

## Application Instructions for the Department of Political Science PhD Program

\*\*\* We do not admit M.A. applicants. We only consider applicants who are interested in earning a Ph.D. degree in Political Science.

\*\*\* We admit students for the Fall Semester only. Students may not start in the Spring Semester.

1. You must fill out an application form, available at: <https://explore.msu.edu/apply/>
2. Pay the nonrefundable application. (We are unable to offer fee waivers)
3. Submit a Personal Statement where you should discuss how your background and life experiences, including social, economic, cultural, familial, educational, or other opportunities or challenges motivated your decision to pursue a Ph.D. degree in political science.
4. You must submit an Academic Statement in which you should describe your plans for graduate study. Are you primarily interested in becoming faculty or in using the research skills to become a policymaker or practitioner? Describe and discuss any research skills that you already have that might be useful in your graduate career and/or any research projects you have been involved in. Also, discuss why you are applying to the MSU Department? As part of this discussion, you should mention the specific faculty members with whom you might wish to study. In the statement, please indicate:
  - **One** subfield which is your **primary/major** interest: American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Political Philosophy, and Public Policy. Please discuss why you are interested.
  - **One** subfield which is your **secondary/minor** interest: American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Political Philosophy, Public Policy, and Quantitative Research Methods. Please discuss why you are interested.
5. Submit a CV/resume.
6. You will also need to submit a writing sample 8-60 pages long. Any original academic work can be submitted including capstone projects, class assignments or papers, research papers, book reviews, literature reviews, policy briefs, or descriptions of data/research. Writing samples should demonstrate your ability to analyze a topic and are best when they relate to your academic/research interests outlined in your application.
7. You will need to personally request **three letters** of recommendation written by people who know you personally and who are also very familiar with your academic work. These three letters of recommendation must be submitted by the recommenders.

To obtain letters of recommendation, add your recommender's information by selecting "Add Recommender." Include all contact information for your recommender, select the waiver decision, and

type your full name as a signature, select "Send to Recommender". The system will generate an email to your recommender that will provide details for how to submit their letter.

8. You should ask the registrar of each college or university you have attended to send one official copy of your transcript to the following address:

Ms. Sarah Krause  
Graduate Programs Coordinator  
Department of Political Science  
Michigan State University  
368 Farm Lane, 324 South Kedzie Hall  
East Lansing, MI 48824

NOTE: Transcripts uploaded by the applicant ARE NOT OFFICIAL.

International applicants must have a transcript and a copy of their diploma, in both their native language and in English, sent by the institutions they attended to the departmental address listed above.

10. An international applicant must submit his or her score on a test of English language competency.

The most common tests are the TOEFL or IELTS. You must request that your score be sent to MSU by the ETS organization. On the test you will have to list the Michigan State University code, 1465. Information about the TOEFL test is available at: <http://www.toefl.org>. Information about the IELTS test is available at: <https://www.ielts.org/>.

Waivers are allowed for the TOEFL/IELTS Requirement:

- If you earned a BA or BS (regular 4-year degree program) in the US.
- If you received a Master's degree from one of the universities in the link below:  
<http://www.aau.edu/about/default.aspx?id=16710>

Note: Any international student who qualifies for a waiver and who will be a teaching assistant must still pass the SPEAK test when the student arrives at MSU. The SPEAK test is a test of the student's ability to speak conversational English.

**Once you have completed your application form, click on "Submit". You will be sent via email an "Applicant ID" that you will be able to use to log into the graduate application portal.**

11. All materials should be received by the deadline for consideration for admission for the following fall semester. The Graduate Admissions Committee will begin reviewing application materials soon after.

If you have questions about application procedures, please email the Graduate Program Coordinator, Sarah Krause, at [skrause@msu.edu](mailto:skrause@msu.edu). For questions about the academic content of the doctoral program or related matters, please email the Ph.D. Director, Professor Ian Ostrander, at [ostran45@msu.edu](mailto:ostran45@msu.edu).