

# ECOLOGY, EVOLUTION, AND BEHAVIOR (EEB) GRADUATE HANDBOOK



All students in the Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior (EEB) Graduate Program at Michigan State University (MSU) have a primary appointment in a home department. *Therefore, this document serves as a supplement to the graduate handbook for each student's home department.* There are more than a dozen departments that participate in the EEB Program, and each department has specific requirements, expectations, and guidelines for its students.

This document focuses primarily on the requirements, expectations, and other guidelines that are specific to the EEB Program. In some cases, these requirements, expectations, and other guidelines may be similar or identical to those for home departments. In other cases, the requirements, expectations, and guidelines for EEB may extend to those that pertain to the student's home department.

All EEB students must therefore be cognizant of the dual requirements (major for Ph.D. students; specialization for Masters students), expectations, and guidelines pertaining to both the EEB Program and their home department. In addition to consulting the relevant graduate handbooks, every EEB student should work closely with their advisor, guidance committee, and administrative staff to ensure that they are satisfying all relevant requirements.

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## Introduction

The Ecology, Evolution, and Biology and Behavior (EEB) Graduate Program offers a multidisciplinary program of study and research in the areas of ecology, evolution, and behavior. Through coursework and weekly seminars, EEB students are exposed to scientific research on animals, plants, microorganisms, and digital organisms in a variety of settings including natural ecosystems, managed landscapes, and laboratory microcosms. Although individual students will focus on a particular group of organisms and habitats, as a whole, EEB students perform original research that encompasses all of these systems.

All EEB students must be admitted to, and subsequently enrolled in, a home department at MSU. EEB thus offers a supplemental program to its students, rather than functioning as an independent, free-standing alternative. In the case of students pursuing the Ph.D. degree, fulfillment of the EEB requirements (in addition to those of a home department) leads to a dual major degree that includes both EEB and the discipline of the home department. In the case of students pursuing a Masters degree, fulfillment of the requirements leads to certification of a specialization in EEB along with the degree from the home department.

The EEB Program is designed to emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of these fields, and it allows considerable flexibility in choosing individual areas of study. Each student's course of study is planned based on their particular interests, capabilities, and professional goals in mind. EEB students must complete the EEB required courses in addition to the requirements of their home departments, and are expected to attend EEB events, including weekly seminars and student-led colloquia, throughout each semester in which they are in residence at MSU. Students are also encouraged to interact and share ideas with one another and with EEB faculty and postdocs during the many formal and informal programmatic events.

A dual major Ph.D. or Masters certification in EEB is awarded upon completion of all the requirements of both the student's home department and the EEB Program. The coursework, dissertation/thesis, and final oral examination to fulfill requirements for both the home department and EEB Program can usually be completed in 2-3 years for the Masters degree, and in 5-6 years for the Ph.D. degree program.

## Links to Select University Policies

[Academic Programs Catalog](#)

[Anti-Discrimination Policy \(ADP\)](#)

[Code of Teaching Responsibilities](#)

[Disability and Reasonable Accommodation Policy](#)

[Digital Accessibility Policy](#)

[General Student Regulations](#)



[Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities \(GSRR\)](#)

[Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities](#)

[Integrity of Scholarship & Grades](#)

[MSU Guidelines for Graduate Student Mentoring and Advising](#)

[MSU-GEU Contract](#)

[Policy on Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct](#)

## Graduate Handbook Sections

### 1. Program Overview

#### Nature of a Dual Program

All students in the EEB Graduate Program are appointed through their MSU home department, which is their primary academic home. Therefore, **this document serves as a supplement to the graduate handbook for each student's home department.** Each department has specific requirements, expectations, and other guidelines for its students.

This document focuses primarily on the requirements, expectations, and other guidelines that are specific to the EEB Program. In some cases, these may be similar or identical to those for home departments. In other cases, the requirements, expectations, and guidelines for EEB may extend those that pertain to the student's home department.

All EEB students must therefore be cognizant of the dual requirements, expectations, and guidelines pertaining to both the EEB program and their home department. In addition to consulting the relevant handbooks, every EEB student should work closely with their advisor, guidance committee, and administrative staff to ensure that they are satisfying all the relevant requirements, expectations, and guidelines.

#### EEB Program Home Departments

EEB accepts students from any MSU department. Most EEB students are from one of the following departments:

- Computer Science and Engineering
- Earth and Environmental Sciences
- Entomology
- Fisheries and Wildlife
- Forestry
- Geography
- Horticulture



- Integrative Biology
- Microbiology, Genetics, & Immunology
- Philosophy
- Plant Biology
- Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences
- Statistics and Probability

### Administrative Organization of the EEB Program

The EEB Program is administered by the College of Natural Science and the Office of Research and Innovation. However, the EEB Program accepts students from all MSU colleges. The chief administrator of EEB is the Director. The Director of the EEB Program is responsible for overall operational guidance, including long-range planning with respect to graduate-student training and budgetary matters. The Director may also serve as a liaison between the EEB Program and MSU colleges and departments. The Director also oversees supportive services and program functions including but not limited to graduate student recruitment and admission, graduate student requirements, progress of graduate students through their programs, support of graduate student research, EEB core courses, seminars, retreats, and any personnel issues within the realm of the EEB Program.

Faculty in the EEB Program include MSU tenured or tenure-track faculty with an active interest in the areas of ecology, evolutionary biology, and/or behavior. EEB core and affiliated faculty may supervise students in the program and serve as major professor (advisor) on the student's guidance committee. A faculty member serving as a major professor should ensure that a student's course of study fulfills the requirements, expectations, and guidelines of the EEB Program as well as the home department. EEB faculty also participate in teaching the required EEB courses along with graduate seminars and other relevant courses. Core EEB faculty serve on program committees, attend EEB faculty meetings, and participate in other EEB activities.

Because the EEB Program does not have its own separate faculty, teaching assignments and expectations depend on the cooperation of participating departments. The Director works with the EEB faculty and departmental chairs to ensure that required and other relevant courses are available to EEB students. The Director also works with EEB faculty and departmental chairs to identify programmatic needs and opportunities, such that the recruitment of new faculty can fill important gaps created by the departure of faculty and, as appropriate, extend course offerings in new directions within the areas covered by EEB.

The **EEB Graduate and Curriculum Committee** consists of two to four EEB core faculty selected by the Director. The Graduate and Curriculum Committee evaluates each EEB graduate student's record and recommends to the EEB Director that the student be granted the EEB dual major Ph.D. or Masters certification provided that all program requirements are satisfied. Each home department will separately evaluate whether a student fulfills its own requirements.

The **EEB Graduate Student Colloquium** meets bi-weekly during the fall and spring semesters to hold informal talks, discuss graduate issues, and research activities. The group serves as a



friendly forum for students to discuss research plans, career goals, programmatic concerns, and other ideas. All EEB members are welcome to attend, and EEB Ph.D. students are expected to present at least once during their tenure at MSU.

The **EEB Graduate Group (EGG)** is a registered graduate student organization representing the student body in EEB. If current graduate students express the desire to EGG leadership to have the Director attend a Graduate Student Colloquium during the academic year, the Director will discuss the EEB Program and its expectations of graduate students, meet incoming graduate students, present any new program initiatives, and hear any programmatic concerns that the students wish to raise. EGG leadership also organizes the annual EEB Research Symposium held late in the spring semester, the Graduate Student Colloquium, and helps organize many of the social events held by EEB each year, including recruitment events.

### Program Highlights

- Year 1: Take EEB core courses with incoming cohort, form guidance committee, begin research.
- Year 2-3: Continue research. Ph.D. students: take comprehensive exam; Masters students: defend.
- Year 4-5: Continue and finish research. Ph.D. students: defend.

## 2. Program Components/Plan Options

The EEB Program offers a dual major Ph.D. or a Masters (Plan A or B) certification. The specific EEB programmatic requirements for these degrees are listed below in the Degree Requirements section.

Other requirements set forth by each student's home department must also be met to obtain either the EEB dual major Ph.D. or Masters certification. In particular, the student should be aware that the format, requirements, and expectations for comprehensive and qualifying exams may vary among home departments, as may the requirements for written or oral presentation of a research proposal. The extent to which the EEB Program's course requirements fulfill the course requirements in a student's primary home department also varies among departments.

EEB-affiliated graduate students should therefore inquire with their home departments about departmental requirements and expectations including information on the following topics: an official plan of study; selecting a thesis or dissertation advisor; formation of a guidance committee; the structure and content of comprehensive and/or qualifying exams, including research proposals; periodic review of student academic performance; and the format of the thesis or dissertation defense and final oral exams.

**The various sections in this EEB graduate handbook that address these, and other matters can provide only those requirements, expectations, or guidelines that are specific to the EEB Program. As such, they supplement but do not supplant the information in the graduate handbook for each student's home department.**



### 3. Degree Requirements

The graduate program for a student in the Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior Program varies with the home department in which they are enrolled. Because EEB is a dual major (Ph.D.) and certification (Masters) program, graduate students must be accepted by and enrolled in a MSU department before joining EEB. Specific curriculum details can be obtained from the graduate office of each department.

The following sections list the formal degree requirements for the EEB Program, including course options and a typical schedule for taking those courses. This handbook also provides a typical timeline and milestones for students in completing a Ph.D. or Masters degree, and discusses some of the factors that may cause delays relative to that typical timeline.

#### Degree Requirements

##### Academic Program

Doctoral and Masters degree programs are planned on an individual basis by the student, major professor (advisor), and guidance committee. The guidance committee has four to five faculty members for the Ph.D. program, and two to three faculty members for the Masters program. The guidance committee must have at least two core or affiliated EEB faculty members for Ph.D. students, one of whom must serve as the student's advisor, and at least one core or affiliated EEB faculty member for Masters students, one of whom must serve as the student's advisor. The committee assists the student in designing an appropriate program of coursework and research leading to the preparation of a dissertation/thesis that presents the results of original research. Formal training is enhanced by a broad spectrum of seminars and colloquia sponsored by the EEB Program and home departments.

Because entering graduate students have heterogeneous academic backgrounds, students are required to complete a series of graduate-level courses to acquire a common base of knowledge. The EEB program consists of four required core courses in three categories: ecology (1 course), evolution (1 course), and quantitative methods in biology (2 courses).

Additional coursework in areas of specialization should be undertaken in consultation with the student's advisor and guidance committee, and as needed to fulfill the student's home department requirements. The goal is to tailor each program to fit the needs of the student.

##### Teaching

The amount of teaching that is required of EEB students depends on the source of their financial support and their home department. However, all students should receive some experience in teaching because of its importance to the career development of scientists. As such, EEB recommends that its students serve as teaching assistants for at least one semester. Teaching assistantships are typically administered through the students' home departments.

##### Education Requirements



Applicants should have a minimum grade-point average of 3.0 in biological science courses. For admission to the program, students are expected to have had preparation in calculus, introductory statistics, and basic biology. Deficiencies may be rectified by taking appropriate undergraduate or graduate courses for collateral coursework concurrently with graduate courses in the EEB program curriculum. Students should consult their advisors and guidance committees for course requirements and recommendations.

## Application Procedures

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**Students must be admitted to both their home department and the EEB Program.** Potential EEB students must **be enrolled in their home department** before applying to the EEB Program. Home departments provide detailed instructions on the specific processes for applying to MSU for graduate studies, which should be consulted by all prospective students.

We encourage students to join the EEB program as early in their graduate career as possible, ideally when first enrolling in courses at MSU or in the first year of graduate study. This will ensure meeting EEB's course requirements. However, EEB recognizes that some students may join the program later in their graduate studies. In general, Ph.D. students should aim to apply to EEB before their comprehensive exams. In any case, no student (Masters or Ph.D.) will be admitted into the EEB Program during the year in which they plan to graduate.

When applying for the EEB Program, the following items should be submitted to the EEB Program via mail at [eeb@msu.edu](mailto:eeb@msu.edu):

- [EEB application form](#) (available on the EEB website)
- A one-page statement of professional goals
- Current CV that outlines education, work experience, publications, and presentations
- A statement from your major professor (a core or affiliate EEB member) that confirms your enrollment in a home department and acknowledges their support of your application to the graduate program

## Annual Deadlines for Application to EEB

For current MSU students, the EEB Program application deadlines are annually on July 15 and January 15. When starting graduate school in the fall semester, students are encouraged to apply to EEB by the July deadline, before the semester starts. Graduate students will only be admitted to the EEB Program after they have enrolled in a home department, provided they (i) meet the requirements for admission to the EEB Program, and (ii) are making satisfactory progress toward their intended degree, as attested by their major professor. Prospective students will not be admitted into the EEB Program during the year in which they plan to graduate.

## Registering for a Dual Major or Specialization in EEB

Per [MSU policy](#), all dual major doctoral (Ph.D.) degrees must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. The process requires developing a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the primary and secondary programs, which details shared coursework, guidance committee members, research conduct requirements, comprehensive exam date, dissertation



description, and how the standards of both areas will be met. EEB Ph.D. students should initiate the MOU process following the approach laid out by their home department (using forms designated by their home college). A request for the dual major degree must be submitted via [GradPlan](#) within one semester following its development and within the first two years of the student's enrollment at Michigan State University. Masters students must add the EEB specialization in GradPlan but do not need an MOU.

### Expectations for Students Receiving a Dual Major or Specialization in EEB

EEB students are expected to be active participants in the EEB community through regular attendance at [EEB events](#) as their schedules allow. Students are also expected to regularly attend [EEB seminars](#) during the fall and spring semesters when they are in residence and are encouraged to meet with external speakers at the weekly student-speaker lunches, especially during their first year in the program. Doctoral (Ph.D.) students are also expected to present their in-progress research at least once during the student-led colloquium series and at the annual research symposium, held each year late in the spring semester.

### Course Requirements for a Dual Major Ph.D. in EEB

Ph.D. students must have at least two EEB faculty members on their guidance committee with one EEB faculty member (core or affiliate) serving as the student's advisor.

The EEB Program requirements for the Ph.D. include 800-level courses in three areas: ecology (one semester), evolution (one semester), and quantitative methods in biology (two semesters). The majority of EEB students take IBIO/PLB 896: Population and Community Ecology to fulfill the ecology course requirement and IBIO/PLB 849: Evolutionary Biology to fulfill the evolution course requirement. However, there are other course offerings that can fulfill the ecology and evolution course requirements (see below). IBIO/PLB/ENT 830 Statistical Methods for Ecology and Evolution I (fall) and IBIO/PLB/ENT 831 Statistical Methods for Ecology and Evolution II (spring) are the only offered courses that fulfill the quantitative methods requirement. The extent to which EEB course requirements also fulfill some of the requirements in a student's home department varies among departments. EEB recommends that students take their required courses during their first year enrolled in the Program. However, course requirements in the home department may delay completion of the EEB course requirements.

The courses that fulfill the ecology, evolution, and quantitative methods requirements for the Ph.D. dual major are listed below:

#### **ECOLOGY requirement (800 Level – 1 course)**

- **IBIO/PLB 896 Population and Community Ecology (core course)**
- PLB 826 Tropical Biology: An Ecological Approach (OTS)
- FW 840 Landscape Ecology
- IBIO/FW 870 Spatial Ecology
- IBIO 897 Ecosystem Ecology & Global Change



Most EEB students take the general broadly-based course IBIO/PLB 896 Population and Community Ecology although students may choose any approved course on the list to complete the Ecology requirement. More than one ecology course may be taken upon suggestion by the student's guidance committee or as desired by the student.

### **EVOLUTION requirement (800 Level – 1 course)**

- **IBIO/PLB849 Evolutionary Biology (core course)**
- FW828 Conservation Genetics

Most EEB students take the general broadly-based course PLB/IBIO 849 Evolutionary Biology, although students may choose any approved course on the list to complete the Evolution requirement. More than one evolution course may be taken upon suggestion by the student's guidance committee or as desired by the student.

### **QUANTITATIVE METHODS requirement (800 Level – 2 courses)**

EEB doctoral students are required to complete the following two semester course-sequence:

- IBIO/PLB/ENT 830 Statistical Methods in Ecology and Evolution I (fall)
- IBIO/PLB/ENT 831 Statistical Methods in Ecology and Evolution II (spring)

### **Course Requirements for a Masters Degree (Plan A or B) with Specialization in EEB**

The EEB Program requires courses in ecology, evolution, and quantitative methods for a specialization in association with a Masters degree through the student's home department. Several approved 800-level courses are listed that can fulfill the ecology and evolution requirements.

The courses that fulfill the ecology, evolution, and quantitative methods requirements for the Masters specialization are listed as follows (and are the same as for the doctoral program):

### **ECOLOGY requirement (800 Level – 1 course)**

- **IBIO/PLB 896 Population and Community Ecology (core course)**
- PLB 826 Tropical Biology: An Ecological Approach (OTS)
- FW 840 Landscape Ecology
- IBIO/FW 870 Spatial Ecology
- IBIO 897 Ecosystem Ecology & Global Change

Most EEB students take the general broadly-based course IBIO/PLB 896 Population and Community Ecology although students may choose any approved course on the list to complete the Ecology requirement. More than one ecology course may be taken upon suggestion by the student's guidance committee or as desired by the student.

### **EVOLUTION requirement (800 Level – 1 course)**



- **IBIO/PLB849 Evolutionary Biology (core course)**
- FW828 Conservation Genetics

Most EEB students take the general broadly-based course PLB/IBIO 849 Evolutionary Biology, although students may choose any approved course on the list to complete the Evolution requirement. More than one evolution course may be taken upon suggestion by the student's guidance committee or as desired by the student.

### **QUANTITATIVE METHODS requirement (800 Level – 2 courses)**

EEB masters students are required to complete the following two semester course-sequence:

- IBIO/PLB/ENT 830 Statistical Methods in Ecology and Evolution I (fall)
- IBIO/PLB/ENT 831 Statistical Methods in Ecology and Evolution II (spring)

### Course Waivers and Substitutions

EEB course waivers and substitutions for non-MSU courses must be approved by the EEB Graduate and Curriculum Committee. Students interested in this possibility should contact the EEB office (eeb@msu.edu) with a detailed syllabus from the class they hope to use as a substitute for an EEB requirement and a brief justification. MSU courses that are not listed in the EEB handbook will not be allowed as substitutes for EEB Program requirements.

MSU faculty can propose to have their courses approved as alternatives for the Ecology and Evolution requirements by contacting the EEB Office (eeb@msu.edu). The faculty instructor must explain why they believe the substitution would be appropriate, submit a course description, a detailed course syllabus, and reading list. The Graduate and Curriculum Committee will conduct a formal review of the course and make a recommendation to the Director, who will ultimately make the final decision.

### Transfer Credits

In some cases, graduate credits may be transferred from other accredited institutions or foreign institutions of similar quality. *EEB students must check with their home department for guidelines on transferring credits that may be applied to the department's requirements.* If an EEB student wants to use transfer credits to satisfy any of the EEB Program requirements, they must still follow the procedures outlined for Course Waivers and Substitutions. EEB has no specific credit requirements so transferring courses from other institutions is not necessary to meet the course requirements (if a course is approved by the EEB Graduate and Curriculum Committee).

### Residence

As per the MSU Graduate School, two consecutive semesters of enrollment with at least six credits of graduate work each semester are required to obtain a doctoral degree from Michigan State University. A minimum of six credits in the degree program must be earned in residence on campus for a Masters degree.

## Typical Timeline for the Ph.D. Program

This section is meant to give a rough outline of the progression of a typical EEB student towards completion of their Ph.D. and some challenges they may face.

The typical student will devote most of their first year toward required and elective coursework in order to begin mastering the relevant subject areas. An important aspect of graduate coursework, and one that is unfamiliar to many students, is delving into the primary scientific (peer-reviewed) literature, learning how to summarize this information both orally and in writing, and engaging in open discussion and good-natured debate about the strengths and limitations of that literature. Some graduate students also serve as teaching assistants in their first year (and often in subsequent years as well). This experience presents the additional challenge of developing effective teaching skills. (Those students serving as teaching assistants – and research assistants – should also become familiar with the MSU [Graduate Employees Union](#) and the [GEU Contract](#).) Most students will identify their major professor (advisor) in their first year (or even before matriculating at MSU), and they should begin to meet regularly with that individual to discuss possible ideas for research, suggestions for scientific literature to read, the composition of their guidance committee, required and recommended courses, and so on. Most students will form their graduate committee in their first year.

In the second year, most students will complete their coursework and take their comprehensive exam as detailed by the home department. Students should also begin hands-on research in their first or second year of graduate school, even if that research does not become their dissertation project. As the second year progresses, students will typically begin preparing for comprehensive and/or qualifying exams, although the timing and the format vary among home departments. In some departments, one component of these exams is developing a written proposal for the students' dissertation research. Most departmental exams also include an oral component in which the student is challenged to display their general knowledge of the field, defend their proposed research, or both by the guidance committee. While these exams sometimes generate anxiety, they also serve to sharpen a student's understanding of the nature of scientific discussion and debate, while helping to identify deficiencies that can be remedied by additional coursework or revising the proposed research plan.

Students should develop a concrete plan or proposal for their research by the start of their third year of graduate school, or earlier, if possible, in consultation with the major professor, guidance committee, and home department. However, every Ph.D. student should realize that there are no guarantees that a scientific project, however interesting or clever, will succeed. Hence, students should remain flexible by considering changes to their original research plan or even the development of a new project to replace their original one. All of this planning should, of course, involve deliberation and consultation with the major professor and guidance committee. Other faculty and one's graduate peers in the EEB Program will often be excellent sounding boards to discuss research challenges and opportunities.

The typical EEB doctoral student is thoroughly immersed in their research in the third, fourth, and fifth years. Many students will also avail themselves of occasional courses, seminars, and reading groups to further master the knowledge base in their areas of interest and even to look



ahead toward areas they might want to pursue later in their scientific careers. Consultation, discussion, and even good-spirited debate with one's advisor, guidance committee, and peers should occur while the research is in progress. EEB students in these years should also avail themselves of opportunities to attend scientific meetings and, once they are ready, present the results of their own on-going research via posters and talks.

In the fifth year or so, most EEB students will face the triple challenge of wrapping up their dissertation research, writing their dissertation, and seeking a postdoctoral position or other employment. The difficulty of writing a dissertation can be greatly reduced if students make a concerted effort to write portions along the way, including background reviews of the relevant literature, methods and materials used in the research, and the results of component parts of the dissertation research as they are completed. Moreover, by writing and submitting for publication those parts of the research as they are completed, a student positions themselves to obtain a postdoctoral position and other subsequent employment. In essence, a student becomes a Ph.D. by mastering a body of knowledge, performing original research that extends that body of knowledge, and disseminating that new knowledge via a dissertation and related peer reviewed publications.

Throughout an EEB student's career, it is expected that they will take advantage of the weekly seminars by experts from across MSU and around the nation and world.

A number of factors can prolong the time required for a Ph.D. For example, the course requirements for the EEB Program and some home departments have little overlap, which means that some students may require an extra semester or even an extra year to complete their coursework. Some students may struggle more than others at various stages including completing required coursework, passing comprehensive exams, developing a research proposal, successfully performing the doctoral research, and preparing a written dissertation on this research that satisfies the student, advisor, and guidance committee.

Also, some students may serve more terms as teaching assistants to satisfy departmental requirements or obtain financial support, which may slow their progress relative to students who have obtained fellowships that allow them to devote all their time to studies and research. And, of course, different students have different levels of outside responsibilities such as family obligations. Hence, it is impossible to provide a precise timeline for obtaining a Ph.D. degree. Any prospective or current student should keep in mind the considerable intellectual challenges imposed by the requirements for mastering a subject area, performing original research, and writing up the results of that research.

**Formal time limits are imposed by the student's home department and by the MSU Graduate School on completing comprehensive examinations and defending the dissertation.**

### Typical Timeline for a Masters Specialization

The typical time required for an EEB Masters student is two to three years, with the timeline depending on the requirements of the student's home department as well as the type of program

that is pursued. The EEB required coursework can be reasonably completed in a single year, although more time may be required if the home department also requires many courses. Prospective EEB Masters students should consult their home department's student handbook. Formal time limits are imposed by the home department and MSU's Graduate School for completing the requirements for the Masters degree.

### Language Requirement

EEB does not have a foreign language proficiency requirement.

### Requirements Table

Requirement	Due Date	Time Limit
Application to EEB	Recommended Year 1	At least one academic year before graduation, ideally before comprehensive exam
EEB Coursework Completion	Recommended Years 1-2	Must be completed by graduation, ideally before comprehensive exam
Formation of Guidance Committee	Recommended by end of Year 1	See home department's graduate handbook for guidelines
PhD Only: Comprehensive Exam	Recommended during or before Year 3	See home department's graduate handbook for guidelines
EEB Graduation Application	MS: Final semester PhD: Final semester	Final semester
Defense of thesis/dissertation	MS: Final semester PhD: Final semester	See home department's graduate handbook for guidelines

#### 4. Selection of the Major Professor (Thesis/Dissertation Advisor)

The choice of the major professor (advisor), who will mentor a student and help guide their research, is one of the most important decisions that a graduate student will make. The process behind this choice, as well as its timing, depends on many factors and varies among home departments. Many students begin graduate school already knowing who they intend to work with, whereas in some departments students are admitted at large and then undertake a series of rotations in their first year to experience different research projects and potential advisors. Owing to these differences, prospective and current graduate students in EEB are urged to consult the handbook for their home department, and to discuss this issue with the graduate director for their home department. Home departments are responsible for providing EEB students with appropriate advising, supervision, and mentoring. A student's home department is also responsible for approving the choice of major professor. [Guidelines for Graduate Student](#)

[\*\*Advising and Mentoring Relationships\*\*](#) can be found on the Graduate School website. Each home department may also establish additional guidelines and expectations for successful advising and mentoring that are specifically relevant to their disciplines. EEB students are encouraged to consult these materials and discuss them with their advisor.

Regardless of the student's home department, there are some general issues to consider in choosing a major professor. These include identifying a faculty member with similar research interests to those of the student. Also, the student should consider the facilities that the professor has to support the research, including equipment, laboratory space, etc. Another important factor is whether the major professor can provide financial support in the form of research assistantships, or whether the student is expected to serve as a teaching assistant or even provide their own financial support during the graduate program. Even when the professor offers a research assistantship, students should be aware that research funding to the professor has a limited time frame so the duration of any assistantship should be discussed, as well as the expectations of the professor for the student and their research activities. Finally, a graduate student should consider their personal compatibility with the potential major professor. A clear understanding between the student and the major professor about their individual and mutual expectations will help to promote the development of the student's academic and scientific potential. Students should collaborate with their advisor to generate individual development plans (IDPs) that take into account the strengths and challenges of the student and the students' career goals. For templates, see [\*\*myIDP \(Biological & Physical Science fields\)\*\*](#) and [\*\*ImaginePhD \(Humanities & Social Science fields\)\*\*](#).

Most graduate students have the same major professor throughout their degree program, but students should also understand that it is sometimes possible for these to change. Such a shift might be desirable, for example, if the student determines that their research interests are much more closely aligned with those of another faculty member than with those of the current major professor. A change may sometimes be appropriate if a student and faculty member find that their styles of discussion and mentoring are not mutually compatible. Any such change must involve discussions with the graduate director in the student's home department and should be pursued as early as possible in the graduate student's training program.

A professional relationship is expected between the graduate student and their advisor, as well as other members of the student's guidance committee. If irresolvable disagreements arise between the student, professor, and/or guidance committee, the initial task of conflict resolution rests with the home department of the student and major professor. If the parties involved are from different departments, then the grievance procedures of the College of Natural Sciences will be followed since it serves as the lead college for the EEB Program. In some cases, the student and faculty member may be advised to seek further assistance from the Office of the Ombudsperson, the MSU Counseling Center, or the Dean of the Graduate School.

MSU policies on [\*\*Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities\*\*](#), including procedures for adjudication of cases involving these rights and responsibilities, are available at the Office of the Ombudsperson.



## 5. Formation of the Guidance Committee

Ph.D. graduate students in the EEB Program must have at least two EEB (core or affiliated) faculty members on their guidance committee. Masters students pursuing a specialization from EEB must have at least one EEB faculty member on their guidance committee. An EEB faculty member must serve as the student's major professor (advisor). The EEB Program is a multidisciplinary program, and it encourages its students to form guidance committees that offer a diversity of perspectives, with faculty members chosen from two or more departments.

The procedures and expected timeline for formation of the guidance committee for an EEB graduate student are set by the student's home department. Each department also sets out the requirements and expectations with respect to the frequency and reporting of student meetings with the guidance committee, the role of the committee in exams, and so on. Every EEB student is encouraged to consult the graduate handbook for their home department on these matters. In general, it is good practice that the committee be formed as early as feasible in the student's career, and that the student meet with their committee on an annual basis.

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

The **Masters thesis or Ph.D. dissertation** must be prepared in accordance with the specifications described by the graduate school, available from the MSU Graduate School Office. The Graduate School guide should be consulted during preparation. EEB students should consult their home department about the requirements and expectations for submitting drafts of the student's thesis/dissertation to the major professor and the guidance committee. Graduate students will benefit by writing portions of their thesis/dissertation along the way, as various components of their research are completed, rather than leaving all writing to the end. These written components should be shared with the major professor, then discussed and revised as needed. Most advisors will expect one or more rounds of revision to the various chapters of a thesis or dissertation, prior to their distribution to the guidance committee as a whole. The student must allow ample time for review of the thesis/dissertation by the major professor and guidance committee prior to the final oral presentation and examination.

The requirements and expectations for the public presentation of research and final exam are set by the EEB student's home department, and must be consistent with requirements of the MSU Graduate School. All EEB students should submit an announcement to the EEB Program Office giving the time, location, title of their thesis/dissertation presentation, home department, major professor, and guidance committee members at least two weeks prior to its scheduled time. The Program will announce thesis/dissertation defense presentations to the entire EEB community and help publicize the event. EEB core faculty and graduate students are encouraged to attend these defense presentations.

Graduate students must be registered for at least one credit during the semester in which the final examination is taken. Students should consult the **University Academic Calendar** for relevant graduation application deadlines the semester before graduation is anticipated.

MSU only accepts electronic thesis and dissertations submitted via ProQuest. The instructions for electronic submissions are available on the Graduate School's [Submission & Completion](#) page.

The target date for the FINAL APPROVAL of an electronic thesis or dissertation to The Graduate School for graduating the semester of that submission is FIVE working days prior to the first day of classes for the next semester. Be aware that a submission via ProQuest does not mean that the document has been ACCEPTED. The review process is interactive, and final approval can take anywhere from a few hours to weeks, depending upon the extent of the necessary revisions and how diligent the student is when making revisions.

### Useful Resources

- [MSU graduate school thesis formatting guide](#)
- [MSU graduate thesis submission deadlines](#)
- [MSU Graduation Application](#)

## 7. Departmental Policies: Academic and Professional Performance

Policies regarding graduate studies at Michigan State University are established at three levels of academic administration: university, college, and department or program. This system tends to separate policies into three categories and may result in no single reference from which a complete statement of policy can be found. This section is intended to bring these policies into focus and to clarify those that may appear to be contradictory.

In general, university policies supersede college policies, college policies override department or program policies, and department policies override committee policies. EEB Program policies have been established, as necessary, to resolve issues not specifically covered by college or university policies.

All EEB graduate students must have a home department that is affiliated with the EEB Program. All EEB graduate students are therefore subject to the policies of their home department, as well as those of the EEB Program, the college, and the university. Those policies specific to a student's department can be found in the graduate handbook of that department.

### Student Progress and Academic Standards

Student progress will be assessed by their home department, as outlined in each home department's graduate handbook.

Michigan State University is committed to high academic standards and expects all doctoral students to excel in their programs of study. A 3.00 cumulative grade point average must be maintained. The program of study cannot include more than three grades of less than 3.0. Credits will not be awarded for courses in which a grade below a 2.0 is earned. If the student receives a grade below a 2.0 in any course during their program of study, they will be required to repeat the course. Students have the right to access their educational records ([GSRR](#)). Students should



contact their home department to receive their educational records, as outlined in department's graduate handbook.

A grade point average is one measure of academic standing. However, academic standards also include consideration of the student's suitability for conducting research, competence in their major field and rate of progress toward completion of the degree. It is a disservice to permit a student to continue toward the degree without the necessary qualifications for retention. Judgment regarding retention is made by the student's major professor and/or guidance committee members. If it is decided that a student lacks such standards, they may be asked to withdraw according to the procedures as defined in the publication Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities which is part of the MSU Graduate School Student Handbook, available annually from the Council of Graduate Students Office.

Research credits are not considered in determining the grade-point average. Justification for retention must be furnished to The Graduate School Office for any graduate students whose GPA is below 3.0 for 14 or more credits. If a graduate student's grade point average is below a 3.0, exclusive of research, the major professor and Guidance Committee must decide whether or not the student will be permitted to continue. The results of their decision will be filed in writing with the student's home department.

The guidance committee and student's home department are jointly responsible for evaluating the student's competence as indicated by grades in core and other courses, research performance and development of professional skills and rate of progress as indicated by the number of courses for which grades have been assigned or deferred. Written evaluations will be communicated to the graduate student at least once a year and a copy of such evaluations must be given to the student's home department office to be placed in the graduate student's file. A student whose performance does not meet the standards of quality, will not be permitted to continue in the degree program, and appropriate action will be taken by the student's home department. These decisions are made by the home department, to which EEB will defer.

### Time Limits

Per MSU's policy, the oral and written comprehensive examinations must be passed within five years and all remaining requirements for the degree must be completed within eight years from the time of a student's first enrollment as a Ph.D. student. A Masters degree must be completed within five to six years from the time of first enrollment as a graduate student, depending on the student's home college. In all cases, the relevant period commences at the time that a student takes the first course that is used to apply to degree requirements, which is not necessarily the semester they were admitted to the university.

It is anticipated that most doctoral students in the EEB Program will complete their Ph.D. in 5-6 years. However, there is considerable variation in this timeline owing to differences among home departments in course requirements, variation in the rate of research progress depending on the dissertation project, and different circumstances among graduate students with respect to funding, family obligations, and so forth.



## Graduate Assistant Illness/Injury/Pregnancy Leave Policy

Graduate students who cannot fulfil their duties due to illness, injury or pregnancy can find the Graduate School's Leave policies from the [Graduate School Guide to Graduate Assistantships](#) in the Illness/Injury/Pregnancy [Leave Policy](#).

## 8. Departmental Policies: Integrity and Safety in Research and Creative Activities

### Ethical Standards

Dishonesty in academics or unethical conduct in presentation of research are grounds for dismissal of a graduate student from the university ([GSRR 2.4.9](#)). Such determinations will be made by a student's home department following procedures of the department and university. Specific judicial procedures to which a graduate student has access will be those defined by their home department. General MSU policies on graduate students rights and responsibilities, including procedures for adjudication of cases involving these rights and responsibilities, are available on their website.

EEB Program students and faculty are encouraged to think deeply and carefully about ethical issues that are relevant to scientific research, mentoring, and communication in which they are engaged. All EEB students should read the [Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities](#). In addition, EEB students must complete their yearly trainings in Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research (RECR) in accordance with their home department's graduate handbook.

### Research Involving Human or Animal Subjects or Hazardous Substances

Federal and University regulations require that all research projects involving human subjects and materials of human origin be reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) before initiation. The [Human Research Protection Program](#) (HRPP) provides more information on the IRB. Under the regulations, a human subject of research is an individual (1) from whom an investigator obtains data by interaction or intervention or (2) about whom the research obtains confidential information.

Michigan State University policy requires that use of living vertebrate animals (including laboratory rats and mice, etc.) in research be reviewed for appropriateness by MSU's [Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee](#) (IACUC) before use of these animals commences. This pertains to all university-owned animals, including client-owned animals used in research, and animals studied undisturbed in their natural habitat. For general reference, the publication that details the standards to which the university conforms is the [NIH Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals](#). Departure from this published guideline requires written scientific justification in the animal use form. Principal investigators and course directors must obtain approval from IACUC before initiating any research, testing, or instructional project involving the use of vertebrate animals.

The Graduate School will not accept thesis or dissertations containing research on human subjects that have not been reviewed and approved previously by HRPP or research involving animal use



without previous review and approval from IACUC. The Graduate School will verify HRPP Log numbers and AUF numbers before granting degrees.

The university acts through its advisory committees and academic governance bodies to ensure that individual research and scholarly projects incorporate appropriate safeguards when dealing with radiation, biological and chemical hazards. All individuals performing work with hazardous substances must accept a shared responsibility for operating in a safe manner once they have been informed about the extent of risk and safe procedures for their activities. Individuals are responsible for safely performing activities associated with hazardous substances.

All people who handle hazardous substances are required to attend initial and annual training sessions sponsored by the [Office of Environmental Health & Safety](#) (EHS). Information regarding these sessions can be obtained at the EHS website. In most cases, after initial classroom training session, the required annual training can be updated online. EHS will provide up-to-date information on that process for those who qualify.

If a graduate student has a question regarding safety, they should ask their major professor. Most departments also have a designated faculty or staff member who can serve as a resource. If the question of safety is not resolved at these levels, the student should contact EHS for a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) and other relevant information.

### Code of Ethics in EEB

EEB faculty and students actively work to provide an environment free from discrimination and harassment, where people feel comfortable and are not threatened or intimidated, leading to a productive and creative environment. We welcome and support people of all backgrounds and identities. This includes people of any race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic class, educational level, color, immigration status, sex, age, political belief, religion, and mental and physical ability. We are committed to conducting well-documented, replicable research, protection of the natural environment while balancing that against human needs, and humane treatment of all research subjects. To produce our best work, we expect from one another politeness, kindness, attention to deadlines, and professionalism in communication. We are responsible members of the community at MSU and elsewhere, and we honor our commitments. We understand our rights and responsibilities, and know where we can turn, or refer others, to get help as needed.

### Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct (RSVM) Policy

MSU and the EEB Program strive to provide an academic and work environment that fosters the values of safety, mutual respect, dignity, equity, responsibility, and clear and timely communication. Relationship violence, sexual misconduct, and stalking are in direct conflict with our institution's values and policies and present barriers to fulfilling our missions.

MSU and EEB's commitment to preventing and responding to relationship violence, sexual misconduct, and stalking applies to admissions, employment, and access to and treatment in all programs and activities.



As per university requirements, all EEB students must take [RSVM training](#).

### Work in Absentia

Candidates for the doctoral degree may, with the approval of the major professor and guidance committee, conduct some work in absentia. Arrangements for registration may be made by applying at the Office of the Dean of the college of the student's home department.

### Student Travel Authorization

Graduate students who engage in travel related to their research, training, or any other university business are required to submit a travel request in advance. Authorization requires the completion of a travel request in Concur, which will be processed through the student's home department. Students should also inquire about availability of automobile liability insurance and travel accident insurance through their home department.

### Foreign Travel

Students who plan to travel to a foreign country on Michigan State University activities should visit [Travel at State](#) and complete the following:

1. Through Travel at State, work with your home department to make your travel reservations with an MSU account number.
2. Complete a travel [request in Concur](#) before travel starts to obtain proper approval from your department.
3. Work with your home department to register in the MSU [Global Travel Registry](#).
4. Verify entry/exit requirements and purchase passport and visas through [CIBT](#).
5. Contact the [Olin Health Center Travel Clinic](#) at least two months in advance of governmental agency in that country. For some countries, it may take up to one year to obtain approval.
6. If you intend to bring plant or animal tissue samples or DNA/RNA back to the United States, you are likely to need approval from the Agriculture Department or from the Center for Disease Control. Be sure to obtain proper letters of authorization to bring biological samples back to the United States.
7. Obtain the proper pharmaceuticals to take with you in case of an emergency. These might include, for example, small packets of dehydration salts if you have experienced excessive fluid loss, appropriate antibiotics in case of food-poisoning or an infected wound, and anti-malarial/preventative medication. Be aware that certain legal drugs in the US are considered illegal in other countries, and in some countries possession of illegal drugs is punishable by a long prison term or even a death sentence.
8. Work with your home department to determine eligibility to access [international health insurance](#) from MSU. It is also helpful to talk with other people who have spent time in

the country you intend to visit to get a sense of customs, food-related problems, medical care, travel arrangements, and safe and unsafe personal activities.

## Useful Information

- [MSU Guidelines on Authorship](#)
- [MSU's Institutional Data Policy](#)
- [MSU's Procedures Concerning Allegations of Misconduct in Research and Creative Activities](#)
- [MSU Travel Clinic](#)
- [General MSU safety resources](#)
- MSU's [Integrity of Scholarship & Grades](#) policy, [GSRR 8.1.2](#), and [GSRR](#), Article 5 for academic integrity.
- How to handle an [active shooter situation](#)

## 9. Student Conduct and Conflict

### Grievance Procedures

EEB students should actively work to provide an environment free from discrimination and harassment, where people feel comfortable and are not threatened or intimidated, leading to a productive and creative environment. EEB expects politeness, kindness, forgiveness, attention to deadlines, and professionalism in communication. EEB graduate students are expected to be responsible members of the community at MSU and elsewhere, honoring their commitments.

The EEB Program is not the home department for any graduate student or faculty appointments. Therefore, grievances will be pursued through the procedures set by the departments involved, colleges, or other administrative units. In cases in which the grievance relates specifically to the EEB Program, the EEB Program Director shall meet with the parties involved in an effort to resolve the grievance informally. If the grievance is not resolved by the parties, then the graduate student should follow the Michigan State University's [Graduate Student Grievance Hearing Procedure](#).

Any graduate student may initiate a grievance, allege violation of existing policies or established practices by an administrator, pursuant to the procedures set forth by MSU (GSRR 5.4). In general, any grievance that involves graduate students or faculty in EEB, and which cannot be resolved informally, will be referred to the appropriate department and college, and their respective judicial process will then be followed. MSU policies on [Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities](#), including procedures for adjudicating cases that involve graduate student rights and responsibilities, are available on their website.

## 10. Work Related Policies

### Language Requirement

EEB does not have a foreign language proficiency requirement.

## Graduate Assistantships

All policies related to graduate assistantships must be consistent with [Article 4 of GSRR](#). For graduate assistants appointed as teaching assistants, the policy also must conform to the specifications of the current [MSU-GEU Contract](#). As all graduate assistantship appointments are made by a student's home department, each student should consult their department's graduate handbook for specific details.

### 11. Resources for EEB Students

#### EEB Professional Horizons Grants

EEB has funding available to Ph.D. and Masters students for partial travel support to attend professional meetings or other scientific activities. The latter might include a special course, learning techniques in another laboratory, and so on. These funds cannot be used to support travel to field sites, whether local or distant, that are part of a student's regular research activities. The expectation for travel support to a scientific meeting is that a student will present their research as a poster or oral presentation. Priority will be given to students near completion, students who have actively participated in EEB seminars and related Program activities, and those who have not yet received travel funds from the Program. Students are encouraged to apply for other sources for professional travel and to discuss any remaining costs with their advisor. If available, an email will be sent to the EEB graduate student listserv notifying them of the opportunity and providing instructions for applications.

#### EEB Fellowships

The student's home department, college, the university, and outside agencies and foundations provide the main sources of financial support for most EEB graduate students. The EEB Program typically has funds to provide some graduate students with summer and/or semester fellowships to cover stipends. The funds will be in the form of a fellowship paid directly to the student. These awards will not include any benefits or tuition waivers. MSU fellowships also do not withhold taxes so students should plan accordingly. Priority will be given to students who are near completion of their degrees, have actively participated in EEB activities, and show evidence of scholarly accomplishments including prior presentations at scientific meetings, papers published and submitted, and grants and fellowships obtained. Accordingly, these fellowships will be made on a competitive basis, although constraints on other available support may also be considered in the decision process. If EEB Fellowships are available in a particular year, an email will be sent to the EEB graduate student listserv notifying them of the opportunity and providing instructions for their applications.



## 12. <https://oiss.isp.msu.edu/UniversityResources>

- Resources provided by the Graduate School:
  - [Access & Inclusion programs](#)
  - [Forms](#)
  - [Funding](#)
  - [Thesis & Dissertation Formatting](#)
  - [Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)
  - [Graduate Educator Advancement and Teaching \(GREAT\)](#)
  - [Graduate School Office of Well-Being \(GROW\)](#)
  - [Mentoring & Advising](#)
  - [Out-of-State tuition waivers](#)
  - [Policy information](#)
  - [Professional development](#)
  - [Research integrity](#)
  - [Traveling scholar opportunities](#)
  - [University Committee on Graduate Studies](#)
- Resources provided by university-level units: [OISS](#), [RCPD](#), [Office of Spartan Experiences](#), [the Libraries](#), [the Olin Health Center](#), [Institutional Diversity and Inclusion](#), [the Burgess Institute for Entrepreneurship & Innovation](#), [the Writing Center](#), and [University Outreach & Engagement](#), and [the Ombudsperson's Office](#).
- Resources provided by the Student Life & Engagement Division: [Student Parent Resource Center](#), the [Gender and Sexuality Campus Center](#), the [Student Veterans Resource Center](#), and [Women's Student Services](#).
- [Academic Programs](#) (university catalogs) is the primary sources for university regulations, policies, procedures, costs, and academic program requirements.
- [Spartan Life Student Handbook and Resource Guide](#) is produced by the Office of Student Affairs and Services.
- [MSU Today](#) is a newsletter and website geared to university and faculty interests.

[The State News](#) is the MSU daily newspaper that contains news and a listing of local events.

### Ombuds Office

The Office of the University Ombudsperson provides assistance to students, faculty, and staff in resolving University-related concerns. Such concerns include: student-faculty conflicts;

communication problems; concerns about the university climate; and questions about what options are available for handling a problem according to Michigan State University policy. The Office of the University Ombudsperson also provides information about available resources and student/faculty rights and responsibilities. The office operates as a confidential, independent, and neutral resource. It does not provide notice to the University - that is, it does not speak or hear for the University. 129 N. Kedzie Hall, (517) 353-8830; <https://ombud.msu.edu>

## Health Facilities

### Health Insurance

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MSU provides health coverage for graduate assistants and their eligible dependents. Graduate assistants are enrolled automatically in the health plan with MSU covering the cost. Through this plan, students have access to quality health care through hospitals, physicians, and affiliated health care professionals in the provider network. Spouses and other eligible individuals and dependents are eligible for coverage under this plan as well. However, their enrollment is not automatic, and the student will need to enroll them. MSU contributes to the premium of dependent coverage. Students should consult their home department's graduate handbook for detailed information

### Other Health-related Resources

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1. [Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities \(RCPD\)](#). Students can register with RCPD **at any time** during their time at MSU. As many reasonable accommodations require significant pre-planning, registration prior to situations requiring accommodations is essential. Accommodations are not implemented retroactively, but can be started mid-semester. If you know you will need accommodations, we suggest [beginning the registration process](#) at least 60 days in advance of your first semester.
2. [Counseling Center & Psychiatric Services](#). Students should feel free to contact the Counseling Center for personal concerns and crisis assistance. Professional counseling and psychological services are offered to assist with personal, as well as career concerns. All services are confidential. Initial consultations are free of charge; all services are free to students carrying seven or more credits. In addition to professional counseling, a self-management laboratory and workshops are offered.
3. [Olin Health Center](#). The Student Health Service is located in Olin Health Center. In the event of an emergency, no matter what time of day, go directly to the nearest emergency center or hospital.
4. [Intramural Sports Facilities](#). Students have access to equipment and facilities in the intramural facilities located in the IM-West, IM-East, and IM-Circle and others. Students must present a current MSU student ID and a picture ID to be admitted to these facilities and borrow equipment.

## Transportation and Parking on Campus

1. [Parking on Campus](#) - Any vehicle brought on campus must be registered through the Department of Public Safety (DPS). Required student registration of motor vehicles can be done through the DPS Office for Parking and Permits. Generally, students with assistantships are eligible to obtain parking permits which allow parking at several lots throughout campus. Graduate students without assistantships have permits allowing them to park in commuter lots on the outer edge of the campus. To obtain a parking permit, the applicant must present their vehicle registration, student ID, driver's license and, if appropriate, last year's gate card.

If a student does not have a graduate assistantship, they may, under special circumstances, qualify for a parking permit, for example, if a vehicle is necessary in performing job duties on campus. In such cases, students will need to go to DPS and fill out a Special Request form for a parking permit. A member of the staff of DPS will review the request and if approved, will provide the opportunity to purchase a parking pass.

2. [Buses](#) - The Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) provides bus service to all parts of the campus and routes serving the Lansing and East Lansing area.
3. [Bikes](#) - The university maintains bicycle racks throughout campus. Bikes should be locked to these racks when parked. Bikes are not permitted in campus buildings. Improperly parked bikes are subject to impoundment by the Department of Public Safety. Bicycle registration through the MSU Department of Public Safety or the cities of East Lansing or Lansing is required.

## Graduate Organizations

### **The EEB Grad Group (EGG)**

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The [EBB Grad Group](#) (EGG) serves to organize the graduate student body of the EEB Program. EGG coordinates student involvement with program-level initiatives, social events, and other realms in which student voices should be included. All graduate students in the EEB Program are members of EGG. Officers are elected by popular vote of EEB students, annually. Involvement in EGG and EGG-sponsored activities is encouraged for all students who are a part of EEB, and serving in EGG is considered to be an important and beneficial professional development activity that augments student experiences while at MSU.

### **MSU/Graduate Employees Union (GEU)**

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The [Graduate Employees Union](#) (GEU) is an activist, volunteer-run collective bargaining unit that fights for safe, equitable, and just working conditions for all graduate students. Members of the Graduate Employees Union are domestic and international graduate students at Michigan State University, including Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, Fellows, and more.

### **Council of Graduate Students (COGS)**

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The [Council of Graduate Students](#) (COGS) is the official graduate student organization at Michigan State University. Officers and departmental representatives are voting members. The primary objective is improvement of the academic, social, and economic position of graduate students at MSU. The organization has official delegates to the Graduate Council, the Academic Council and standing committees thereof, and several all-university and presidential committees. Through membership in these and other bodies, COGS participates in decisions on matters such as tuition and fees, the grading system, traffic regulations, academic and extracurricular programs of the university, graduate assistant stipends, improvements in on- and off-campus student living conditions, academic freedom and responsibilities, student representation in university government, and the selection of principal administrative officers. Meetings are open to all graduate students.

COGS also offers a wide range of services and programs to graduate level students including:

- [MSU Student Food Bank](#) - The Student Food Bank was established to address the problems of students and their families with financial hardship. The SFB is located at Olin Health Center, and hours are 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday evenings. Students may visit bi-monthly. For more information, or to volunteer, stop by the office (Olin Health Center, 463 E. Circle Drive Rm. 151).
- [Copy Center](#) - COGS maintains a copy center in its office (120 Chittenden Hall). Open to all graduate/professional students, the COGS copy center features a high quality copier for use at the lowest rates available. This center charges \$0.04 per 8 ½ x 11 copy (black and white). The center also offers 8 ½ x 14 copies at \$0.05 per page, 11 x 17 at \$0.06 per copy, and color copies printed starting at \$0.20 per page. Cash or check only.
- [Student Legal Services](#) - COGS jointly provides a wide range of free legal services to MSU graduate students. The plan enables students to consult a staff attorney on many legal matters such as landlord/tenant problems, small claims, traffic offenses, and minor criminal/civil matters. For more specialized needs, students are referred to other area attorneys. The Students Defender Division of legal services provides students with advice concerning university regulations, judiciary programs, and other types of paralegal help necessary to resolve intra-university problems. Students Legal Services is located in Room 329, Student Services Building. Due to the large number of phone calls and potential problems, no legal advice of any kind will be given over the phone. Call 517-353-3716 or stop by the office to make an appointment.
- [Loans](#)
  - \$300 Short-Term Loans - ASMSU administers a \$300 loan program for COGS. To obtain a loan, bring a valid MSU ID and a picture ID to 307 Student Services. The loan is interest-free for 8 weeks. Since the loan fund is a limited resource, money may not always be available. Loans are only available during the first six weeks of classes.



- \$500 Short-Term Loans - The Office of Financial Aid administers a COGS-funded \$500 loan program. Applications for the \$500 loan are available in 252 Student Services and take 2-3 business days to process. Make sure to write “COGS LOAN” clearly at the top of the application form. This loan is interest-free for up to 60 days.
- [Professional Development Fellowships](#) - COGS offers professional development fellowships. Please visit the COGS website for an application and guidelines.

### Directory of Frequently Contacted Offices

- EEB office phone: 517-432-1359
- Program Office (EEB Hub): 1440 Biomedical and Physical Sciences Bldg.
- Program Director: Elise Zipkin
- Academic Program Coordinator: Barbara Bloemers