfy the University's and the Department's standards of ethics and intellectual integrity will be dismissed as students from the Ph.D. program.

### **E. Responsible Conduct of Research Requirement**

The Department requires all students to undertake training in the responsible conduct of research. The Graduate School's Research Integrity website offers specific information about how this requirement can be satisfied (<https://grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity>). The Department will notify students of specific requirements and training dates on an annual basis.

### **F. Use of Human Subjects in Political Science Research**

All Ph.D. students in the Department of Political Science must comply with the guidelines and regulations of the [Human Research Protection Program](#) (UCRIHS) in the conduct of their research or in the process of conducting research for other students or faculty. Students must obtain HRPP approval for all research that directly or indirectly involves the use of human subjects. This includes data gathered from human subjects through interviews, mail surveys, or telephone surveys. Graduate students must obtain HRPP approval *before* they begin their research projects. Graduate students should contact the HRPP office directly to obtain application forms and to receive more detailed information about this process.



Details on the procedures for graduate students to obtain approval for human subjects research and the procedures for submitting an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application are provided here: <https://hrpp.msu.edu/help/graduate-student.html>

Typically, the graduate student's major advisor or another faculty member should be designated as the Principal Investigator (PI) and the graduate student should be designated as co-Investigator. Graduate students may also be designated the role of PI Proxy- more information on this role is available here: <https://hrpp.msu.edu/assets/click-resources/designate-proxy.pdf>

### **G. Dismissal from the Ph.D. Program**

Dismissal from the Ph.D. Program can occur if a student fails to adhere to responsible and ethical conduct in research and scholarship as specified in this section and in the University's [Guidelines for Academic Integrity](#).

Examples of criteria for dismissal due to unethical or dishonest behavior:

- Violations of academic and scholarly integrity including cheating on tests and exams, plagiarism, and falsifying data. Failure to follow these guidelines can lead to consequences for those involved (e.g., dismissal from the program).
- Failure to satisfy the University HRPP regulations is considered grounds for dismissal of a student from the program.

Procedures for dismissal will be conducted in accordance with [GSSR sections 2 and 5](#). The department has a hearing board (see Appendix B) for adjudication of cases that cannot be resolved with informal and direct discussion. The hearing board will operate in accordance with [GSSR section 5](#).

### **H. Links to University Policies and Resources**

- MSU Guidelines on Authorship: <https://vprgs.msu.edu/michigan-state-university-guidelines-authorship>
- MSU Institutional Data Policy: <https://tech.msu.edu/about/guidelines-policies/msu-institutional-data-policy/>
- Procedures Concerning Allegations of Misconduct in Research and Creative Activities: [https://hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/faculty-academic-staff/faculty-handbook/misconduct\\_procedures.html](https://hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/faculty-academic-staff/faculty-handbook/misconduct_procedures.html)
- Procedures Concerning Reports of Academic Dishonesty: <https://ombud.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/Academic%20Dishonesty%20Report%20Handout.pdf>
- MSU Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades: <http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/regulations/selected/integrity-of-scholarship-and-grades>

## IX. STUDENT CONDUCT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

### A. Asking Questions, Eliminating Confusion

Students are required to arrange meetings with their Guidance/Dissertation Committees at least once a year in order to inform them of their progress and activities. These meetings can also serve as valuable forums to discuss any problems students might be encountering and to raise issues that need to be addressed. Students should also feel free to consult with the Director of the Ph.D. Program in order to obtain additional clarification and advice about course scheduling, degree requirements, program deadlines, etc.

### B. Resolving Problems and Conflicts

Most of the problems that occur within a graduate program are due to miscommunications or conflicts between graduate students and faculty, particularly students and their Guidance/Dissertation Committee Chairs. Such conflicts can arise over a variety of issues, and they can be difficult to resolve. Hence, it is important to find ways of avoiding such conflicts before they develop into intractable situations.

Students should try to resolve problems within the Department. Students should consult with the Director of the Ph.D. Program regarding those issues that they might find difficult to discuss with their Guidance/Dissertation Committee members. In the event of problems with the student's Guidance/Dissertation Committee Chair who is also the Director of the Ph.D. Program, students should consult with the Chair of the Department. All students may seek the advice of the Chair of the Department who has ultimate responsibility for the successful functioning of the graduate program and the entire department.

Matters that cannot be handled informally by the Director of the Ph.D. Program or the Department Chair shall be handled via the procedures in Appendix B.

Students can also obtain advice and information about conflict resolution from the following university sources:

- [Adjudication of Cases Involving Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)
- [Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)

### C. Dismissal from the Ph.D. Program

Dismissal from the Ph.D. Program can occur if a student fails to adhere to responsible and ethical conduct in research, scholarship, or teaching activities (as specified in the University's *Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities* and in Section VIII of this Handbook).

Procedures for dismissal will be conducted in accordance with [GSSR sections 2 and 5](#). The department has a hearing board (see Appendix B) for adjudication of cases that cannot be resolved with informal and direct discussion. The hearing board will operate in accordance with [GSSR section 5](#).

## **X. WORK RELATED POLICIES**

### **A. Graduate Assistants and Teaching Assignments**

All students admitted to the Department's Ph.D. program are offered funding for five years, the normal length of a doctoral program, contingent upon meeting program milestone, maintaining academic standing, and availability of funding.

Graduate students are encouraged to seek extra-departmental funding, either inside or outside the University. Fellowship and grant information is made available for this purpose on a continuing basis via messages sent to students' MSU email accounts. Students are encouraged to review this information and to discuss potential applications with the Director of the Ph.D. Program or other faculty members. When graduate students who already have departmental funding commitments receive external funding, their departmental funding commitment is extended for a like amount of time, and the departmental funding that had been reserved for them may become available for other graduate students during the period of external funding. Thus, graduate students who receive external funding help both themselves and their fellow graduate students.

Graduate students who have exhausted their five years of funding will be contacted about their progress in the Ph.D. program, their financial needs, and their desire for funding for the following year. Students will receive priority for funding if they develop exceptionally good records in the department, but such funding generally can occur only when temporary or unexpected funds become available to the Department. This can occur, for example, if other graduate students who are funded receive an external award, a faculty member goes on leave, etc. Such funding generally is granted only when the Department has teaching needs that cannot be fulfilled by available faculty or graduate students in earlier stages of their programs.

#### **1. Departmental Assignments and Assistantship Appointments**

##### **a. Terms of Commitment for Graduate Assistantships**

Students who enter the program with an assistantship will be informed of the length of their funding commitment. For students with no prior graduate work, this is generally for five years. The Department considers five years as an appropriate period for funding of students in the Ph.D. program, assuming the candidate is formally admitted to the Ph.D. program at the end of the first year of study, maintains satisfactory progress through the remaining stages of the graduate program, satisfactorily completes the minimum number of credit hours each semester, and receives positive evaluations of assistantship performance.

When the Department makes a commitment to a student for five years of assistantship support, that generally refers to five years of support from any funds that are part of the Department's normal budgets or are arranged for or secured by the Department rather than the student. This includes the general graduate student budget, temporary funding that may be available from other Department accounts (e.g., from the faculty salary budget if a faculty member is on leave), research grant funds secured from external sources by members of the

Department, other non-Departmental funds secured and generally managed through the Department, or other University funds arranged by the Department. Funding from any of these sources will be counted as part of the five-year funding period, even though students may have made separate application, either in writing or informally, for such funding.

Funding packages for students entering the program with outside funding (e.g. a government fellowship from their native country) will be specified in the first funding letter. In general, these funds will be combined with a Department assistantship to produce a five-year funding package.

### **b. English Proficiency Requirement for International Students**

International students must fulfill the English language proficiency requirement in order to be assigned as teaching assistants in the Department of Political Science. International Students can satisfy this requirement by attaining the minimum score of 50 or higher on the Test of Spoken English (given by the Educational Testing Service), the SPEAK test ([given by the English Language Center at MSU](#)), or the ITA Oral interview (also given by the English Language Center at MSU). The Department can terminate the financial assistance of any student who does not meet the English language proficiency requirements by the end of their first year in the Program. The Department may require students who do not pass the English proficiency requirement by the end of their first semester in the program to enroll in an English language course at MSU during their second semester in the program. The Department does not pay for the extra credits required to enroll in this course.

### **c. Work Assignments for Graduate Assistants**

Wherever possible, students will be assigned as teaching or research assistants in their areas of interest and competence. Most assignments are made by the Director of the Ph.D. Program and students with any special goals for their assistantships are encouraged to consult with the Director of the Ph.D. Program about potential assignments. Other assignments may be made by faculty members with research grants or with program initiative funds. Students who have definite arrangements for assignments with anyone other than the Director of the Ph.D. Program should inform the latter of these commitments, so that duplicate assignments are not made.

[A half-time appointment is considered to entail twenty hours weekly of departmental work responsibilities. A quarter-time appointment is considered to entail ten hours weekly of work responsibilities.](#) According to university rules, graduate students may not work more than *three-quarters* (3/4) time. An overload assignment therefore cannot be for more than 3/4 time even when the assignments involved, considered separately, might be the same as two half-time time assignments. In general, 3/4 time assignments are made only when the department has extraordinary teaching obligations that cannot be met by the normal complement of faculty and teaching assistants, and a particular individual is extraordinarily well qualified to take on the additional responsibility.

## **2. Expectations and Responsibilities of Graduate Assistants**

### **a. Course Registration**

Graduate assistants must be registered for courses each semester in which they hold assistantships. The University has identified the following set of minimum enrollments for doctoral students holding graduate assistantships based upon their appointment status:

- Quarter-time assistants (10 hours per week): Minimum enrollment is 3 credit hours for Ph.D. students (including credits in courses number 899 or 999)
- Half-time assistants (20 hours per week): Minimum enrollment is 3 credit hours for Ph.D. students (including credits in courses numbered 899 or 999)
- Three-quarter time assistants (30 hours per week): Minimum enrollment is 3 credit hours (including credits in courses numbered 899 or 999)

Minimum enrollment for doctoral students who have successfully completed all comprehensive exams is 1 credit hour per semester. Doctoral students must be enrolled in one credit hour during the semester of their oral defense for their doctoral dissertation. International students are required to maintain full time course enrollment in fall and spring semesters (<https://oiss.isp.msu.edu/immigration1/visa-immigration/status/>)- 6 credits per semester for students without an assistantship, 3 credits per semester for students with an assistantship, and 1 credit per semester for students with ABD status.

Any deviations from the enrollment requirements listed above must be approved *in advance* (i.e., prior to enrollment) by the Dean of the College of Social Sciences. Graduate assistants should be enrolled in graduate-level courses that have been identified as relevant for their degree programs. Any exceptions must be approved in advance by the student's Guidance Committee and the Director of the Ph.D. Program. Visitor credits may count as part of a graduate assistant's credit load, if approved in advance by the students Guidance Committee and the Director of the Ph.D. Program.

### **b. Maintaining Norms of Professional Behavior and Ethical Conduct**

Graduate Assistants are expected to observe the following norms of professional behavior proposed by an ad hoc committee of faculty and graduate students and adopted by the faculty:

1. The faculty member(s) with whom a graduate assistant is working should clearly specify the assistant's duties and responsibilities at the start of the semester, or at a time sufficiently in advance of the date of expected completion.
2. Assistants should be available for work for the number of hours specified from the start (defined as the first day of classes for the semester) to the end of the semester (being defined as the last day of the final exam week).
3. Assistants should report to the person(s) to whom they are assigned during the week prior to the beginning of the semester.
4. Assistants have the responsibility of reporting to the person(s) to whom they are assigned at least once per week.
5. Inability to perform assigned duties should be communicated immediately to the Director of the Ph.D. Program.

6. Compliance with the provisions of the [University Code of Teaching Responsibilities](#) is necessary.
7. The department strongly encourages graduate assistants to consult informally and frequently with their faculty mentors on an ongoing basis through the course of their assignment.

Graduate assistants must also maintain the ethical standards and practices outlined by the Department, the University, and the American Political Science Association (and referenced in [Section VIII of this Handbook](#)).

Violations of the above expectations, norms, and standards will be heard by the Department's Graduate Studies Committee. Cases that cannot be resolved by the Graduate Studies Committee shall be heard by a Departmental Judiciary Committee. If the case cannot be resolved at the department level, it will be heard by the College Hearing Board.

### **c. Training of Teaching Assistants**

The University runs a training program for new teaching assistants. It is normally held in the week prior to the beginning of Fall semester classes. Students holding assistantships through the Department of Political Science are required to attend this program. The Graduate Program Assistant is responsible for notifying students about the times and dates of these training sessions.

Even for students not on assistantships at the beginning of an academic year, it is advisable for new doctoral students to enroll in this Fall training program. The reason is that, on occasion, unanticipated needs arise for an additional teaching assistant during the school year (or for teaching the next summer's courses). In hiring a new teaching assistant, the Director of the Ph.D. Program will give priority to students who have already had the teaching-assistant training.

In addition, the Graduate School has resources for teaching. See the following website for details: <https://grad.msu.edu/teaching>.

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

All Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants must complete the on-line training about the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy. To access the training, login to the ORA training website at: <https://ora.msu.edu/train/programs/rvsm.html>. *If you need assistance, contact the Helpdesk at 517-884-4600 or [empower@msu.edu](mailto:empower@msu.edu).*

### **e. Faculty Supervision and Evaluation of Graduate Assistant Performance**

The Department wants its teaching assistants and graduate instructors to become effective teachers—and effective representatives of the Department—as quickly as possible. The teaching assistant training program mentioned above will accomplish part of the necessary training.

Another part of the training will be the responsibility of the faculty members who work with, and supervise, the teaching assistants and instructors. New students who are assigned as graders for a particular course will naturally be supervised by the faculty member teaching the course. Similarly, students who are assigned to a course to run a discussion section (or sections) will be supervised by the faculty member teaching the course. Students who are given the full responsibility to teach their own courses will be supervised by faculty who teach courses within that field.

### **(1) The Supervisory Relationship**

When a graduate instructor and faculty mentor work together, the supervision should involve the following activities:

- a. When a student is assigned responsibility for teaching a course, he/she should meet with the faculty mentor (or designated representative) to discuss matters such as text selection, course structure, syllabus design, examination design, grading practices, and pedagogical approach (e.g., lectures vs. discussions, etc.). This should be done *before* books are ordered and a syllabus is prepared for the course in question. The intent is to utilize the faculty member's teaching experience so that the graduate instructor can avoid various pitfalls in teaching and course design.
- b. At some point in the semester, the faculty mentor should attend at least one class session taught by the graduate instructor. For a new instructor this should be done early in the semester, and it may be helpful to visit again later in the semester. For an experienced instructor a single visit late in the semester may be sufficient.
- c. Following the class visit, the faculty mentor should meet with the graduate instructor to discuss any issues involving presentational style and technique that may be appropriate.
- d. The graduate instructor should feel free to consult the faculty mentor for advice or assistance regarding any course-related issues that may arise.

For new graduate instructors, faculty mentors should exercise relatively close supervision. For experienced graduate instructors, relatively infrequent contact may be acceptable.

### **(2) The End-of-Semester Evaluation**

Whether the graduate instructor is new or experienced, the faculty mentor has some evaluation responsibilities:

- a. At the end of the semester, the graduate instructor shall have the students in his/her class fill out online SIRS forms. The faculty mentor shall then review these forms. If it would serve a useful educational purpose, the faculty mentor may wish to meet with the instructor to consider issues raised by students in the SIRS forms.
- b. After visiting the class and reviewing the SIRS forms at the end of the semester, the faculty mentor should fill out an evaluation form (obtained from the Graduate Program Assistant), give a copy to the graduate instructor, and place a copy in the graduate instructor's file.
- c. The graduate instructor should either sign the form (signifying that he/she has read the evaluation and has no complaint) or (within 20 days) respond to the evaluation in writing.

- d. If the graduate instructor wishes to appeal an evaluation, the appeal shall be considered by the Graduate Studies Committee.
- e. The Chair and the Director of the Ph.D. Program may use the results from this evaluation process in awarding future graduate instructorships.

It should be emphasized that the primary intent of both the supervision and the evaluation is to ensure that the education provided by graduate students to our undergraduates is as good as possible.

### **3. The Criteria and Process for Determining Departmental Financial Support**

#### **a. Termination of Support During the Academic Year**

An assistantship may be terminated in less than one academic year if a student fails to meet the grade standards of the department, because of unsatisfactory performance during a previous assistantship assignment, due to violations of professional and/or ethical standards, or because the student has not satisfactorily completed the minimum credit hour semester enrollment requirements.

#### **b. Reappointment of Graduate Assistants from One Year to the Next**

By March 31 of each calendar year, the Director of the Ph.D. Program will advise each graduate assistant in writing of one or more of the following:

- a. that her/his assistantship will be renewed for the following academic year;
- b. that the assistantship will be renewed provided the assistant is able to meet certain specific conditions;
- c. that the assistantship will be renewed providing the Department is able to meet certain specified conditions;
- d. that the assistantship will not be renewed.

If the assistantship is not renewed, the reasons shall be indicated. One condition of renewal is that the student indicate in writing (by April 15) her/his intention to return to accept the assistantship for the next fall.

Unfortunately, due to normal University budget procedures it is sometimes impossible for the Department to make a firm commitment to some students for the next academic year until substantially after the March 31 deadline. However, all students interested in financial aid should submit a Teaching Assistantship Application to the Ph.D. Program Director each year (<http://polisci.msu.edu/phd/academics/forms-handbook/>).

#### **c. Termination of Financial Support from One Academic Year to the Next**

The reappointment of graduate assistants shall be determined by the following criteria:

- The student must be formally admitted into the Ph.D. program to be reappointed as a graduate assistant in the second year and beyond;
- The student must be making satisfactory academic progress in the program;



- The student must maintain the minimum acceptable grade point average for Ph.D. students in the Department of Political Science;
- The student must complete the minimum number of course enrollments per semester for graduate assistants; the student must receive positive performance assessments of graduate assistant assignments (as determined by the End-of-the Year Evaluations mentioned earlier);
- The student must adhere to the professional and ethical standards of the Department, the University, and the Political Science Profession.
- Reappointment of graduate assistants also depends upon the availability of funds.

#### **4. Graduate Assistant Benefits**

##### **a. Stipends, Stipend Advancement, and Promotion**

The Department has three levels—[Level 1](#), [Level 2](#), and [Level 3](#)—of graduate assistant appointments. In any one academic semester, the stipend per assistantship unit is the same for all assistantships in a particular level. Actual stipend rates are set in the summer and become effective on August 15.

- For a Level 1 assistantship the graduate student has a bachelor's degree and less than one year's experience as a graduate assistant at MSU. They conduct research, perform administrative tasks or other supervised duties such as reading and grading papers.
- For a Level 2 assistantship appointment the graduate student must possess a master's degree or the equivalent in a field deemed relevant to political science and/or have completed at least one year as a graduate assistantship at MSU. After completing two assistantship semesters, the student is automatically transferred to Level 2 for the duration of the appointment.
- For a Level 3 assistantship appointment, successful completion of doctoral comprehensive exams, as defined by the department in which the student is enrolled, and six semesters of experience as a graduate RA/TE at Michigan State University. This designation will hold for the remainder of the time that the student is on an assistantship.

The pay period for Fall semester begins on August 16 and the assistant receives a paycheck biweekly during the semester. To have your paycheck directly deposited to the bank of your choice you may contact the Payroll office at 350 Administration Building.

Graduate Assistantship stipends may not be subject to Social Security (FICA) taxes as long as they meet federal guidelines and federal requirements for enrollment. Stipends are subject to income taxes with few exceptions. The taxability of stipends is subject to review by the Internal Revenue Service. For more information, call the Payroll Office at 517-355-5010, ext. 204.

Only graduate student Teaching Assistants are covered by the MSU/Graduate Employees Union (GEU) Contract (<https://grad.msu.edu/assistantships>). Research assistantships are not.

General university policies covering graduate student assistantships are listed in the *Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities* pamphlet, found on the following website:  
<https://grad.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/gsrr/GSRR.pdf>.

#### **b. Tuition Waivers**

A waiver of out-of-state tuition is granted to out-of-state students during the semester of their appointments. A waiver of out-of-state tuition is granted for the full academic year to out-of-state students with full academic year appointments, as well as for the summer session that precedes or follows appointments for an entire academic year.

A nine credit-hour tuition waiver is granted in fall and spring semesters while holding an appointment. For summer session appointments, the waiver is five credits.

#### **c. Graduate Assistant Offices**

Each graduate assistant is assigned to office space in South Kedzie Hall in accordance with social distance guidelines required by the university.

#### **d. Health Insurance for Graduate Assistants**

Michigan State University and the Council of Graduate Students worked together to offer graduate assistants health insurance coverage beginning Fall Semester 1994. Graduate assistants (domestic and international) are automatically enrolled in a GA health insurance plan, the premium of which is paid by the University. Fall and Spring appointments coverage is from August 15 to August 14 of the following year. Enrolled students may also insure their eligible spouse and/or dependent children (residing with the insured). For questions concerning waiver processing or general information, contact the MSU Benefits office at 517-353-4434 or 800-353-4434, or via email [SolutionsCenter@hr.msu.edu](mailto:SolutionsCenter@hr.msu.edu). Website: <http://www.hr.msu.edu>.

#### **e. Graduate Assistant Illness/Injury/Pregnancy Leave Policy**

A graduate assistant unable to fulfill the duties of his/her appointment because of illness or injury shall notify the Director of the Ph.D. Program or Department Chair as soon as circumstances permit. Similarly, a graduate assistant unable to fulfill the duties of her appointment because of pregnancy shall notify the administrator of her major unit as soon as circumstances permit.

During the illness, injury, or pregnancy the major unit shall adjust (reduce, waive, or reschedule) the graduate assistant's duties as those duties and the assistant's physical circumstances reasonably dictate. If total absence from duties becomes necessary, the major unit shall maintain the stipend of the appointment, provided the graduate assistant is still enrolled, for a period of two months, or to the end of the appointment period or of the semester, whichever should occur first. The graduate assistant shall have the right to return to the assistantship, within the original terms of the appointment, at such time as he/she is able to reassume the duties of the position. More information regarding the university policy on

graduate assistantship leave can be found here  
(<https://reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Print.aspx?Section=351>)

#### **f. Grief Absence Policy**

It is the responsibility of the student to: a) notify their advisor/major professor and faculty of the courses in which they are enrolled 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 RA or TE, the graduate student must also notify their employer. Both employer and student will swiftly communicate to determine how the student's responsibilities will be covered during their absence. Graduate teaching assistants (TAs) should refer to the bereavement policy in the [MSU GEU Collective Bargaining Agreement Article 18](#). Students who believe their rights under this policy have been violated should contact the [University Ombudsperson](#). More information on the university policy regarding grief absence can be found here (<https://reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Notices/GriefAbsence.aspx>).

#### **g. Jury Duty Policy**

Graduate teaching assistants (TAs) should refer to the jury duty policy in the MSU GEU Collective Bargaining Agreement Article 18, IV.

#### **h. Parking Benefits**

Students who own motor vehicles or bicycles and want to use them on campus must register them with the University Vehicle Office. Information on getting a parking permit can be found here: <https://police.msu.edu/parking-services/permits/>.

### **B. Work Related Policies for All Doctoral Students Pursuing Degrees**

#### **1. Computer Laboratory**

Room 219 of South Kedzie Hall contains a number of computers which are available for use by all Political Science students. The computers are all connected to the University network.

#### **2. Activating your MSU NetID and E-mail Account**

MSU uses e-mail for a variety of official communications. 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 aPID and PAN for activation. Every student enrolled at the University is assigned an e-mail address on the MSU computer system. All graduate students in the department are expected to use their MSU e-mail as a way of communicating on an ongoing

basis with faculty, staff, and other students during the course of their studies at MSU. The link for activating your account: <https://tech.msu.edu/new-students/>.

### **3. Political Science Graduate Student Association (GSA)**

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is represented at faculty meetings by its own elected President and Vice President. Active members of the GSA elect representatives to various departmental committees, and the GSA sponsors a number of social activities for graduate students and faculty each year. The GSA also makes recommendations to the Departmental Chairperson or Department committees on matters of professional importance to graduate students.

### **4. Health Services**

All regularly enrolled doctoral students carrying six or more credits are eligible for health services during the semester in which they are enrolled. Other students who have fewer than six credits as well as spouses of students may purchase a Health Service card at Olin Health Center entitling them to Health Center services during the semester in which they or their spouse are enrolled. Unenrolled students and their spouses may purchase a Health Service card for one semester following their eligibility. For complete details see: <https://www.hr.msu.edu/benefits/graduate-assistants/index.html>.

### **5. International Travel**

MSU students traveling internationally on University-affiliated non-education abroad travel must register their travel with MSU. Travel is considered University-affiliated if it is funded by MSU or occurs in connection with your enrollment at MSU. This includes registered student organizations, students traveling with MSU faculty or staff, and College of Law international programs. See: <https://oihs.isp.msu.edu/students>

### **6. Special Services**

Auxiliary aids and services are available to students with special needs and disabilities. Please contact the Department of Political Science office at 355-6590 and the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-7273 for more information. The website for the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities: <https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/>.

## **XI. UNIVERSITY RESOURCES**

### **A. Frequently Contacted Offices**

Department of Political Science: <http://polisci.msu.edu/>

Graduate School: <https://grad.msu.edu/>

Office of Graduate Studies, College of Social Science:  
<https://socialscience.msu.edu/graduate/index.html>

Registrar's Office: <https://www.reg.msu.edu/>

Financial Aid: [www.finaid.msu.edu](http://www.finaid.msu.edu)

Parking, Department of Police and Public Safety: <http://www.police.msu.edu/>

Payroll Office: <http://www.ctrl.msu.edu/copayroll/>

### **B. Campus-Wide Services and Support for Graduate Students**

Office of the Ombudsperson: <https://ombud.msu.edu/>

Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities:

<https://grad.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/gsrr/GSRR.pdf>

Council of Graduate Students: <http://cogs.msu.edu/>

Student Affairs and Services: [www.vps.msu.edu/vpsas/index.htm](http://www.vps.msu.edu/vpsas/index.htm)

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: <https://inclusion.msu.edu/education/inclusion-elearning.html>

Career Services Network: <http://careernetwork.msu.edu/>

Counseling & Psychiatric Services: <https://caps.msu.edu/>

English Language Center: [www.elc.msu.edu](http://www.elc.msu.edu)

Graduate Employees Union (GEU): [www.geuatmsu.org](http://www.geuatmsu.org)

Office for International Students and Scholars: [www.oiss.msu.edu](http://www.oiss.msu.edu)

International Studies & Programs: [www.isp.msu.edu](http://www.isp.msu.edu)

Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities: [www.rcpd.msu.edu](http://www.rcpd.msu.edu)

MSU Human Resources: <https://www.hr.msu.edu/benefits/graduate-assistants/index.html>

Student Health Services: [www.olin.msu.edu](http://www.olin.msu.edu)

WorkLife Office: <https://worklife.msu.edu/>

Human Research Protection Program: <https://hrpp.msu.edu/>

## APPENDIX A: CHECKLIST OF NORMAL PROGRESS IN THE PH.D. PROGRAM

### FIRST YEAR

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Meeting with the Director of the Ph.D. Program to prepare your first-year program before the start of the Fall Semester
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Successful completion of the three core course sequence: PLS 800, 801, 802
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Completion of at least three other courses (9 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Selection of and meeting with Guidance Committee (no later than April of the second semester, first year)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Approval of coursework in GradPlan by Guidance Committee and PhD Director by last day of April
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Admission to the Ph.D. program by the Department (end of finals week)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Submission of Annual Progress Report to Ph.D. Director by May 30<sup>th</sup>
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Completion of Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) requirements

### SECOND YEAR

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Enrollment in at least 6 courses (18 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Completion of required coursework in major field by end of the Spring Semester of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Meeting with Guidance Committee to review progress
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Certification by the Graduate Program Assistant that all requirements have been completed to be eligible to take Comprehensive Field Examinations before the start of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Master's Degree (optional) awarded at completion of 30 semester credits and certification by Department that graduate work has been of Master's Degree quality
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Submission of Annual Progress Report to Ph.D. Director by May 30<sup>th</sup>
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Completion of Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) requirements

### **THIRD YEAR**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Successful completion of Comprehensive Field Examination in major
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Completion of minor field coursework by the end of the first semester of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Completion of all coursework identified in degree program by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Submission of materials for third-year annual review, including the third-year paper, by the last day of classes of the Fall semester
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Selection of Dissertation Chair and Committee by the last day of classes of the Fall semester
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Submission of Annual Progress Report to Ph.D. Director by May 30<sup>th</sup>
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Completion of Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) requirements
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Enrollment in PLS 999 credits

### **FOURTH & FIFTH YEARS**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Written Dissertation Proposal and Oral Defense of Proposal by the second week of Fall semester of the 4<sup>th</sup> year. Submission of completed form with signatures of all committee members submitted to Graduate Program Assistant
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Submission of Annual Progress Report to Ph.D. Director by May 30<sup>th</sup> of each year
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Writing of dissertation
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Tentative dissertation approval by committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Submit a dissertation draft, in final form for the oral defense to members of Dissertation Committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Two weeks before the defense, contact the Graduate Program Assistant with the title of the dissertation and the date and time of the defense
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Oral dissertation defense (full committee, open to all departmental members). Must receive written approval of this oral presentation from an extraordinary majority of the committee; i.e., no more than one committee member dissents, and submit completed form with committee members' signatures to Graduate Program Assistant

- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Enrollment in at least one credit hour during the semester of the oral defense. Must register for and complete a total of 24 (and no more than 36) credits of PLS 999 (Dissertation Credits) before eligible to graduate
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Completion of Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) requirements
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Obtain a dissertation submission packet from the Graduate School
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Final dissertation approval by committee members. Final approval occurs only after an extraordinary majority of the committee approves the final written dissertation
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Complete and submit dissertation approval form with signatures of all committee members to Graduate Program Assistant
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Complete and submit online *Application for Graduation*
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Electronic submission of the final copy of the dissertation and payment to the Graduate School in accordance with its procedures and deadline dates
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Prepare your dossier for job placement
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Request confidential letters of recommendation for placement file



## **Appendix B: Graduate Student Academic Grievance Hearing Procedures for the Political Science Program**

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

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The [Michigan State University Student Rights and Responsibilities \(SRR\)](#) and the [Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities \(GSRR\)](#) documents establish the rights and responsibilities of MSU students and prescribe procedures to resolve allegations of violations of those rights through formal grievance hearings. In accordance with the SRR and the GSRR, the Political Science Program has established the following Hearing Board procedures for adjudicating graduate student academic grievances and complaints. (See GSRR 5.4.)

### **I. JURISDICTION OF THE POLITICAL SCIENCE PROGRAM HEARING BOARD:**

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

### **II. COMPOSITION OF THE HEARING BOARD:**

- A. The Program shall constitute a Hearing Board pool no later than the end of the tenth week of the spring semester according to established Program procedures. Hearing Board members serve one year terms with reappointment possible. The Hearing Board pool should include both faculty and graduate students. (See GSRR 5.1.2 and 5.1.6.)
- B. The Chair of the Hearing Board shall be the faculty member with rank who shall vote only in the event of a tie. In addition to the Chair, the Hearing Board shall include an equal number of voting graduate students and faculty. (See GSRR 5.1.2, and 5.1.5.)

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

### **III. REFERRAL TO THE HEARING BOARD:**

- A. After consulting with the instructor and appropriate unit administrator, graduate students who remain dissatisfied with their attempt to resolve an allegation of a violation of student academic rights or an allegation of academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards or falsifying admission and academic records) may request an academic grievance hearing. When appropriate, the Department Chair, in consultation with the Dean, may waive jurisdiction and refer the request for an initial hearing to the College Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.3.6.2.)
- B. At any time in the grievance process, either party may consult with the University Ombudsperson. (See GSRR 5.3.2.)
- C. In cases of ambiguous jurisdiction, the Dean of The Graduate School will select the appropriate Hearing Board for cases involving graduate students. (See GSRR 5.3.5.)
- D. Generally, the deadline for submitting the written request for a hearing is the middle of the next semester in which the student is enrolled (including Summer). In cases in which a student seeks to contest an allegation of academic misconduct and the student's dean has called for an academic disciplinary hearing, the student has **10** class days to request an academic grievance to contest the allegation. (See GSRR 5.3.6.1 and 5.5.2.2.)
- E. If either the student (the complainant) or the respondent (usually, the instructor or an administrator) is absent from the university during that semester, or if other appropriate reasons emerge, the Hearing Board may grant an extension of this deadline. If the university no longer employs the respondent before the grievance hearing commences, the hearing may proceed. (See GSRR 5.4.9.)
- F. A written request for an academic grievance hearing must (1) specify the specific bases for the grievance, including the alleged violation(s), (2) identify the individual against whom the grievance is filed (the respondent) and (3) state the desired redress. Anonymous grievances will not be accepted. (See GSRR 5.1 and 5.3.6.)

### **IV. PRE-HEARING PROCEDURES**

- A. After receiving a graduate student's written request for a hearing, the Chair of the Department will promptly refer the grievance to the Chair of the Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.3.2, 5.4.3.)
- B. Within **5** class days, the Chair of the Hearing Board will:
1. forward the request for a hearing to the respondent and ask for a written response;
  2. send the names of the Hearing Board members to both parties and, to avoid conflicts of interest between the two parties and the Hearing Board members, request written challenges, if any, within **3** class days of this notification. In addition to conflict of interest challenges, either party can challenge two hearing board members without cause (GSRR 5.1.7.c);
  3. rule promptly on any challenges, impanel a Hearing Board and send each party the names of the Hearing Board members. If the Chair of the Hearing Board is the subject of a challenge, the challenge shall be filed with the Dean of the College, or designee (See GSRR 5.1.7.). Decisions by the Hearing Board chair or the College Dean (or designee) on conflict of interest challenges are final;
  4. send the Hearing Board members a copy of the request for a hearing and the respondent's written response, and send all parties a copy of these procedures.
- C. Within **5** class days of being established, the Hearing Board shall review the request, and, after considering all requested and submitted information:
1. accept the request, in full or in part, and promptly schedule a hearing.
  2. reject the request and provide a written explanation to appropriate parties; e.g., lack of jurisdiction. (The student may appeal this decision.)
  3. the GSRR allows the hearing board to invite the two parties to meet with the Hearing Board in an informal session to try to resolve the matter. Such a meeting does not preclude a later hearing. However, by the time a grievance is requested all informal methods of conflict resolution should have been exhausted so this option is rarely used. (See GSRR 5.4.6.)
- D. If the Hearing Board calls for a hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall promptly negotiate a hearing date, schedule an additional meeting only for the Hearing Board should additional deliberations on the findings become necessary, and request a written response to the grievance from the respondent.

- E. At least **5** class days before the scheduled hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall notify the respondent and the complainant in writing of the (1) time, date, and place of the hearing; (2) the names of the parties to the grievance; (3) a copy of the hearing request and the respondent's reply; and (4) the names of the Hearing Board members after any challenges. (See GSRR 5.4.7.)
- F. At least **3** class days before the scheduled hearing, the parties must notify the Chair of the Hearing Board the names of their witnesses and advisor, if any, and request permission for the advisor to have voice at the hearing. The chair may grant or deny this request. The Chair will promptly forward the names given by the complainant to the respondent and visa versa. (See GSRR 5.4.7.1.)
- G. The Chair of the Hearing Board may accept written statements from either party's witnesses at least **3** class days before the hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.9.)
- H. In unusual circumstances and in lieu of a personal appearance, either party may request permission to submit a written statement to the Hearing Board or request permission to participate in the hearing through an electronic communication channel. Written statements must be submitted to the Hearing Board at least **3** class days before the scheduled hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.9c.)
- I. Either party to the grievance hearing may request a postponement of the hearing. The Hearing Board may either grant or deny the request. (See GSRR 5.4.8.)
- J. At its discretion, the Hearing Board may set a reasonable time limit for each party to present its case, and the Chair of the Hearing Board must inform the parties of such a time limit in the written notification of the hearing.
- K. Hearings are closed unless the student requests an open hearing, which would be open to all members of the MSU community. The Hearing Board may close an open hearing to protect the confidentiality of information or to maintain order. (See GSRR 5.4.10.4.)
- L. Members of the Hearing Board are expected to respect the confidentiality of the hearing process. (See GSRR 5.4.10.4.and 5.4.11.)

**V. HEARING PROCEDURES:**

- A. The Hearing will proceed as follows:

1. Introductory remarks by the Chair of the Hearing Board: The Chair of the Hearing Board introduces hearing panel members, the complainant, the respondent and advisors, if any. The Chair reviews the hearing procedures, including announced time restraints for presentations by each party and the witnesses, and informs the parties if their advisors may have a voice in the hearings and if the proceedings are being recorded. Witnesses shall be excluded from the proceedings except when testifying. The Chair also explains:

- In academic grievance hearings in which a graduate student alleges a violation of academic rights, the student bears the burden of proof.
- In hearings in which a graduate student seeks to contest allegations of academic misconduct, the instructor bears the burden of proof.
- All Hearing Board decisions must be reached by a majority of the Hearing Board, based on a "clear and convincing evidence." (See GSRR 8.1.18.)

(See GSRR 5.4.10.1 and 8.1.18.) For various other definitions, see GSRR Article 8.)

2. If the complainant fails to appear in person or via an electronic channel at a scheduled hearing, the Hearing Board may either postpone the hearing or dismiss the case for demonstrated cause. (See GSRR 5.4.9a.)
3. If the respondent fails to appear in person or via an electronic channel at a scheduled hearing, the Hearing Board may postpone the hearing or, only in unusual circumstances, hear the case in his or her absence. (See GSRR 5.4.9-b.)
4. If the respondent is absent from the University during the semester of the grievance hearing or no longer employed by the University before the grievance procedure concludes, the hearing process may still proceed. (See GSRR 5.3.6.1.)
5. To assure orderly questioning, the Chair of the Hearing Board will recognize individuals before they speak. All parties have a right to speak without interruption. Each party has a right to question the other party and to rebut any oral or written statements submitted to the Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.4.10.2.)

6. Presentation by the Complainant: The Chair recognizes the complainant to present without interruption any statements relevant to the complainant's case, including the redress sought. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the complainant by the Hearing Board, the respondent and the respondent's advisor, if any.
7. Presentation by the Complainant's Witnesses: The Chair recognizes the complainant's witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, any statement directly relevant to the complainant's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the respondent, and the respondent's advisor, if any.
8. Presentation by the Respondent: The Chair recognizes the respondent to present without interruption any statements relevant to the respondent's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the respondent by the Hearing Board, the complainant, and the complainant's advisor, if any.
9. Presentation by the Respondent's Witnesses: The Chair recognizes the respondent's witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, and statement directly relevant to the respondent's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the complainant, and the complainant's advisor, if any.
10. Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Complainant: The complainant refutes statements by the respondent, the respondent's witnesses and advisor, if any, and presents a final summary statement.
11. Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Respondent: The respondent refutes statements by the complainant, the complainant's witnesses and advisor, if any, and presents a final summary statement.
12. Final questions by the Hearing Board: The Hearing Board asks questions of any of the participants in the hearing.

## **VI. POST-HEARING PROCEDURES**

### **A. Deliberation:**

After all evidence has been presented, with full opportunity for explanations, questions and rebuttal, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall excuse all parties to the grievance and convene the Hearing Board to determine its findings in executive session. When possible, deliberations should take place directly

following the hearing and/or at the previously scheduled follow-up meeting.  
(See Section IV.D above.)

B. Decision:

1. In grievance (non-disciplinary) hearings involving graduate students in which a majority of the Hearing Board finds, based on "clear and convincing evidence," that a violation of the student's academic rights has occurred and that redress is possible, it shall recommend an appropriate remedy to the Department Chair or School Director. Upon receiving the Hearing Board's recommendation, the Department Chair or School Director shall implement an appropriate remedy, in consultation with the Hearing Board, within **3** class days. If the Hearing Board finds that no violation of academic rights has occurred, it shall so inform the Chair or Director. The Chair of the Hearing Board shall promptly forward copies of the final decision to parties and the University Ombudsperson. (See GSRR 5.4.11.)
2. In grievance (non-disciplinary) hearings involving graduate students in which the Hearing Board serves as the initial hearing body to adjudicate an allegation of academic dishonesty and, based on "clear and convincing evidence," the Hearing Board finds for the student, the Hearing Board shall recommend to the Department Chair or School Director that the penalty grade be removed, the Academic Dishonesty Report be removed from the student's records and a "good faith judgment" of the student's academic performance in the course take place. If the Hearing Board finds for the instructor, the penalty grade shall stand and the Academic Dishonesty Report regarding the allegation will remain on file, pending an appeal, if any to the College Hearing Board within **5** class days of the Hearing Board's decision. If an academic disciplinary hearing is pending, and the Hearing Board decides for the instructor, the graduate student's disciplinary hearing before either the College Hearing Board or the Dean of The Graduate School would promptly follow, pending an appeal, if any, within **5** class days. (See GSRR 5.5.2.2 and 5.4.12.3)

C. Written Report:

The Chair of the Hearing Board shall prepare a written report of the Hearing Board's findings, including recommended redress or sanctions for the complainant, if applicable, and forward a copy of the decision to the appropriate unit administrator within **3** class days of the hearing. The report shall indicate the rationale for the decision and the major elements of evidence, or lack thereof, that support the Hearing Board's decision. The administrator, in consultation with the Hearing Board, shall

then implement an appropriate remedy. The report also should inform the parties of the right to appeal within **5** class days following notice of the decision, or **5** class days if an academic disciplinary hearing is pending. The Chair shall forward copies of the Hearing Board's report and the administrator's redress, if applicable, to the parties involved, the responsible administrators, the University Ombudsperson and the Dean of The Graduate School. All recipients must respect the confidentiality of the report and of the hearing board's deliberations resulting in a decision. (See GSRR 5.4.12 and 5.5.2.2)

**VII. APPEAL OF THE HEARING BOARD DECISION:**

- A. Either party may appeal a decision by the Hearing Board to the College Hearing Board for cases involving (1) academic grievances alleging violations of student rights and (2) alleged violations of regulations involving academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, professional standards or falsification of admission and academic records.) (See GSRR 5.4.12.)
- B. All appeals must be in writing, signed and submitted to the Chair of the College Hearing Board within **5** class days following notification of the Hearing Board's decision. While under appeal, the original decision of the Hearing Board will be held in abeyance. (See GSRR 5.4.12, 5.4.12.2 and 5.4.12.3.)
- C. A request for an appeal of a Hearing Board decision to the College Hearing Board must allege, in sufficient particularity to justify a hearing, that the initial Hearing Board failed to follow applicable procedures for adjudicating the hearing or that findings of the Hearing Board were not supported by "clear and convincing evidence." The request also must include the redress sought. Presentation of new evidence normally will be inappropriate. (See GSRR 5.4.12.1, 5.4.12.2 and 5.4.12.4.)

**VIII. RECONSIDERATION:**

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

**IX. FILE COPY:**

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