

Graduate Handbook for the Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior Program

Last revised 1 November 2020

All students in the EEB Graduate Program are appointed through a home MSU 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 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 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 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 graduate handbooks, every EEB student should work closely with their advisor, guidance committee, and administrative staff to ensure that they are satisfying all of the relevant requirements, expectations, and Code of Ethics.

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EEB (Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior Program) Graduate Handbook

I. Program Overview

A. Introduction

The Ecology, Evolution, 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 often focus on a particular group of organisms and habitats, EEB students as a whole, perform original research that encompasses all these systems.

All EEB students must be admitted to, and subsequently enrolled in, a home department. The EEB program thus offers a supplemental program to its students, rather than functioning as a separate, 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 an M.S. degree, fulfillment of the corresponding requirements leads to certification of a specialization in EEB along with the traditional degree from the home department.

The EEB Program is designed to emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of these fields, and it allows its students considerable flexibility in choosing individual areas of study. Each student's course of study is planned with his or her interests, capabilities, and professional goals in mind. EEB students are expected to complete the EEB core courses in addition to the requirements of their home departments, and to attend EEB seminars throughout each semester in which they are in residence at MSU. Students are also encouraged to interact and share ideas with one another in the EEB Graduate Colloquium.

A dual-major Ph.D. or M.S. 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 can usually be completed in 2-3 years for the M.S. degree, and in five years for the Ph.D. degree program.

B. Nature of a Dual Program

All students in the EEB Graduate Program are appointed through a MSU department. **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 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 those that pertain to the student's home department.

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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.

C. EEB Program Home Departments

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

- Anthropology
- Computer Science and Engineering
- Entomology
- Fisheries and Wildlife
- Forestry
- Geography
- Geological Sciences
- Horticulture
- Integrative Biology
- Microbiology and Molecular Genetics
- Philosophy
- Plant Biology
- Plant Pathology
- Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences
- Psychology
- Statistics and Probability

D. 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 of scientists 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.

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E. Administrative Organization of the EEB Program

The EEB Program is administered by the College of Natural Science. However, the Program accepts students from other colleges. The chief administrator of the Program is the Director. The Director of the EEB Program is responsible for the overall operational guidance of the Program, including long-range planning with respect to graduate-student training and budgetary matters. The Director may also serve as a liaison between the Program and MSU colleges and departments, and in this role is assisted by participating faculty including members of the EEB Program Executive Committee. 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, evolution, and behavior. Core or affiliate EEB 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 program fulfills the requirements, expectations, and guidelines of the EEB Program as well as those of the home department. The EEB faculty also participate in teaching the required EEB courses along with graduate seminars and other relevant courses. In addition, EEB faculty serve on EEB Program committees, attend EEB Program 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 the EEB faculty and departmental chairs to identify program 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 Program Executive Committee** (EEBPEC) consists of the Director, one faculty member from most departments affiliated with the EEB Program, and two student representatives. EEBPEC may advise the Director on such matters as appointment of new faculty, reappointment or termination of existing faculty, and other major policy matters relating to the EEB Program. In addition to any meetings scheduled by the Director, a meeting may be initiated by an EEBPEC member or at the request of any EEB Program faculty member or graduate student for the purpose of discussing a specific matter of concern that he or she wants brought to the attention of the committee. If a suggested solution from the EEBPEC or Director does not satisfy the concern, the individual raising the concern may request that the matter be brought before the EEB Program faculty at a faculty meeting.

The **EEB Graduate Committee** consists of two to four EEB Program faculty selected by the Director in consultation with the EEBPEC. The Graduate Committee evaluates each

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EEB graduate student's record and recommends to the EEB Director that the student be granted the EEB dual-major Ph.D. or M.S. certification provided that all program requirements are satisfied. (Each home department will separately evaluate whether a student fulfills its own requirements.)

The **EEB Seminar Committee** consists of at least three EEB Program faculty members selected by the Director in consultation with the EEBPEC and two EEB Program graduate students elected by the graduate students. The Committee assists the Director in choosing a seminar or symposium format for the year, and in selecting appropriate topics and presenters. In doing so, the Seminar Committee solicits suggestions from the EEB faculty and students. The Seminar Committee assumes responsibility for the organization and execution of the seminar series or symposium.

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.

The **EEB Graduate Group (EGG)** is a registered graduate student organization representing the student leadership on the EEB program. 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. The EGG leadership also organizes the annual EEB Research Symposium held late in the spring semester and helps organize many of the social events held by EEB each year.

II. Program Components/Plan Options

The EEB Program offers a dual-major Ph.D. or a Master's (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 will also apply, and these must also be met to obtain either the EEB dual-major Ph.D. or Master's 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. Also, the extent to which the EEB Program's course requirements may fulfill some of the course requirements in the graduate student's home department varies considerably 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 qualifying exams,

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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.

III. Degree Requirements and Timelines

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

Section A, as follows, lists the formal degree requirements for the EEB Program, including course options and a typical schedule for taking those courses. Section B provides a typical timeline and milestones for students to achieve in completing a Ph.D. or Master's degree, and it discusses some of the factors that may cause delays relative to that typical timeline.

A. Degree Requirements

1. Academic Program

Ph.D. and M.S. degree programs are planned on an individual basis by the student, major professor (thesis 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 Master's program. The guidance committee must have two faculty members from the EEB Program for Ph.D. candidates, one of whom must serve as the student's major professor, and one faculty member from EEB for Master's candidates. The committee assists the student in designing an appropriate program of coursework and research leading to the preparation of a thesis that presents the results of original research. Formal training is supplemented 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, typically within their first two years, to acquire a common base of knowledge. The EEB program consists of a core of four required courses including ecology (1), evolution (1), and quantitative methods in biology (2). Additional coursework in an area of specialization should be undertaken in consultation with the student's major professor and guidance committee, and as needed to fulfill the student's home departmental requirements. The goal is to tailor each program to fit the needs and objectives of the student.

2. 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 are encouraged to

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acquire some experience in teaching because of its importance to the career development of all scientists. Teaching assistantships are administered through the student's home department.

3. Education Requirements

Applicants should have a minimum grade-point average of 3.0 with grades of 3.0 or better in biological science courses. For admission to the program, students are expected to have had preparation in biology, chemistry, calculus, and introductory statistics. It is up to the discretion of your home department and advisory committee to determine if any additional coursework will need to be taken to rectify any deficiencies. There are no specific prerequisites required for any of EEB's required courses.

4. Application Procedures

Students must be admitted and enrolled within a home department at MSU before applying to the EEB program. Prospective MSU students should **first contact the home department of their choice** for specific details of admission. This first contact with the home department is **crucial** to avoid delays in the application process. Generally, the following items will need to be submitted:

- [University online application](#) also includes:
 - Application Fee
 - 2 Official Copies of Transcripts
 - Departmental Application
 - Letters of Recommendation (usually 3)
 - Statement of Purpose or Professional Goals
 - TOEFL Scores and Statement of Financial Proof (International Students only)

After a student has enrolled at MSU, they may apply to the EEB program. The following items listed should be submitted to the EEB Program via email at **EEB@msu.edu**:

- The EEB Graduate Program Application
- A one-page statement of your research and/or professional goals (can be the one used during the MSU admission process)
- A current CV that outlines education and work experience, lists of any publications and/or presentations, and any other pertinent information
- A statement from your primary advisor (a core or affiliate member of EEB) that acknowledges they are supportive of your application to the program

5. Deadline for Applications

Applications to EEB are reviewed and processed twice each year with annual deadlines of July 15 and January 15. Graduate students applying to the EEB Program must be in good standing within their home departments at MSU. Since the program has course requirements and a wealth of activities, it is optimal to gain admission early in a student's graduate career. EEB encourages prospective students to apply immediately after enrolling at MSU or during their first year of graduate study. However, the nature of some

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department's requirements may necessitate a later start date. In general, Ph.D. students should apply before their comprehensive exams. In any case, no student (M.S. or Ph.D.) will be admitted into the program during the year in which they plan to graduate.

6. Course requirements for a dual-major Ph.D. and M.S. specialization in EEB and the student's home department

The EEB Program requirements for the Ph.D./MS include 800-level courses in three areas: ecology, evolution, and quantitative methods in biology. EEB doctoral candidates are expected to attend as many talks as they can in the EEB Seminar Series each semester and the bi-weekly student colloquia.

While EEB allows students to choose their specific ecology and evolution courses based on their backgrounds and interests, all students are required to take the IBIO/PLB/ENT 830 and 831 quantitative methods course sequence. EEB's quantitative training program is both rigorous and comprehensive. Students gain proficiency in R programming and a deep understanding of classical and modern approaches to data analysis, providing a strong foundation for the many advanced statistical and computational courses that MSU offers.

The extent to which EEB course requirements also fulfill requirements in a student's home department varies considerably among departments. Fulfilling additional course requirements in a home department may cause delays in completing the course requirements for EEB.

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

Graduate ECOLOGY Course (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

*FOR/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. A student may choose a more specialized listed course (with asterisks on the following page), to fulfill the Graduate Ecology Course requirement. Of course, more than one ecology course may be taken upon suggestion by the student's guidance committee.

Graduate EVOLUTION Course (800 Level - 1 course)

IBIO/PLB849 Evolutionary Biology (core course)

*FW828 Conservation Genetics

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Most EEB students take the general broadly-based course PLB/IBIO 849 Evolutionary Biology. A student may choose the more specialized listed course (with asterisks above), which also provides an overview of evolutionary biology, to fulfill the Graduate Evolution course requirement. Of course, more than one evolution course may be taken upon suggestion by the student's guidance committee.

Graduate QUANTITATIVE METHODS Courses (800 Level - 2 courses)

EEB doctoral candidates are required to complete the following two semesters sequenced courses:

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

All Ph.D. students are required to use GradPlan. Students are reminded that they must request EEB program within GradPlan to receive the dual degree.

7. Course Waivers and Substitutions

EEB core course waivers and substitutions of any non-MSU courses must be approved by the EEB Academic Programs Committee. Any MSU course with which an EEB student wishes to replace one of the courses listed must have been previously approved, via application by the instructor, as an alternative core class by the Academic Programs Committee. MSU faculty can propose to have their courses listed as alternatives to those in the class lists above by way of the EEB Office (103 Giltner Hall or email to eeb@msu.edu). The faculty instructor must explain why they believe the core would be appropriate for the requirement, and submit a course description, a detailed course syllabus and reading list. The Academic Programs Committee also needs to approve any substitution of an EEB core course with a class taken at an institution other than MSU. Any student interested in this possibility should submit a detailed syllabus from the class they hope to use as a substitute for an EEB core course.

8. 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 a Ph.D. and some of the important challenges faced along the way.

The typical student will devote most of their first year toward required and elective coursework 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 literature, learning how to summarize this information both in speaking and in writing, and engaging in open discussion and good-natured debate about the strengths and limitations of that literature. Many 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 should also become familiar with the Graduate Employees Union and the [GEU Contract](#). Most students will identify their major professor in their first year, and

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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.

In the second year, most students will continue with their coursework, and they will usually also assemble their guidance committee. Most students will 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 student's dissertation research. Most departmental exams also include an oral phase in which the student is challenged to display his or her general knowledge of the field, defend his or her 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.

In any case, 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 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 also 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 major professor, 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 research project, writing their dissertation, and seeking a postdoctoral position or other employment. The difficulty of writing a dissertation can be greatly reduced if the student makes 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

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is positioning himself or herself much better in terms of obtaining 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 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.

Several 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, major professor, 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 the 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 MSU on completing the comprehensive and/or qualifying examinations and the dissertation. See Section VII. C. for general MSU time limits.

9. Typical Timeline for the Master's Certification

The typical time required for an EEB Master's degree candidate 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 requires many additional courses. EEB Master's students should consult their home departments. Formal time limits are imposed by MSU (see section VII.C.) for completing examinations and other requirements for the Master's degree.

IV. Selection of Thesis/Dissertation Advisor

The choice of the major professor, 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 the student's home department. 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

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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.

For any EEB graduate students who have not yet chosen a major professor, their home departments are responsible for providing 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 department may also establish additional guidelines and expectations for successful advising and mentoring that are specifically relevant to the disciplines represented in the department. EEB students are encouraged to consult all these materials and discuss them with their major professor.

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, and the like. Another important factor for some students 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, and so the duration of any assistantship should be discussed, as well as the expectations of the professor for the student and his or her 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.

Most graduate students have the same major professor throughout their degree program, but students should also understand that it is sometimes possible to change to another major professor. Such a shift might be desirable, for example, if the student determines that his or her 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 also 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 a change 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 major professor, 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

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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](#).

V. Formation of the Guidance Committee

Graduate students in the EEB Program who are Ph.D. candidates must have at least two EEB faculty members on their guidance committee. One EEB faculty member must serve as the student's Ph.D. advisor. Master's candidates pursuing a certification from EEB must have at least one EEB faculty member on their guidance committee. 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 with 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.

VI. Thesis/Dissertation Defense and Final Oral Examination

The Master's thesis or Ph.D. dissertation must be prepared in accordance with the specifications described in [The Graduate School Formatting Guide](#), available from the MSU Graduate School Office. This guide should be consulted during preparation. Information about [electronic submission of thesis and dissertations](#) can be found on their website. EEB student should consult their home department about the requirements and expectations for submitting drafts of the student's thesis or dissertation to the major professor and the guidance committee. As discussed in Section III.A.9, graduate students will benefit by writing portions of their thesis or dissertation along the way, as parts 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 major professors will want to read and will suggest one or more rounds of revision to the various chapters of a thesis or dissertation, prior to their distribution to the guidance committee. The student must allow ample time for review of the thesis or 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 consistent with requirements of the MSU Graduate School. **All EEB students should submit an announcement to the EEB**

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Program Office giving the time, location, title of their thesis or dissertation presentation, home department, major professor, and guidance committee members at least one week prior to its scheduled time. EEB Program faculty and graduate students are encouraged to attend these 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 Calendar in the *MSU Schedule of Courses and Academic Handbook* for relevant 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 website. 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 author is when making the necessary revisions.

VII. University Policies on Academic Performance, Integrity and Safety in Research and Creative Activities

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 all of these policies into focus and to clarify those that may appear to be contradictory.

In general, University policies override College policies, College policies override Department or Program policies, and Department policies override Committee policies. Program policies have been established, as necessary, to resolve issues not specifically covered by College or University policies.

All EEB graduate students 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. This section provides an overview of the general University policies that pertain to MSU graduate students, including those in the EEB Program, as well as certain items that are of relevance to the EEB Program.

A. Academic Standards

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

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of less than a 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 his/her program of study, he/she will be required to repeat the course.

A grade point average is one measure of academic standing. However, academic standards also include consideration of the student's suitability for conducting research, competency in his/her 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, he/she 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 which is available annually from the Council of Graduate Students Office, 120 Chittenden Hall.

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 a 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 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 to enroll in the degree program, and appropriate action will be taken by the student's home Department.

B. Ethical Standards

Dishonesty in academics or unethical conduct in presentation of research are grounds for dismissal of a graduate student from the University. 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 his or her home department. General MSU policies on [Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities](#), including procedures for adjudication of cases involving these rights and responsibilities, are available at their website.

EEB Program students and faculty are encouraged to think deeply and carefully about ethical issues that are relevant to the scientific research, mentoring, and communication in which they are engaged. All EEB students and faculty should read the “[Guidelines for Graduate Student Advising and Mentoring Relationships](#)” and the “[Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities](#)” that were originally published in the MSU Research

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Integrity Newsletter (Volume 7, No. 2, Spring 2004, pp. 9-14). An interview with University Distinguished Professor Hans Kende, who chaired the task force that prepared these guidelines, is in the same issue (pp. 15-18) and should be read for additional perspective.

C. Time Limits

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 doctoral student. A Master's degree must be completed within six years from the time of first enrollment as a graduate student. 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 about 5 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. The maximum time allowed between initial matriculation in a MS or PhD program and completion of the degree is 8 years. Section III.A.9 of this Handbook provides a typical timeline for the Ph.D. Program and discusses some of the factors that can cause delays along the way.

D. 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. [Human Research Protection Program](#) (HRPP) is an 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 within the institution of living vertebrate animals (includes laboratory rats and mice, etc.) be reviewed for appropriateness by the Institutional Animal Care and 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 the [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

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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 persons 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 the major professor. Most Departments also have a designated faculty or staff person 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.

E. Residence

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 Master's degree.

F. 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 their guidelines on transferring credits that may be applied to the Department's requirements. Additional permission is required if an EEB student wants to use transfer credits to satisfy any of the EEB Program course requirements that are outlined in Sections III.A.6 (Ph.D.) and III.A.7 (Master's degree). That request should follow the procedures in Section III.A.8 for Course Waivers and Substitutions.

G. Graduate Assistant Illness/Injury/Pregnancy Leave Policy

The following information is from the [Graduate School Guide to Graduate Assistantships](#).

A graduate assistant unable to fulfill the duties of their appointment because of illness or injury shall notify the administrator of their appointing unit as soon as circumstances permit. Similarly, a graduate assistant unable to fulfill the duties of

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their appointment because of pregnancy shall notify the administrator of their major unit as soon as circumstances permit.

During the illness, injury, or pregnancy, the appointing 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 and the graduate assistant is still enrolled, the appointing unit shall maintain the stipend of the appointment, provided for a period of two months or to the end of the appointment period or the semester, whichever occurs 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 or she is able to resume their duties.

H. Work in Absentia

Candidates for the doctoral degree may, with the approval of the major professor and Guidance Committee members, 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.

I. Student Travel Authorization

Graduate students who engage in travel related to their research, training, or any other University business are required to obtain travel authorization in advance. Authorization requires the completion of specific travel authorization forms, 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.

J. 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 in order to make your travel reservations with an MSU account number. All travelers will need to set up a Concur profile. Go to Travel.msu.edu to fill out the travel profile application.
- (2) Complete MSU's [Pre-Trip Authorization](#) from your home Department.
- (3) Work with your home Department in order to be registered in the [traveler's database](#).
- (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 your date of departure. Travel to particular countries may require one or more vaccinations or boosters. In addition, the travel clinic nurse will review potential health hazards, travel problems, and restrictions for each country. If you are traveling for pleasure, you are welcome to use the Olin Travel Clinic.
- (6) Check the [US State Department](#) to learn about your destination and specific health and safety issues there.

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- (7) If you intend to pursue a research project in another country, you should have permission from the appropriate governmental agency in that country. For some countries it may take up to one year to obtain approval.
- (8) 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.
- (9) 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.
- (10) Work with your home Department to determine eligibility to access [international health insurance](#) from Michigan State University. 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 the customs, food related problems, medical care, travel arrangements, and safe and unsafe personal activities.

K. Miscellaneous EEB Program Policies and Guidelines

1. Language Requirement

The EEB Program does not have a foreign language requirement.

2. EEB Student Travel Fellowships

From time to time, the EEB Program may have funds available to provide partial travel support to attend professional meetings or other scientific activities involving travel. The latter might include a special course, learning some technique in another laboratory, and so on. However, 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 meeting is that a student will present their research as a poster or talk.

The availability of funds to support travel will be announced via email to graduate students in the EEB Program. Both doctoral and master's students are eligible for this support, but priority will be given to doctoral students. Priority will also be given to students near completion of their degrees, and to students who have actively participated in EEB seminars and related Program activities.

Subject to limitations on EEB funds available for this purpose, the Program will make a number of small awards in partial support of professional travel each year. Any student who requests this funding must also seek funds from three other sources: the graduate school, his/her home department, and his/her major professor (research grants). If the travel is international, the student should request funds from the Office of International Studies and Programs as well. The MSU Graduate School has forms that are specifically designed for requesting travel funds and indicating the contributions from the various sources.

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To apply for these funds, upon solicitation from the EEB Office, students must submit the EEB Travel Funding Support Application and the MSU Graduate School Funding Request Form. Electronic links to these materials can be obtained by sending an email to the EEB Program Office at eeb@msu.edu

Prior to undertaking the travel (however, not prior to requesting funds), the student must also obtain a Travel Authorization from his or her home Department, as described in section VII.I.

3. EEB Summer Fellowships

The student's home Department, home College, the University, and outside agencies and foundations provide the main sources of financial support for most EEB graduate students. From time to time, however, the EEB Program may have funds to provide partial summer fellowships to some graduate students. The funds will be in the form of a fellowship paid directly to the student. These awards will not include any benefits or tuition waiver. Only doctoral students will be eligible for these fellowships. 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; such accomplishments may include 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 Summer Fellowships will be available in a particular year, then an email will be sent to EEB graduate students notifying them of the opportunity and providing instructions for their applications.

The fellowship application has four required parts. **Part I** is a cover sheet available from the EEB Office. **Part II** is a one-page summary (max. 500 words) of the student's dissertation research, including objectives and progress to date. **Part III** is one-page resume or bio-sketch for the student, including evidence of scholarly accomplishments such as presentations at scientific meetings, papers published or submitted, and grants and fellowships awarded. **Part IV** is a brief letter from the major professor, which can be attached to the rest of the application or sent separately. The letter should comment on the student's qualifications and progress, including evidence of merit such as talks presented or papers submitted. Also, if the professor lacks sufficient funds to provide summer support for this student from research grants or other sources, that fact should be noted in this letter. To apply for these funds, upon solicitation from the EEB Office, students must submit the required documents to the EEB Office.

4. Grievance Procedures

As the EEB Program is not the home department for any graduate student or faculty appointments, most grievances will be pursued through the procedures set by the involved departments, colleges, or other administrative units. If a grievance specifically addresses the EEB Program, the Program Bylaws stipulate the following procedures:

Any EEB Program faculty member or EEB graduate student may initiate a grievance, alleging violation of existing policies or established practices by an

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administrator, pursuant to the procedures set forth in the Michigan State University Faculty Grievance Procedure or Michigan State University Graduate Student Grievance Procedure.

The EEB Program Director or EEBPEC shall meet with the parties involved to resolve the grievance informally.

In the event that the grievance is not resolved by the parties, a grievance hearing will be arranged by the Faculty Grievance Official (FGO) or Graduate Student Grievance Official pursuant to the procedures set forth in the Faculty Grievance Procedure or Graduate Student Grievance Procedure.

In the event a grievance is initiated at the EEB Program level, the Model Academic Unit Grievance Procedure will apply.

In general, any grievance that involves graduate students or faculty in the Program, 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.

VIII. Special Information for Foreign Students

International Students interested in joining the EEB Program should work through their prospective or current home department to make sure that they understand and fulfill the requirements for foreign students. The [Office for International Students and Scholars](#) (OISS) is a resource center for information on matters related to international students and scholars, and their website provides additional information.

IX. University Resources and Services for Graduate Students

The University provides a wide array of services to students to assist them in adjusting to the rigors and inevitable stresses that go with a rigorous academic life

A. Academic Facilities

1. Student Services

Michigan State University provides extensive student personnel services to assist students and enhance the educational experience. Michigan State University recognizes that the total development of the individual-personal, social, and physical, as well as intellectual, is of equal importance.

The Vice President for [Student Affairs and Services](#) has general administrative responsibility for all student personnel matters. The multiple services and responsibilities are carried out through the offices of Coordinated Minority Student Programs, Counseling, Financial Aid, Recreational Sports and Fitness Services, Placement Services (including Student Employment and the Career Information Center), Student Life, and University Housing Programs.

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The Student Life area includes Campus Life Orientation, Health and Alcohol Education, Judicial Affairs, Off-Campus Housing and Commuter Programs, Service Learning, Student Activities, Student and Leadership Development, and Student Withdrawals and Records.

2. Michigan State University Library

It is strongly suggested that you take advantage of the library tours to thoroughly familiarize yourself with all the available resources. There are many branch libraries on campus. Consult [Spartan Life](#) or the [MSU Libraries](#) websites for additional information.

3. Computer Center and Statistical Consulting

a. Computer Services

[The Institute for Cyber-Enabled Research](#) (iCER): Get an account

with ICER if you plan to manipulate or analyze “big data.”

[Technology at MSU](#)

[Tech Support](#)

[Computer Store](#)

b. Computer Labs and Classrooms

Computer facilities are available on campus. Policies regarding use of equipment should be obtained from individual facilities. Location of computer labs can be found at the Computer Labs and Classroom website.

c. Center for Statistical Training & Consulting

MSU has a Center for Statistical Training & Consulting. Additional information on this service can be found at their website.

4. Spartan Bookstore

The Spartan Bookstore is in the International Center on Shaw Lane. Off-campus bookstores are in the East Lansing area.

5. Center for Community Engaged Learning

This is a volunteer program that provides students the opportunity to learn more about different work environments while providing community service. Staff is available to assist students in choosing a placement that meets their interests.

6. The Writing Center

This center offers writing consultation to graduate as well as undergraduate students. One on one consultations are best for small papers or projects like vitas, abstracts and cover letters, while peer response writing groups offer help developing drafts of larger projects like research and conference papers, and even thesis and dissertations. The center also has a library with books on resumes, vitas and cover letters, and examples of all the above. Call 432-3610 to make an appointment or email grammar@msu.edu for answers to questions about grammar, etc.

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7. Career Services Network

The Career Services Network office assists students in career advising and seeking employment upon graduation. Their staff does workshops, classes and individual advising on topics such as how to interview successfully and steps to creating a well-written resume. You may also interview for internships or full-time employment through the Career Placement office.

The Career Information Center provides up-to-date information on career possibilities, self-evaluation tools, and resource material on career choice, planning and strategy.

The MSU College of Natural Sciences ([CNS](#)) has a career website for graduate students. Also, the MSU Graduate School provides [Career Services](#) advising.

8. BIG Academic Alliance

MSU is a member of the BIG Academic Alliance. Through this committee's traveling scholar program, a doctoral student can pursue a limited amount of coursework at any Big Ten University or the University of Chicago. Participants in this program normally pay tuition at MSU at MSU rates for courses taken at other participating institutions. A doctoral student interested in this program should contact the [Office of the Graduate School](#) for instructions and formal processing.

B. Health Facilities

1. Health Insurance

Michigan State University provides health coverage for graduate assistants and their eligible dependents through Blue Care Network (BCN). As a graduate assistant, you are enrolled automatically in the health plan, and MSU picks up the cost of your health coverage. Through this plan, you have access to quality health care through hospitals, physicians, and affiliated health care professionals in the BCN provider network. Locate a provider through the BCN website.

Spouses and other eligible individuals and dependents are eligible for coverage under this plan too; however, their enrollment is not automatic, so you will need to enroll them. MSU contributes to the premium of dependent coverage. Visit the rates page for more details.

Those eligible include:

- Graduate assistants with 1/4, 1/2, or 3/4 appointments (eligible for tuition waiver); AND who have worked at least 53 calendar days during their Fall or Spring appointment, or 46 calendar days during their Summer appointment

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- Eligible dependents are spouse/other eligible individuals, children (must be under the age of 26), stepchildren (must be under the age of 26)

The Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD)

Staff specialists are available to respond to mobility, visual, hearing, alternative learner, and other handicapper populations to enable their involvement in University activities. Other resources are available to students with special needs.

2. Counseling Center

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 7 or more credits. In addition to professional counseling, a self-management laboratory and workshops are offered.

3. Olin Health Center

The Student Health and Wellness is in Olin Health Center. In the event of an emergency, no matter what time of day, go directly to Sparrow Hospital or the nearest emergency center.

4. Women's Health

The Women's Health serves as a referral service and advocate of women's issues for women faculty, staff, and students. They sponsor many campus programs and workshops on women's issues.

5. Intramural Sports Facilities

Students have access to equipment and facilities in the intramural facilities located in the IM-West, IM-East, and IM-Circle. Students must present a current MSU student ID and a picture ID to be admitted to these facilities and borrow the equipment. Use of most of the facilities is free to currently enrolled students, although there are a few exceptions, such as a small charge for the use of the weight room in the IM-East.

C. Transportation and Parking on Campus

1. Parking on Campus

Any vehicle you bring 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 the 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 you do not have a graduate assistantship, you may, under special circumstances, qualify for a parking permit. For example, if your vehicle is necessary in performing the duties for

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a job you hold on campus, you may wish to apply for a parking permit. You 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 your request and if they feel you need a parking permit for campus, they will give you the opportunity to buy one.

2. Buses

The Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) provides bus service to all parts of the campus and connections with CATA routes serving the Lansing and East Lansing area.

3. Bikes

The University maintains bicycle racks throughout the 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.

D. EEB Graduate Student Organizations

1. The EEB Graduate Student Organization (GSO)

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

2. MSU/Graduate Employees Union (GEU)

3. Council of Graduate Students (COGS)

COGS is the official graduate student organization at Michigan State University. Officers and departmental representatives (one representative per department for the entire University) 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 such matters 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. For further information, contact the department for the name of your representative.

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

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a. MSU Student Food Bank

COGS and ASMSU jointly established a Student Food Bank 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).

b. Copy Center

COG maintains a copy center in its office (120 Chittenden Hall). Open to all graduate/professional students, the COGS copy center features a high-quality Canon copier for use at the lowest rates available. This center charges \$0.04 per 8 ½ x 11 copy (black and white). We also offer 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. Fax can be sent for \$.25/fax. Cash or check only.

c. Student Legal Services

COGS and ASMSU have joined to provide a wide range of legal services to MSU students. This service is free to all 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 any other type of paralegal help necessary to resolve intra-university problems. Students Legal Services is 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 353-3716 or stop by the office to make an appointment.

d. \$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 6 weeks of classes.

e. \$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 you write "COGS LOAN" clearly at the top of the application form! This loan is interest-free for up to 60 days.

f. Endowment Fund

COGS offers conference and degree completion grants. Please visit the [COGS website](#) for an application and guidelines.

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g. City of East Lansing Parking Permits

The Council of Graduate Students has teamed up with the City of East Lansing to sell reduced cost graduate student permits in the Downtown East Lansing Division Street ramp (Lot 10 - Colorful Parking Garage at Division & Albert Streets). Permit holders can park in the designated permit area in the upper levels using an access card purchased at the COGS Office.

E. University Guides and References

1. Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities

This document contains University policies concerning graduate education and is published in Spartan Life.

2. Funding Guide

The Graduate School has produced a Guide for Graduate Students, Graduate Professional Students and Postdoctoral Fellows, to assist students in identifying funding sources such as grants, fellowships, scholarships, and awards.

3. Career and Professional Development

The Graduate School at MSU offers a variety of workshops and other resources that can assist students in their career and professional development. The “PREP” program focuses on four skills that are key to career and professional development: planning, resilience, engagement, and professionalism.

4. Resource Guide

A helpful resource guide to campus programs and services, and includes rules, regulations, rights, and responsibilities that have been established in the interest of intellectual and personal development while protecting individual freedoms. It is published annually by the Department of Student Life in the Division of Student Affairs and Services.

5. Academic Programs

Academic Programs (University catalogs) are the primary sources for university regulations, policies, procedures, costs, and academic program requirements.

6. Spartan Life

Spartan Life Student Handbook and Resource Guide is produced by the Office of Student Affairs and Services.

7. The Schedule of Courses and Academic Handbook

The Schedule of Courses provides selected information on courses, university regulations, policies, procedures, costs, and the academic calendar.

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8. Guide to the Preparation of Master's Thesis and Doctoral Dissertations

The Graduate School Guide to the Preparation of Master's Thesis and Doctoral Dissertations describes the final procedures for degree completion and manuscript requirements for your thesis or dissertation.

9. MSU Today

A weekly newspaper geared to University and faculty interests.

10. The State News

The State News is the MSU daily newspaper that contains news and a listing of events of interest.

F. Directory of Frequently Contacted Offices

1. EEB Program

Office phone: 517-432-1359

E-mail: EEB@msu.edu

EEB Program Director: Dr. Elise Zipkin

EEB Program Office, 103 Giltner Hall, Ms. Barbara Bloemers

2. College of Natural Science

EEB is administered by the College of Natural Science

3. Michigan State University

a. Administration

[Office of Admissions](#)

[Office of the Registrar](#)

[Controller's Office](#)

[The Graduate School](#)

b. Student Services

[ASMSU/COGS Legal Services](#)

[Career Services Network](#)

[Center for Community and Economic Development](#)

[Counseling Center](#)

[Employee Assistance Program](#)

[Office of Financial Aid](#)

[Council of Graduate Students \(COGS\)](#)

[Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives](#)

[Student Affairs & Services](#)

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c. Computer Services

[Technology at MSU](#)

[Tech Support](#)

[Computer Store](#)

d. International Center

[English Language Center](#)

[Office for International Students & Scholars](#)

[Office of Study Abroad](#)

[International Studies & Programs](#)

e. Library

[MSU Libraries](#)

f. Student Health Services

[Olin Health Center](#)

[Student Health Insurance](#)

G. Selected MSU Websites

[MSU Home Page](#)

[EEB Program Site](#)

[Academic Programs](#)

[Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities](#)

[MSU/GEU Contract](#)

[Office for International Studies and Programs](#)

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

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

[Office of the Ombudsperson](#)