



**MISSISSIPPI STATE**  
UNIVERSITY™

# Graduate Programs Administration Reference

2015-2016



THE  
GRADUATE SCHOOL

The purpose of this document is to provide Graduate Program administrators (e.g., department heads, graduate coordinators, program directors/managers) with a quick reference to graduate education requirements at MSU. This document does not replace the Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.msstate.edu/graduate/>). In the case of discrepancies between this reference and the official Graduate Catalog, the latter document is to be considered the final word on University policy.

\*All forms available in masters, educational specialist, and doctoral groupings under Degree Program Forms at <http://www.grad.msstate.edu/forms/> .



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ADMISSIONS INFORMATION</b>	<b>5</b>
DOMESTIC STUDENTS APPLICATION CHECKLIST	5
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS APPLICATION CHECKLIST	5
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS APPLICATION DEADLINES	6
DOMESTIC STUDENTS APPLICATION DEADLINES	6
DISTANCE DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS APPLICATION DEADLINES	6
UNCLASSIFIED DOMESTIC STUDENTS APPLICATION DEADLINES	6
APPLICATION AND ADMISSIONS PROCESS	7
ACCESSING XTENDER	8
TRACKING APPLICATIONS IN BANNER	9
TYPES OF GRADUATE ADMISSION	11
<b>GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS</b>	<b>13</b>
TYPES OF GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP APPOINTMENTS	13
GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT CERTIFICATION PROGRAM	15
GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT CLASSIFICATION LEVELS	16
<b>PROGRAM COMPLETION TIMELINES</b>	<b>17</b>
NON-THESIS MASTER’S AND EDUCATIONAL SPECIALIST DEGREES	17
THESIS MASTER’S AND EDUCATIONAL SPECIALIST DEGREES	18
DOCTORAL DEGREES	19
<b>DEGREE AUDIT INFORMATION</b>	<b>20</b>
INITIAL STEPS – ALL DEGREE LEVELS	20
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS - ALL DEGREE LEVELS	22
EXTENSION OF TIME TO DEGREE – ALL DEGREE LEVELS	23
ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY – DOCTORAL LEVEL	24
THESIS OR DISSERTATION DEFENSE – ALL DEGREE LEVELS	24
CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS – ALL DEGREE LEVELS	25
GRADUATION CEREMONY PARTICIPATION PRIOR TO FULFILLING DEGREE REQUIREMENTS	26
COURSE RETAKE	26
ACADEMIC PROBATION	27
ACADEMIC DISMISSAL	28
<b>FLOW OF POLICIES, PAPERWORK, REQUESTS, APPROVALS</b>	<b>29</b>

## ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

### *Domestic Students Application Checklist*

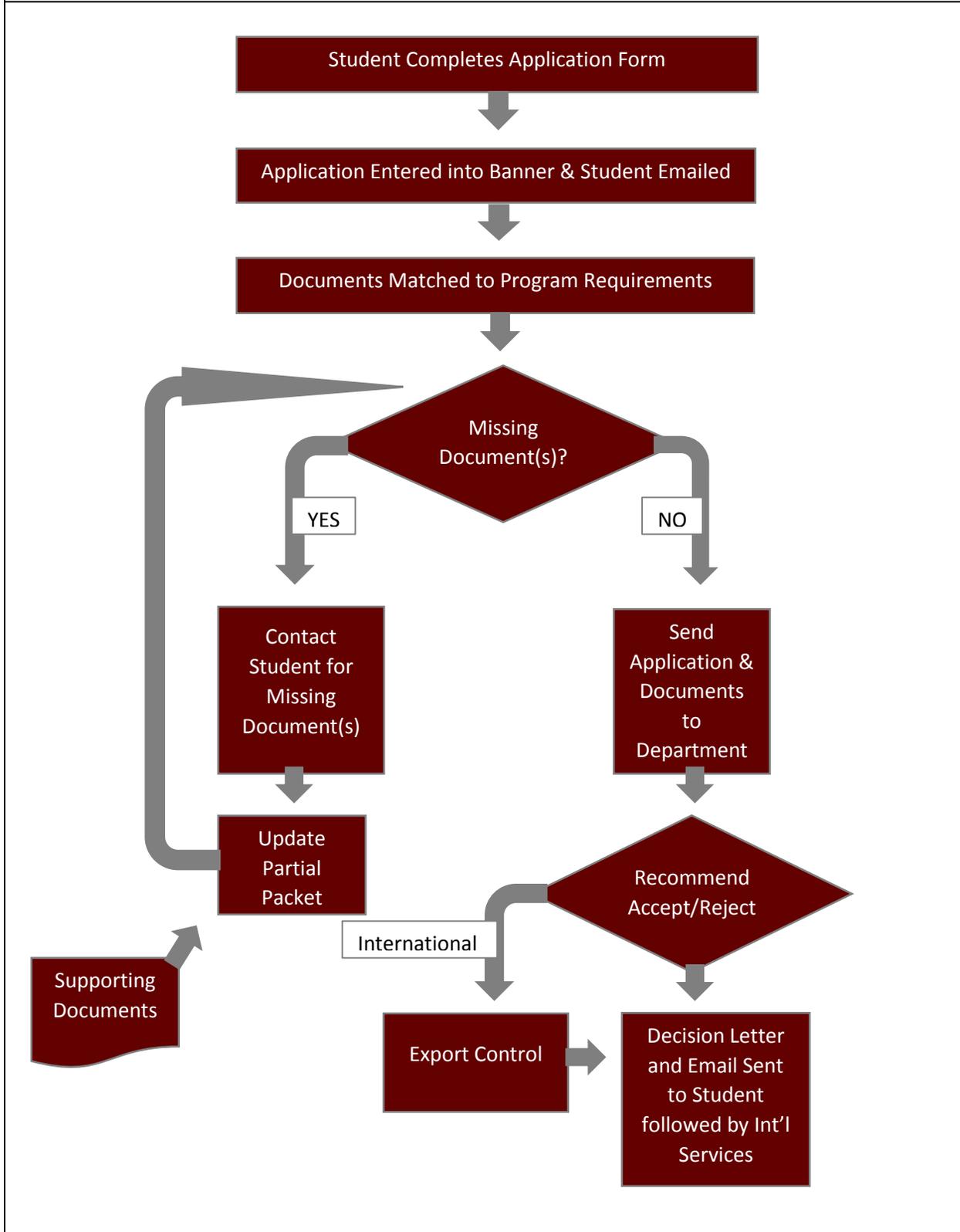
- Completed application form
- \$60 non-refundable application fee
- Statement of Purpose
- Names and email addresses of three academic references
- GRE or GMAT scores if required by academic department
- Official Academic Records/Transcripts

### *International Students Application Checklist*

- Completed application form
- \$60 non-refundable application fee
- Statement of Purpose
- Names and email addresses of three academic references
- GRE or GMAT scores if required by academic department
- Official Academic Records (in native language along with translated copies if appropriate)
- Document of Support Form including all required signatures (not required if applying for a distance program)
- Bank Letter or other Document of Financial Support (not required if applying for a distance program)
- TOEFL or IELTS Score

<b><i>International Students Application Deadlines</i></b>	
• Fall	May 1
• Spring	October 1
• Summer	March 1
<b><i>Domestic Students Application Deadlines</i></b>	
• Fall	July 1
• Spring	November 1
• Summer	May 1
<b><i>Distance Domestic &amp; International Students Application Deadlines</i></b>	
• Fall	August 1
• Spring	December 1
• Summer	May 15
<b><i>Unclassified Domestic Students Application Deadlines</i></b>	
• Fall	11:59 pm (CST) evening before first day of classes.
• Spring	See University calendar for class dates.
• Summer	See University calendar for class dates.

## Application and Admissions Process



## *Accessing Xtender*

Xtender is a document imaging system. Documents can be scanned and stored for reviewing. During admissions season, graduate coordinators and faculty involved in making admissions decisions can access an applicant's documents for review in Xtender. Xtender is integrated with Banner so that documents associated with a person are accessible when that person's record is brought up. OGS uses this system as an electronic "filing cabinet" for its student record keeping. To gain faculty access to Xtender:

- Graduate coordinator should notify OGS via an email to [fsparks@grad.msstate.edu](mailto:fsparks@grad.msstate.edu) of the need for access to review graduate applications
- Submit **SSN User Electronic Access Request** form (SSN04) noting access is for "Xtender" and for the purpose of "reviewing graduate applications" to unit/department head for approval
- Form is then routed for approval through the Dean of the college and the Provost Office before set-up by ITS.

### ***Tracking Applications in Banner***

To quickly track the progress of a student applying to MSU, coordinators and administrators can view which materials have and have not been received by OGS by the following:

- Access “Banner” for Academic Departmental Users
- In the column marked “Reports” choose “Admissions Applicants”
- Enter the applicant’s 9-digit student # at the bottom of the “Admissions Applicants” form, select “Graduate” level, and “View Application.”
- Clicking on the application number in column one of the resulting report will open that student’s file containing a list of documents that have/have not been received by OGS.
- For additional details see:  
[http://grad.msstate.edu/pdf/ADMISSION\\_APPLICATIONS.pdf](http://grad.msstate.edu/pdf/ADMISSION_APPLICATIONS.pdf)

After a student application has been entered into workflow, coordinators and administrators can track location of the applications in workflow by the following:

- Access “Banner” for Academic Departmental Users
- In the column marked “Reports” choose “Graduate Application Departmental Review Workflow Status”
- Enter the applicant’s 9-digit student # at the bottom of the form, select “Graduate” level, and “View Student.”
- The workflow user with current access to the student’s application is listed in the right hand column of this report.
- Selecting the applicant’s 9-digit number in the left hand column of this report opens a copy of the workflow screening form where test scores, comments, and other materials can be viewed.
- For additional details see:  
[http://grad.msstate.edu/pdf/REVIEWER\\_WORKFLOW\\_STATUS.pdf](http://grad.msstate.edu/pdf/REVIEWER_WORKFLOW_STATUS.pdf)



### ***Types of Graduate Admission***

For specialized admissions (e.g., faculty, military, readmission) see

<http://catalog.msstate.edu/graduate/admissions-information/admission-procedure/status/>

<b><i>Regular</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>A prospective student who holds a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution</u> and has any one of the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 2.75 GPA on the last two years of bachelor's coursework</li><li>○ 2.75 GPA on 30 or more semester hours of undergraduate credit <u>after</u> earning a bachelor's</li><li>○ 2.75 GPA on the last two years of undergraduate credit and a 3.00 GPA on fewer than 24 hours graduate coursework</li><li>○ 3.00 GPA on 24 or more graduate hours</li><li>○ an earned master's or higher-level degree</li></ul></li></ul>
<b><i>Provisional</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>A prospective student who has not fully met the GPA requirement</u></li><li>• Student must have as the initial objective advancement to regular status.</li><li>• Regular status is achieved <u>after</u> receiving a 3.00 GPA on the first 9 hours of regular graduate-level courses taken at MSU</li><li>• Courses with an S grade, transfer credits, or credits earned while in Unclassified status cannot be used to satisfy this requirement</li><li>• Academic departments may set higher standards for students admitted provisionally into their programs</li><li>• While in the provisional status, a student is not eligible to hold a graduate assistantship.</li></ul>
<b><i>Contingent</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>A prospective student who has met all admissions requirements and is in the final semester of bachelor's degree work</u></li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An applicant may also be admitted with requirements the department expects the student to fulfill by a certain deadline</li> <li>• Departmental contingencies typically are prerequisite courses, standardized tests, or another similar requirement</li> </ul>
<b><i>Conditional</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>A prospective international student who meets all other requirements but has no TOEFL or IELTS score</u></li> <li>• If, after one year of ESL study at MSU, the student passes the required language test s/he may obtain full admission to the graduate program</li> <li>• Students are initially allowed to take only ESL classes and are placed on hold to prevent registration for other courses</li> <li>• Conditionally admitted students can be admitted only for a Fall semester to ensure completion of the required ESL within one academic year</li> </ul>
<b><i>Unclassified</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>A non-degree-seeking prospective student wishing to take graduate-level courses</u></li> <li>• Requires an unclassified graduate application, an official transcript verifying the applicant's bachelor's degree, and a \$60.00 application fee</li> <li>• Once admitted unclassified, the student may not apply for a graduate degree program for the same semester.</li> <li>• Up to 9 hours of graduate work earned while unclassified may be transferred to a degree program with the approval of the graduate program</li> <li>• Hours completed in unclassified status may not be used to satisfy provisional admission requirements if the student is later admitted to a degree program.</li> </ul>

## GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

<i>Types of Graduate Assistantship Appointments</i>	
<b>GRA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Graduate Research Assistants</u> perform duties in support of University research, which may/may not relate to the students' thesis/dissertation. This opportunity provides an excellent means for students to learn new techniques and methods as well as expand their knowledge by association with research-oriented responsibilities, whether employed within the student's academic discipline or not department. Duties and stipends vary from program to program depending on assigned duties.</li></ul>
<b>GSA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Graduate Service Assistants</u> aid faculty and staff members with administrative functions and GSA appointments are available in many academic and non-academic units. Duties vary, depending on administrative needs of the unit making the award, and stipends vary according to the nature of assigned duties.</li></ul>
<b>GTA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Graduate Teaching Assistants</u> work under the direct supervision of graduate faculty members and are assigned duties related directly to instruction, such as assisting in the preparation of lectures, leading discussion sections, conducting laboratory exercises, grading papers, and keeping class records.</li><li>• Advanced students who have completed 18 graduate hours in their teaching discipline may have primary responsibility for an undergraduate course, including assessment and final grades.</li><li>• GTAs cannot be assigned primary responsibilities for teaching and student assessment in courses approved for graduate credit.</li><li>• All graduate students planning to serve as Graduate Teaching Assistants must participate in the Graduate Teaching Assistant Certification Program prior to beginning the first teaching assignment at MSU and satisfy all program/evaluation requirements necessary to obtain certification.</li></ul>

***Additional Assistantship Requirements information – All Degree Levels:***

- To be eligible for an assistantship a student must be admitted to a specific degree program with “regular” or “contingent” status. A student with “contingent” status must, within the first award enrollment period, satisfy “regular” admission requirements, and an assistantship award will be terminated if these requirements are not met.
- Application for an assistantship must be submitted to the college, department, school, or support unit. The department/unit may provide its own application form or use the Application for Graduate Assistantship found on the Graduate School website. The department/unit establishes application deadlines and review procedures.
- Individual academic and non-academic departments are responsible for making the offer of an assistantship award, establishing the amount of the stipend and the work schedule, and monitoring the performance of the graduate assistant’s duties and responsibilities.
- Graduate assistants must be full-time students (registered in at least 9 graduate credit hours) and may not enroll in more than 13 graduate credit hours. The required full-time status must be maintained throughout the entire semester. Therefore, no course may be dropped if the resulting course load is fewer than the required 9 graduate credit hours, nor may any course in the 9-hour load consist of or be converted to audit status.
- Graduate assistants wishing to schedule more than a full-time course load may, with the approval of his/her major professor, department head, graduate coordinator and dean, register for more than 13 hours by submitting an Overload Form to the major professor. The dean’s office sends the approved form to the Registrar’s Office.
- To retain an assistantship, a student must demonstrate satisfactory progress in the academic program. Failure to do so may result in termination of the assistantship.

### ***Graduate Teaching Assistant Certification Program***

The Graduate Teaching Assistant Certification (GTAC) workshop is designed to introduce first-time teaching assistants to the techniques and skills necessary to be effective instructors in a university environment and promote excellence in undergraduate education at Mississippi State University. The Teaching Assistant Certification Program consists of the following three components:

- International Teaching Assistant (ITA) Workshop for international students only
- Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Workshop for both US and international students
- Microteaching Simulation/Classroom Certification Evaluation (for GTA2/GTA3 certification).

### ***Graduate Teaching Assistant Classification Levels***

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b><i>GTA1</i></b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Graduate Teaching Assistant 1</u> assist in such tasks as preparing and proctoring exams, grading exams and assignments, preparing instructional materials, maintaining class records, and tutoring students outside the classroom. This position does not require Microteaching Simulation/Classroom Certification.</li><li>• A GTA who initially received assignment to a GTA1 level appointment may later complete the Microteaching Simulation/Classroom Certification Evaluation in anticipation of a change in duties/responsibilities that require classroom or laboratory teaching.</li></ul>   |
| <b><i>GTA2</i></b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Graduate Teaching Assistant 2</u> requires completion of the Microteaching Simulation/Classroom Certification Evaluation. The graduate assistant may have the same duties as GTA1. Other responsibilities include making presentations in laboratories or classrooms, conducting lectures, and leading discussion groups. These tasks involve classroom or laboratory teaching of students but not as instructor of record. Graduate teaching assistants must receive direct supervision by the instructor of record.</li></ul>   |
| <b><i>GTA3</i></b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Graduate Teaching Assistant 3</u> will teach for credit as the instructor of record and/or as the person primarily responsible for assigning grades.</li><li>• “Graduate teaching assistants may serve as instructors of record only for undergraduate courses. These graduate students must possess a master’s in the teaching discipline, or at least 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline and obtain classroom certification from the Graduate School. Graduate teaching assistants must receive direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the same teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned periodic evaluations. Graduate teaching assistants cannot serve as instructors of record for graduate level courses, regardless of qualifications.”</li></ul> |

## PROGRAM COMPLETION TIMELINES

Refer to the Graduate Academic Calendar for dates and deadlines.

[http://www.grad.msstate.edu/academic\\_calendar/](http://www.grad.msstate.edu/academic_calendar/)

<b><i>Non-Thesis Master's and Educational Specialist Degrees</i></b>		
<b><i>Year 1</i></b>	<b><i>Task</i></b>	<b><i>Responsibility</i></b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet all contingent and provisional admission requirements</li> </ul>	Student
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete committee request form</li> </ul>	Student <u>and</u> committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the program of study form</li> </ul>	Student <u>and</u> committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send program and committee forms to OGS when completed or when student applies to graduate</li> </ul>	Student <u>or</u> committee
<b><i>Year 2</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete program of study and committee change forms if needed and send to OGS</li> </ul>	Student <u>and</u> committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule comprehensive exam when coursework completed or within 6 credits of completion and be enrolled</li> </ul>	Student <u>and</u> committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send comprehensive exam announcement to OGS two weeks prior to exam date</li> </ul>	Student <u>or</u> committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send exam result form to Graduate School</li> </ul>	Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply for graduation by the deadline (after first deadline, late fees assessed)</li> </ul>	Student

<b><i>Thesis Master's and Educational Specialist Degrees</i></b>		
<b><i>Year 1</i></b>	<b><i>Task</i></b>	<b><i>Responsibility</i></b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet all contingent and provisional admission requirements</li> </ul>	Student
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete committee request form</li> </ul>	Student <u>and</u> committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the program of study form</li> </ul>	Student <u>and</u> committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send program and committee forms to OGS when completed or when student applies to graduate</li> </ul>	Student <u>or</u> committee
<b><i>Year 2</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete program of study and committee change forms if needed and send to OGS</li> </ul>	Student <u>and</u> committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule comprehensive exam (if required by program) when coursework completed or within 6 credits of completion and be enrolled</li> </ul>	Student <u>and</u> committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send comprehensive exam announcement to OGS two weeks prior to exam date</li> </ul>	Student <u>or</u> committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule thesis defense and be enrolled</li> </ul>	Student <u>and</u> committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send defense announcement to OGS two weeks prior to defense date</li> </ul>	Student <u>or</u> committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send exam result form to Graduate School</li> </ul>	Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit initial and final thesis to Library and be enrolled at time of each submission</li> </ul>	Student
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply for graduation by the deadline (after first deadline, late fees accessed)</li> </ul>	Student

<b>Doctoral Degrees</b>		
<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet all contingent and provisional admission requirements</li> </ul>	Student
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete committee request form</li> </ul>	Student <u>and</u> committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the program of study form</li> </ul>	Student <u>and</u> committee
<b>Year 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule comprehensive examination when coursework completed or within 6 hours of completion and enrolled</li> </ul>	Student <u>and</u> committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send program of study and committee request form prior to the exam to OGS</li> </ul>	Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send comprehensive exam announcement to OGS two weeks prior to exam date</li> </ul>	Student <u>or</u> committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send exam result form to Graduate School</li> </ul>	Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Propose dissertation topic and be enrolled</li> </ul>	Student
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete and submit Admission to Candidacy form when exam passed and topic approved</li> </ul>	Committee
<b>Candidacy Period</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enroll for at least one credit of dissertation/research for Fall <u>and</u> Spring OR Summer</li> </ul>	Student
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule dissertation defense and be enrolled</li> </ul>	Student <u>and</u> committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send result form to Graduate School</li> </ul>	Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit initial and final dissertation to Library and be enrolled at time of each submission</li> </ul>	Student
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply for graduation by the deadline (after first deadline, late fees are accessed)</li> </ul>	Student

## DEGREE AUDIT INFORMATION

### *Initial Steps – All Degree Levels*

A new student meets with her major professor or graduate coordinator to establish a program of study and a committee.

- The **Program of Study** form should adhere to the degree requirements in the graduate catalog under which the student was admitted.
- The **Committee Request** form should include only individuals who hold a graduate faculty appointment. They are listed in the Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.msstate.edu/graduate/faculty/>).

These two forms are completed and filed in the department. The student should also have a copy.

The forms should be sent immediately to the Graduate School for filing. However, they are required to be sent to the OGS when:

- A master's student has applied for graduation
- An educational specialist student has applied for graduation
- A doctoral student has applied to take comprehensive examinations.

If changes occur (the program of study, the committee, or both) the submission of program of study and/or committee change forms is required.

***Additional Initial Steps information – All Degree levels:***

- A program of study change form is not required if only the committee members change. The committee in place approved the program at that time. A **Change of Program** form is required only when courses are added or deleted from the original program.
- A **Committee Change** form is required when a member leaves and/or a new member is added. If a departing member is no longer available to sign, write “Left MSU” in place of the signature.
- If the student has a minor, a minor committee member is required, and the minor graduate coordinator must sign all forms as well.
- Each degree level has specific requirements for committee composition. To follow policy, see program specifics <http://catalog.msstate.edu/graduate/>.

### ***Comprehensive Examinations - All Degree Levels***

- A comprehensive examination is taken only when the student has completed all coursework or is within six hours of coursework completion. This requirement excludes internship/practicum courses.
- A comprehensive examination must be announced two weeks prior to the scheduled date by submitting the **Declaration of Comprehensive Examination/Defense** form to the OGS.
- The **Report of Examination Results** must be submitted to the Graduate School by the department and must never be handled by the student.
- A student who fails the defense can schedule another examination no earlier than four months after the date of the original examination.
- Per University policy, two failures on the defense will result dismissal from the program.

#### ***Additional Examination information – Doctoral Level:***

A doctoral student must adhere to the following comprehensive examination deadlines:

- June 1 for December graduation
- November 1 for May graduation
- February 1 for August graduation

If a deadline falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the following Monday becomes the default deadline.

***Extension of Time to Degree – All Degree Levels***

<b><i>Master's</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eight years is the time limit for completion of master's degree requirements (6 years for those admitted prior to Fall 2010).</li><li>• A <b>Request for Extension of Time</b> form must be used to request a one-year extension if needed under well-justified, extenuating circumstances.</li><li>• The request must be approved by the major professor and dean of the college and submitted to the Office of the Graduate School.</li></ul>
<b><i>Educational Specialist</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A student must complete the educational specialist program within eight years (6 years for those admitted prior to Fall 2010).</li><li>• All courses included on the program of study must be current at the time of completion of the degree.</li><li>• A Request for Extension of Time form must be used to request a one-year extension if needed under well-justified, extenuating circumstances.</li><li>• The request must be approved by the major professor and dean of the college and submitted to the Office of the Graduate School.</li></ul>
<b><i>PhD</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A Ph.D. student must complete the degree program within five years of passing the preliminary/comprehensive examination (8 years from date of admission for those admitted prior to Fall 2010).</li><li>• A <b>Request for Extension of Time</b> form must be used to request a one-year extension if needed under well-justified, extenuating circumstances.</li><li>• The request must be approved by the major professor and dean of the college and submitted to the Office of the Graduate School.</li></ul>

### ***Admission to Candidacy – Doctoral Level***

A doctoral student is admitted to candidacy when she/he has:

- Satisfactorily completed all required coursework and the final program of study has been approved and sent to the Graduate School
- Completed all research skills or other requirements prior to taking the comprehensive examination;
- Has passed the preliminary/comprehensive examination
- Received formal approval of a dissertation topic by his/her committee

### ***Thesis or Dissertation Defense – All Degree Levels***

A student who submits a thesis or dissertation to fulfillment degree requirements must:

- Make a public presentation before the committee open to any member of Graduate Faculty and the Dean/Associate Dean of the Graduate School
- Defend the thesis/dissertation by the published Graduate School deadline
- Submit the **Declaration of Examination/Defense** form at least two weeks prior to the scheduled date

### ***Other Defense information – All Degree Levels:***

- The student or committee may request that the Graduate School appoint an outside observe to attend the comprehensive/preliminary examination;
- A student who fails the defense can schedule another examination no earlier than four months after the date of the original examination.
- Per University policy, two failures on the defense will result in the student being dropped from the program.

### ***Continuous Enrollment Requirements – All Degree Levels***

A graduate student who has completed all coursework but must take a comprehensive examination or complete a thesis/dissertation must be continuously enrolled for at least one credit hour for each Fall and Spring OR Summer semester. This policy applies to the following circumstances.

- Doctoral: has completed all coursework, passed comprehensive examinations, and has been admitted to candidacy but has not made final submission of a dissertation to the Library.
- Educational Specialist non-thesis: has completed all coursework but not taken or passed comprehensive examination.
- Educational Specialist thesis: has completed all coursework and passed examinations but has not made final submission of a thesis to the Library.
- Master's non-thesis: has completed all coursework but not taken or passed comprehensive examination.
- Master's thesis: has completed all coursework and passed examinations but has not made final submission of a thesis to the Library.

### ***Other Enrollment Requirements information– All Degree Levels:***

A student must enroll at MSU for at least one graduate credit hour in the semester in which she/he:

- Takes a comprehensive examination,
- Proposes a thesis/dissertation,
- Defends a thesis/dissertation,
- Submits initial and final thesis/dissertation to the Library.

### ***Graduation Ceremony Participation Prior to Fulfilling Degree Requirements***

- Ph.D. students and thesis-option master's and educational specialist students may participate in the May graduation ceremony after missing applicable deadlines provided they have met all requirements prior to the ceremony.
- Non-thesis master's and educational specialist students who have passed the comprehensive examination, if applicable, may participate in May commencement ceremonies if they have six or fewer hours of coursework to take during the summer semester and they have already registered for those hours.
- The student's graduate coordinator, department head, college dean, and dean of the Graduate School must each approve the request, which is submitted in the form of a letter from the student.
- All approvals must be obtained no later than ten business days prior to the date of commencement.

### ***Course Retake***

- A student may retake a course if his/her **Request to Retake a Course** ([http://www.grad.msstate.edu/forms/pdf\\_forms/request\\_to\\_retake\\_a\\_course.pdf](http://www.grad.msstate.edu/forms/pdf_forms/request_to_retake_a_course.pdf)) request is approved.
- Only one course per degree can be repeated, and this policy applies to any graduate course taken since the beginning of enrollment in the current program.
- OGS suggest that program coordinators advise students of the availability of the one-time option for retake before considering academic dismissal from a degree program.
- A repeated course must be taken at MSU.

### ***Academic Probation***

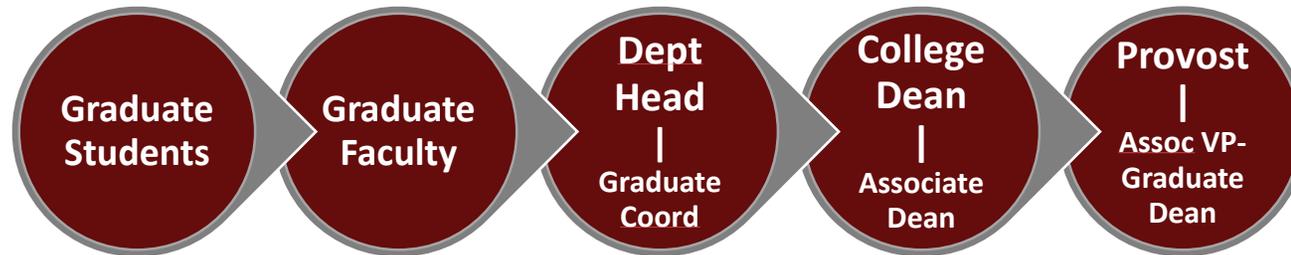
- A graduate student shall be placed on academic probation beginning in the following semester if:
  - his or her GPA falls below 3.00, or
  - he or she receives a third course grade lower than a B
  - a student may also be placed on academic probation if he or she falls short of any other standards for satisfactory academic performance established by their academic unit
- Specific information relative to retaking of courses or completing remedial work will be established by the appropriate academic advisor, student's graduate committee, and graduate coordinator and documented in written form.
- This remediation plan must specify a required date of completion.
- If the student intends to pursue the academic appeal process relating to the reason for being placed on probation, he or she must do so during the first probationary semester.
- **A student cannot take a preliminary/comprehensive examination or defend/submit a thesis or dissertation during the probationary period.**
- **If, at the end of the probationary period, the student has not met the requirements outlined in the remediation plan, she or he shall be dismissed.**

## ***Academic Dismissal***

- A graduate student **shall** be dismissed from the University if:
  - he or she receives a second course grade less than a C,
  - he or she receives a fourth course grade less than a B, or
  - he or she is found to be responsible for violating the Student Honor Code for a second time
- A student may also be dismissed from the University if he or she fails to meet the requirements placed upon them when he or she was placed on academic probation or falls short of any standards established by his or her academic unit. (See Academic Performance and Unsatisfactory Performance in this section.)
- The dismissal process begins with a [Recommendation for Academic Dismissal](#) form (a letter may be attached) from the graduate coordinator, approved by the college dean, to the dean of the Graduate School to recommend that a student be officially dismissed from a graduate program.
- The reason for the dismissal must be stated.
- Upon a review of the dismissal request, an official academic dismissal letter from the dean of the Graduate School is sent to the student through the U.S. Postal Service and is emailed to the student's MSU account.
- Any schedule of classes for the following semester(s) will be dropped and the Office of the Graduate School (OGS) places an academic dismissal hold on the student's record to prevent further enrollment.
- The student may refer to the Graduate Catalog for information regarding the appeals process (see Academic Dismissal Appeal Procedure below).
- A student who has been dismissed from a graduate program and has not been reinstated via the appeal process cannot reapply and be admitted into that program, except by meeting the conditions necessary to request Academic Amnesty (see Academic Amnesty under Academic Requirements).

# Graduate School

## Flow of Policies, Paperwork, Requests, Approvals



Dean Bruce  
Associate Dean Long  
Chris Rousseau

Doretta Martin, Linda Mason-Bonner, Lakan Drinker,  
Nathan Drake, Marina Hunt, Meredith Nagel

Pam Sullivan, Kathy Griffin

Joanne To, Shlynn Morris

Michael Gann, Forest Sparks

Margaret McMullen

**Office  
of the  
Graduate School**

- Admissions
- Academics (Grad Registrar)
  - Academic Policies
  - Graduate Catalog
  - Graduation Audits
  - Dismissals
- Business Management
  - Assistantships
  - Fellowships
- Enrollment Management
- Professional Development & Financial Assistance Programs
  - TA Certification
  - 3 Minute Thesis
  - Preparing Future Faculty
  - Student Travel Grants
  - Recruiting Grants
  - Workshops
- Graduate Council