GRADUATE POLICY AND PROGRAM HANDBOOK

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL, FOOD, AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS

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I. PURPOSE

This document describes the graduate programs offered by the Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics and the criteria and procedures used for admitting students to them. The requirements of the master's and Ph.D. programs are set forth, along with policies and guidelines pertaining to student advising, evaluation of academic performance, research integrity, student conduct and conflict resolution, and graduate assistantships. Program timetables and a checklist of administrative forms and deadlines are also included. Additional information about the graduate program can be found on the department's website, and an intranet site available to the department's graduate students.

Appeals concerning interpretation of this document may be referred to the department chairperson for determination.[1] Under extremely unusual circumstances a student or a guidance committee may petition the faculty representatives on the Graduate Policy Committee of the department for a waiver or modification of these policies for the specific student, subject to approval by the department chairperson.

II. OVERVIEW

A. Introduction to Graduate Education

The graduate program is an important part of the Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics. Substantial physical and financial resources, as well as faculty effort, are devoted to the program and to the creation of an intellectual environment conducive to effective learning.

Students entering graduate school assume responsibility for their own academic and professional development with the support of the faculty. Formal learning situations such as classes and thesis and dissertation research are important in the student's development and preparation for post-degree responsibilities. Additional development is expected through individual study and thought, interaction with other students and faculty, and by taking advantage of other learning opportunities such as seminars and professional meetings.

To facilitate the personal development of graduate students, the department's program is flexible and permits some freedom of action by both students and faculty. Though some common requirements must be satisfied, a range of programs can be developed to fit individual interests and needs. Programs can emphasize agricultural, food, and resource economics theory, research methods, and measurement of economic variables. Programs can also emphasize the study of applied problems and the analysis of decision making by both private and public actors.

[1] The department chairperson may assign some of the duties described in this document to the associate chairperson.

B. Overview of Graduate Programs

1. Master's program. Two M.S. degrees in agricultural, food, and resource economics are offered: Plan A (minimum 30 credits with a 6-credit thesis and no second field), and Plan B (minimum 33 credits with a 3-credit research paper and a 6-credit second field). A final oral examination is required for both Plan A and Plan B programs.

2. Ph.D. program. The Ph.D. degree requires four fields: economic theory (courses in the Economics Department), a field in applied microeconomics (one required AFRE course), a major field in agricultural, food, and resource economics (development economics, environmental and resource economics, or food and agricultural economics), and an AFRE methods field. Students also complete a comprehensive exam/dissertation proposal requirement, complete a dissertation, and defend it at a final oral examination.

C. General Policies

University and College policies and guidelines are an important part of the context within which our departmental policies are developed. Important references to these broader policy documents include the following:

1. *Academic Programs Catalog*
   This document includes sections on:
   - Graduate Education
   - Graduate Study in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

2. *Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities* *(GSRR)*

3. *MSU Guidelines for Graduate Student Mentoring and Advising*

4. *Research and Scholarly Integrity*
   Graduate School Research Integrity resources
   Research Integrity Office
   Procedures Concerning Allegations of Misconduct in Research and Creative Activities

5. Student records include the academic file (grades, degree program forms, academic correspondence), the assistantship/fellowship file (appointment forms), and the "personnel file" (for students appointed as TAs under the terms of the GEU/MSU contract). Access to student records is governed by:
   - The provisions of FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)
   - MSU's *Student Privacy Rights*
   - MSU's Access to Student Information policy

   Students have the right to access their educational records (*GSRR* Article 3).

6. *Disability Accommodations for Graduate Assistants*
   Graduate assistants (RAs, TAs, and TEs) are both students and employees. They are thus eligible for disability accommodations in both of these roles, and these accommodations are provided through distinct documents coordinated by the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD): Students receive an Accommodation Letter or Temporary Adjustment Letter and employees receive a Statement of Employee Accommodation Determination (SEAD). Graduate assistants can register for both situations using the AccessMSU accommodation portal.

7. *Offerings from the Office of the University Ombudsperson*
   The MSU Ombudsperson office provides the following free services to units upon request.
   1. **Academic Dignity and Civility Assessment:** The Office of the University Ombudsperson offers support to academic units by conducting assessments focused on academic civility and dignity within the faculty/student dynamic.
   2. **Presentations & Trainings:** The Ombuds office will deliver presentations and trainings that cover common topics such as principles of academic integrity, conflict resolution, decision making, FERPA, the role of the Ombuds office, and custom topics. These offerings can be tailored for faculty & staff, students, and/or the classroom.

   The Office of the University Ombudsperson also assists students, faculty, and staff in understanding rights and policies related to students, and assists with conflict resolution.

8. *Office of Student Support - Student Rights and Responsibilities*

9. *MSU Anti-Discrimination Policy (ADP)*

10. *Code of Teaching Responsibility*

11. *Office for Civil Rights and Title IX Education and Compliance - Disability and Reasonable Accommodation Policy*

12. *MSU Digital Accessibility Policy*

13. *Integrity of Scholarship and Grades*

14. *MSU Graduate Employees Union (GEU) Contract*

15. *MSU Policy on Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct and Title IX Policy*

16. *Research Integrity Office - Guidelines on Authorship*

17. *MSU Institutional Data Policy*

18. *Office of the Registrar - Grief Absence Policy*

III. ADMISSIONS CRITERIA, REQUIREMENTS, AND PROCEDURES

A. Admissions Criteria

Admission to the graduate program is based on three main criteria:

1. Ability to complete the degree requirements successfully and in a reasonable time period. This is evaluated based on the entire application, including:

   a. Record of previous academic training and performance (course program, grades, length of time to degree, and date of degree).

   b. Academic and personal statements.

   c. TOEFL and GRE scores. See the MSU Graduate School's English Language Competency policy for graduate admissions.

   d. Letters of recommendation.

   e. Previous research or work experience that is relevant to the applicant's proposed area of interest.

2. Match between the applicant's background, interests, and educational objectives, and the Department's research, teaching, and outreach programs.

Additional details on admissions criteria are available on the Applying and Visiting page of the AFRE website..

B. Admissions Procedures

1. Students are admitted to enter the program in the Fall Semester. Admissions requests for the Spring and Summer Semesters are generally not granted because required core courses are sequential and begin only in the Fall Semester.

2. Students may apply directly to the master's program.

3. Students may enter the doctoral program in one of three ways:

   a. Students who have obtained or expect to obtain a master's degree from another department or from another institution may apply for direct admission to the doctoral program.

   b. Students who have obtained or expect to obtain a bachelor's degree with coursework that is sufficiently advanced may apply for direct admission to the doctoral program.

   c. Students currently enrolled in the department's master's program may request a transfer to the doctoral program by submitting a formal application through the MSU admissions portal.

4. Provisional admission:

   a. Students who lack preparation in a particular area but who are otherwise admissible may be admitted provisionally. Necessary remedial work and deadlines for completing it will be stated in the admissions letter. Regular status will be granted when the provisions have been completed. Provisional admission is rare in AFRE.

IV. ADVISING

Graduate students receive academic advising from a guidance committee of faculty members, including a major professor and (if the student so chooses) a research supervisor other than the major professor.

A. Eligibility of Faculty for Advising

1. Graduate student advising is normally the responsibility of "regular faculty" members. As defined in the *Faculty Handbook* (p. 201), "The 'regular faculty' of Michigan State University shall consist of all persons appointed under the rules of tenure and holding the rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, or instructor, and persons appointed as librarians. In addition, the principal administrative officer of each major educational and research unit of the University shall be a member of the 'regular faculty'."

2. Others who may serve in an advising role include the following:

   a. An emeritus or non-tenure system faculty member may serve:
      - on a particular graduate student's guidance committee or M.S. oral examination committee as a committee member, or
      - as the chairperson (major professor) of the student's guidance or examination committee, or
      - as the thesis or dissertation advisor.

For emeritus and non-tenure system faculty, approval is required by the department chairperson. For non-tenure system faculty, approval by the college and the Dean of the Graduate School is also required, following the procedures on how to have fixed-term MSU faculty, academic specialists, support staff, and non-MSU individuals serve on graduate student committees.

Non-tenure system faculty members who have been so approved may serve on a guidance committee or as a voting member of the examination committee so long as the number of AFRE tenure system committee members is equal to or exceeds the number of non-tenure system committee members and the AFRE guidance committee composition requirements in section IV.C are met. See Planning a Doctoral Program and Appointment of a Guidance Committee and Master's Programs Examinations for guidance committee requirements per the MSU Academic Programs Catalog.

b. An MSU faculty member who has been advising a student may continue in that role after leaving MSU for other employment, with the approval of the department, college, and Dean of the Graduate School. Follow the procedures on how to have fixed-term MSU faculty, academic specialists, support staff, and non-MSU individuals serve on graduate student committees.

c. Persons from other institutions may serve only as nonvoting members of the guidance or examination committee unless they have been approved by the department, college, and Dean of the Graduate School using the same procedure applied to non-tenure system MSU faculty members. Follow the procedures on how to have fixed-term MSU faculty, academic specialists, support staff, and non-MSU individuals serve on graduate student committees. If so approved, persons from other institutions may serve on a guidance committee or as a voting member of the examination committee so long as the AFRE guidance committee composition requirements in section IV.C are met.

B. Major Professor

1. New students are assigned a temporary major professor by the department's Graduate Program Director. A student may request a specific temporary major professor.

2. The student is responsible for selecting a permanent major professor. The student's selection of a major professor is subject to approval by the Graduate Program Director. If necessary, the student may request the Graduate Program Director to assist in identifying a suitable major professor.

3. As outlined more fully in the *MSU Guidelines on Graduate Student Mentoring and Advising*, the major professor's role is to advise the student on developing a program plan, selecting a research topic and implementing and publishing the research, and developing professional skills. The major professor should provide

intellectual support and guidance to the student, give regular feedback to the student on their academic progress, and facilitate the student's career development.

4. A major professor who is unable or unwilling to continue in that role may resign. The student then selects a new major professor as soon as possible, subject to approval by the Graduate Program Director. When feasible, the major professor who is unable to continue will assist the student in identifying a suitable replacement.

5. A major professor who is temporarily unable to serve in that role should, in consultation with the student, designate another person to act as major professor during the period, and notify the student and the Graduate Program Director accordingly.

6. A student whose educational objectives change may request a different major professor, subject to approval by the Graduate Program Director.

C. Guidance Committee

1. The guidance committee must be selected by the student, in consultation with the major professor.

   a. For a master's student, the guidance committee consists of three or more Michigan State University regular faculty members. A majority of the guidance committee members must have appointments in the Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics. The guidance committee is responsible for grading the student's final oral examination.

   b. For a Ph.D. student, the guidance committee consists of four or more Michigan State University regular faculty members. A majority of the guidance committee members must have appointments in the Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics.

   c. The student may change the guidance committee at a later time, subject to approval by the Graduate Program Director.

   d. While the majority of the student's guidance committee must have appointments in the Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics, students are encouraged to seek members from outside the Department when such members can offer special expertise relevant to their programs.

2. As outlined more fully in the *MSU Guidelines on Graduate Student Mentoring and Advising*, the guidance committee including the major professor counsels the student in the development of career objectives and a relevant program of study consistent with the individual's career objectives, periodically assesses the student's progress and performance, and determines if the student has met the standards for the degree. Many students desire and could benefit from teaching, extension

activities, or research responsibilities, in addition to their thesis or dissertation research. The guidance committee is responsible for encouraging or requiring such experience commensurate with the student's interests and professional goals.

D. Research or Dissertation Supervisor

1. The candidate and major professor may designate another faculty member to act as research supervisor (M.S. program) or dissertation supervisor (Ph.D. program), subject to approval by the department chairperson. The research or dissertation supervisor becomes a member of the guidance committee. Other faculty members may be added to the guidance committee, or the guidance committee may be reconstituted, for purposes of guiding and evaluating the student's research.

2. The research/dissertation supervisor, if one is designated, will have primary responsibility for advising the student during the development of the M.S. Plan B paper or thesis or Ph.D. dissertation. Otherwise, the major professor will fulfill this responsibility. Advice should be given on problem definition, data collection methods, analytic content, and structure and style of the final product. Where special help is needed, the research/dissertation supervisor or major professor should suggest how it can be obtained. They should also clarify with the student any specific needs for reports and appropriate journal articles, as well as authorship of, and responsibility for, joint publications.

E. Professional Development

The major professor and guidance committee members should encourage and assist the student to take advantage of learning opportunities outside the classroom, and to develop professional skills that are important for a career in agricultural, food, and resource economics. Attendance at seminars and research proposal or thesis/dissertation presentations and participation at professional meetings provide important opportunities for learning about current research or policy issues and methods of analysis, for sharpening critical thinking, and for developing a network of acquaintances who can serve as future colleagues. Students are therefore expected to participate regularly in such learning experiences. In addition, the student's advisors should assist in creating opportunities for the student to develop writing, speaking, presentation and programming skills, and other skills and experiences that would contribute to effective teaching, if that is relevant to the student's intended career. Students are expected to be active in pursuing such skill-building opportunities. For many students, professional development opportunities may include travel abroad. Students traveling abroad are encouraged to use the following MSU resources:

a. The MSU Travel Clinic can advise on health risks or recommended immunizations.

b. The International Studies and Programs website provides information related to safety around the world.

c. Assistance with travel funding may be available via the Graduate School.

Students are also encouraged to take advantage of career and professional development resources available from the MSU Graduate School.

F. Student Responsibilities

The responsibility of faculty to adhere to university and department policies and to provide effective advising and mentoring of graduate students is accompanied by a set of responsibilities incumbent on students. As outlined more fully in the *MSU Guidelines on Graduate Student Mentoring and Advising* and in the *Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR)*, the responsibilities of students that contribute to good student-advisor relationships include learning and adhering to university and department policies, following principles of honesty, integrity, and collegial behavior during course work, research and publication-related activities, and keeping the major professor and guidance committee regularly informed of progress toward degree completion.

V. MASTER'S PROGRAM DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

A. Introduction

1. The M.S. degree program in agricultural, food, and resource economics reflects recognition that the background and post-degree plans of students vary widely. Despite this, all students are expected to obtain sufficient economic theory, mathematics and statistics to interpret economic data effectively and to obtain practical research results for themselves and others. They are also expected to develop a general familiarity with the content, approaches and historical development of agricultural economics and its supporting disciplines. The requirements of the M.S. degree are summarized in Table 1.

2. Students who plan to acquire a Ph.D. degree should develop the M.S. program as an integral part of their total graduate program. This is particularly important in areas of study where substantial prerequisites are required.

B. Course Program

1. Two broad programs are offered under the designations of Plan A and Plan B. The student is responsible for filing a major professor, guidance committee, and Plan A or Plan B course program via GradPlan no later than the end of their second semester in the program. These requests must be approved by the guidance committee, Graduate Program Director, and college dean. The major professor, guidance committee, Plan A/B designation, and/or course program may be

modified later to respond to changing academic opportunities or research or career interests.

2. AFRE 801, AFRE 802, AFRE 805, and an elective quantitative methods course (typically fulfilled via AFRE 835) are required.[2] In addition, a minimum of 12 other course credits in agricultural economics, with at least 9 at the 800-900 level, is required under both Plan A and Plan B (Table 1).

3. A second field of 6 course credits is designated for Plan B. This field is normally outside the Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics and is in addition to minimum credit requirements in economics.

[2] Whenever a course number is specified, it is understood that the phrase "or equivalent" applies, including a higher-level course on the same material.

Table 1. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR M.S. PROGRAM

	Semester Credits	
Course Requirements a/	**Plan A**	**Plan B**
Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics Field		
AFRE 800/900-level courses beyond those taken to fulfill the requirements below	9	9
Elective b/	3	3
Second Field (in or outside AFRE)	0	6
Economics (AFRE 805 or EC 812A)	3	3
Quantitative Methods		
Statistics (AFRE 802)	3	3
Mathematics for economists (AFRE 801)	3	3
Elective quantitative methods course, as approved by the guidance committee and department (typically AFRE 835)	3	3
Research: Thesis for Plan A (AFRE 899); research, case study, or problem-solving project paper for Plan B (AFRE 898)	6	3
Total Credits	30	33

Other Requirements:

- Minimum GPA of 3.0 in the student's approved course program, and 3.0 grades in each required quantitative methods course
- Minimum of 18 credits (excluding research) in courses at the 800 or 900-level
- Final oral examination
- Completion of RECR requirements

a/ Whenever a course number is specified it is understood that the phrase "or equivalent" applies, including a higher-level course on the same material.

b/ Including suitable 400-level courses in AFRE or in other departments as approved by the guidance committee and the department.

5. A minimum of 30 credits including research (33 credits if Plan B) with a grade point average of at least 3.0 is required. University regulations generally do not permit counting 300-level courses. The guidance committee may require collateral courses that are not included in the minimum credits or in the grade point average. A maximum of 9 semester credits of graduate course work (excluding research and thesis credits) may be transferred from courses taken at another institution, or in another master's degree program at Michigan State University. See the Academic Program Catalog (Transfer Credits) for further details.

6. A minimum of 18 credits (excluding research credits) must be in courses at the 800 or 900 level.

7. A minimum of 9 credits in quantitative methods courses, consisting of 3 credits of mathematics for economists (AFRE 801), 3 credits of mathematical statistics for applied economics (AFRE 802), and one elective 3-credit quantitative methods course (typically AFRE 835).

8. The student demonstrates competence in quantitative methods by achieving at least a 3.0 grade in each of the courses taken to satisfy the three quantitative methods requirements.

9. A maximum of 3 credits of AFRE 890 (Independent Study) may be used toward fulfillment of the Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics field (for Plan A and Plan B students) or the second field (for Plan B students).

C. Research

1. The research requirement depends on the choice of Plan A or Plan B option.

   a. Plan A requires a thesis, based on 6 credits of research earned in AFRE 899. This option is appropriate for students who wish to emphasize research experience during the M.S. program.

   b. Plan B requires a research paper, based on 3 credits of research earned in AFRE 898. This option is appropriate for students who wish to emphasize course work during the M.S. program.

   c. The guidance committee has latitude in determining what constitutes a Plan A thesis or Plan B research paper. In general, a thesis will make an original contribution to the field and is likely to involve analysis of primary data, perhaps collected by the student. A Plan B paper may take many forms, including a case study of a firm or industry, or a literature review and research proposal, and is more likely to involve analysis of secondary data.

2. Plan A and Plan B students must complete Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research (RECR) requirements (Annex D), and all students must ensure that they

comply with the university requirements and guidelines pertaining to use of human subjects and vertebrate animals in research, and to safe use of hazardous materials.

a. Students whose master's Plan A or Plan B research will involve human subjects will need to apply online at the Office of Research Regulatory Support, Human Research Protection Program to obtain prior approval from the University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Examples of research involving human subjects include interviews, surveys, behavioral or educational testing, observation of individual or group behavior, or the use of existing data on human subjects, including publicly available data. In most cases, research based on primary or secondary survey data whose collection had the consent of those surveyed and did not place them under any risk, and whose use does not reveal their identities, will receive quick and favorable review. The IRB office should be contacted for more specific information about review procedures and the types of research requiring review.

b. Students whose research involves vertebrate animals should adhere to the guidelines of the Animal Care Program.

c. Guidelines for protection of the environment and regulatory compliance are available from the Office of Research Regulatory Support, Environmental Health and Safety.

D. Final Oral Examination

1. The M.S. student's guidance committee is also the student's final oral examination committee. The candidate is expected to provide members of the examination committee with a copy of the thesis or Plan B paper at least two weeks before the oral examination. The defense should be announced to all faculty and graduate students at least a week in advance by the Academic Program Coordinator. The student must be registered for a minimum of one credit in the semester in which the final oral examination is taken (except for in summer for domestic students; international students in their final semester must be enrolled at the level required by the Office of International Students and Scholars).

2. The oral examination should be scheduled so that all members of the examination committee may attend. If necessary, other modes of faculty participation such as through conference call or written questions and comments may be adopted with the approval of the department chairperson. If travel to participate in the defense represents a significant hardship for the student, the student may petition the examination committee and department chair for a remote defense.

   Approved remote defenses are subject to the following conditions:

   i. The student must present a seminar that is viewable (either recorded or in person) by the examination committee and other people on the MSU campus.
   ii. The student must be interactively examined.

iii. Logistical arrangements for the defense are the responsibility of the student and committee.

3. The oral examination is a comprehensive evaluation of the candidate's qualifications for the M.S. degree. At the discretion of the major professor, the examination committee may give a written examination in addition to the oral. Since master's programs vary markedly, the oral examination will vary, but in each case the examination will attempt to determine if the student has achieved a minimum level of competence in the general area of agricultural, food and resource economics and a comprehensive knowledge of the major area of emphasis. The examination will normally begin with a public presentation by the student of their thesis or Plan B paper, but the examination is not limited to a defense of the thesis or the Plan B paper. Consistent with College policy, interested faculty members not on the examination committee may participate without vote during the examination that follows any public presentation of the student's research. Graduate students may not attend this examination, however.

4. A majority vote to pass is sufficient for successful completion of the examination requirement for a Plan A or Plan B master's degree. In the event of a tie vote, the department chairperson will arrange for another assessment to break the tie. If the student is required to make revisions in the thesis or Plan B paper, the faculty member designated by the examination committee to review the revised work is expected to do so in a timely manner, normally within four weeks following the date the revised work is delivered to the faculty member. If the student does not receive a response within four weeks, the student should contact the faculty member or major professor, and if necessary, may request assistance from the department chairperson in obtaining a timely decision on the acceptability of the proposed revisions.

5. The examination committee also evaluates the candidate's potential for performance in a Ph.D. program. The major professor is responsible for transmitting this recommendation to the department chairperson.

E. Preparation and Submission of Final Research Paper or Thesis

1. The document should be prepared using the master's thesis formatting guidelines prescribed by the Graduate School.

2. The research supervisor must approve the final version of the document. For Plan A theses, an electronic copy of the document must be submitted to the Graduate School via ProQuest. An electronic copy of the document approved by the Graduate School must also be submitted to the Academic Program Coordinator before the degree will be certified. Plan B papers are not collected by the University or Graduate School; however, an electronic copy of the document must be submitted to the Academic Program Coordinator before the degree will be certified. The student should also provide copies to the major professor, the research supervisor (if different from the major professor), and any other members of the guidance committee indicated by the major professor.

3. The student is responsible for submitting all required forms to the Graduate School and the department.

4. In addition to the main body of a thesis or dissertation, the Graduate School now permits the submission of supplementary materials to ProQuest. These supplemental materials will not be reviewed by the Graduate School for formatting requirements, but they must be acceptable by ProQuest and comply with ProQuest's criteria and storage limits. All supplementary materials need the approval of the thesis/dissertation committee chair on the ETD (Electronic Theses and Dissertation) approval form.

F. Recognition of Outstanding M.S. Thesis/Plan B Research Paper

Each year the Department selects the outstanding M.S. thesis or Plan B research paper and recognizes the student's research efforts by placing their name on a plaque displayed in the department. In addition, the student honored will receive a monetary award of at least $250, the amount to be adjusted periodically by the department on the recommendation of the Graduate Policy Committee.

VI. PH.D. PROGRAM DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

A. Introduction

1. University regulations require students to be in residence on campus for two consecutive semesters after first enrollment for doctoral degree credit. Students must complete at least six credits of graduate work in each of the two resident semesters. Students must also register for and successfully complete 24 credits of doctoral dissertation research (AFRE 999). The requirements of the Ph.D. degree are summarized in Table 2.

2. Students who enter the master's program in agricultural, food, and resource economics and who subsequently transfer to the doctoral program have the option to complete or discontinue the master's degree in agricultural, food, and resource economics. For students that opt to complete the master's degree, subject to approval of the student's guidance committee and with explicit acknowledgment, selected material from the M.S. thesis or Plan B paper may be incorporated into the dissertation. All requirements for the master's degree must be met.

3. Prior research experience is helpful in preparing a doctoral student to complete the dissertation successfully. Students entering the doctoral program without having completed a master's thesis, research paper, or equivalent, will be encouraged to identify, in consultation with their guidance committee, ways of obtaining appropriate research experience prior to beginning their doctoral dissertation research.

Table 2. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR PH.D. PROGRAM

Course Requirements a/	Semester Credits
Microeconomic Theory (EC 812A and EC 812B)	7
Econometrics (EC 820A and EC 820B)	6
Applied Microeconomics (AFRE 900)	3
Research Design and Communication in Applied Economics (AFRE 871 & AFRE 971, 1.5 credits each) b/	3
AFRE Major Field (DEV, ERE, or FAE) c/	6
AFRE Methods Field	6
Electives (additional 800- or 900-level courses from any MSU department)	6
Dissertation Research (AFRE 999)	24
Total Credits	61

Other Requirements:
- Completion of qualifying requirements (see VI.C below)
- A grade of 3.0 or better is required in each course used to establish a Ph.D. student's AFRE Major Field and AFRE Methods Field, and the student's cumulative GPA across their AFRE Major Field and AFRE Methods Field courses combined must be greater than 3.0.
- A grade of 3.0 or better is required in both 1.5-credit courses taken to fulfill the Research Design and Communication in Applied Economics requirement
- Presentation, successful defense, and completion of the dissertation research proposal/comprehensive exam
- Presentation, successful defense, and completion of the final dissertation
- Completion of RECR requirements

a/ Where a specific course is listed, the phrase "or equivalent" applies, including a higher-level course on the same material.

b/ AFRE 871 and AFRE 971 are new courses that will be offered starting in Fall 2027; these course numbers are subject to change.

c/ Including at least one 900-level course.

B. Course Program

1. The student is responsible for filing via GradPlan a major professor and guidance committee no later than the end of their second semester in the program, and a course program no later than the end of their third semester in the program. These requests must be approved by the guidance committee, Graduate Program Director, and college dean. The major professor, guidance committee, and/or course program may be modified later to respond to changing academic opportunities or research or career interests. Prior to filing a course program, only 800 and 900 level courses completed by the student will be included in computations of GPA used to determine academic standing.

2. A grade point average of 3.0 in the student's approved course program is required before the student can be certified for graduation. Collateral courses are not included in this calculation.

3. Transfer credits: AFRE Ph.D. students that have completed graduate-level coursework at MSU or another institution prior to matriculating into the AFRE Ph.D. program may request that up to 9 credits of such coursework be considered for transfer by MSU and applied toward their AFRE Ph.D. program coursework requirements. Per the MSU Academic Programs Catalog section on transfer credits for doctoral programs, "Graduate credits may be transferred from other MSU programs or postsecondary accredited institutions of comparable academic quality if they are appropriate to a student's program and provided they were completed no earlier than three years prior to the date of matriculation into the doctoral degree program. The department or school chairperson or director and dean must grant approval. Applications to transfer courses completed prior to this deadline must be submitted by the department/school for approval by the dean of the college and the Dean of the Graduate School. Only graduate–level courses in which at least a 3.0 (B) grade was received will be considered for transfer." Approval by the student's major professor, guidance committee, and the MSU Registrar's Office (RO) is also required.

   Transfer credits from coursework taken at another institution will generally be treated as non-AFRE and counted toward the Ph.D. student's electives requirement (up to a maximum of 6 credits; see Table 2). If the student wishes to substitute transfer credits from another institution for an AFRE course, the content of the course taken at the other institution must be sufficiently similar to the AFRE course equivalent (based on the course syllabi) to warrant the substitution. The course syllabi will be reviewed by the AFRE Graduate Program Director and the instructor of the AFRE course to determine if such substitution is appropriate.

   Students interested in exploring transfer credit options should contact the AFRE Graduate Program Director.

4. Course work is organized around six required competencies and an electives requirement. The six required competencies are microeconomic theory, econometrics, applied microeconomics, research design and communication in applied economics, a major field in agricultural, food, and resource economics, and an AFRE methods field. The electives requirement consists of 6 additional credits of 800- or 900-level courses. The same course may not be used to meet more than one of these requirements.

5. The microeconomic theory requirement is intended to provide Ph.D.-level training via EC 812A and EC 812B, which must be taken in the first academic year of doctoral study. Students demonstrate competence in microeconomic theory through qualifying requirements (see VI.C below).

6. The econometrics requirement consists of EC 820A and EC 820B, which must be taken in the first academic year of doctoral study. Students demonstrate competence in econometrics through qualifying requirements (see VI.C below).

7. The applied microeconomics requirement consists of AFRE 900 (3 credits total), which must be taken no later than the Fall semester of the second academic year of doctoral study. Students demonstrate competence in applied microeconomics through qualifying requirements (see VI.C below).

8. The research design and communication in applied economics requirement consists of two 1.5 credit courses (3 credits total). AFRE 871 (1.5 credits), which must be taken no later than Fall semester of the third academic year of doctoral study, is a course designed to help students improve their research question formulation, writing, and presentation skills. AFRE 971 (1.5 credits), which must also be taken no later than Fall semester of the third academic year of doctoral study, includes departmental seminar attendance, discussion, and critique obligations for Ph.D. students. A minimum grade of 3.0 is required in each course to fulfill this requirement (AFRE 871 and AFRE 971). Students can take a course a maximum of two times to meet these grade requirements. [Please note: AFRE 871 and AFRE 971 are new courses that will be offered starting in Fall 2027; these course numbers are subject to change.]

9. The major field in agricultural, food, and resource economics provides a specialization within agricultural, food, and resource economics, normally related to the student's probable dissertation area. A minimum of six credits is required. The available fields are:
    a. Development Economics (DEV)
    b. Environmental and Resource Economics (ERE)
    c. Food and Agricultural Economics (FAE)

10. The AFRE methods field entails advanced training in modern empirical methods. Students must take a minimum of 6 credits of AFRE methods courses to fulfill this requirement, selecting from among the following set of 3-credit courses: AFRE 823, AFRE 874, and AFRE 976). [Please note: AFRE 976 is the proposed permanent course number for the course that has been offered under temporary course number AFRE 991 (Advanced Data Analytics); this course number is subject to change.]

11. A grade of 3.0 or better is required in each course used to establish a Ph.D. student's major field in agricultural, food, and resource economics and their AFRE methods field, and the student's cumulative GPA across their major field and methods field courses combined must be greater than 3.0. Students can take a course a maximum of two times to meet these grade requirements.

12. The electives requirement is to assure a broad foundation of knowledge. A minimum of 6 credits of additional MSU 800- or 900-level coursework is required to fulfill this requirement. These courses may be AFRE or non-AFRE courses. A maximum of 3 credits of Independent Study may be used toward fulfillment of the electives requirement. Independent Study credits in AFRE are taken via AFRE 890. See the

Registrar's Office course descriptions website for information on Independent Study course codes in other units.

13. Additional courses may be required by the guidance committee, particularly to remedy deficiencies or to assure the student's competence in view of career objectives relative to previous academic study and work or other learning experiences.

C. Qualifying Requirements

1. To be qualified to proceed in the AFRE Ph.D. program, grades of 3.5 or greater are required in at least two of the following five EC and AFRE core courses: EC 812A, EC 812B, EC 820A, EC 820B, and AFRE 900, with a 3.0 minimum also required in each of these courses. Retaking a course to meet these requirements is not allowed.
2. Performance in the four required first-year courses (EC 812A, EC 812B, EC 820A, and EC 820B) determines eligibility to proceed to the second year. Students who do not meet the grade requirements based on first-year performance must take and pass a May Economics Qualifying Examination according to the following rules:
    a. Students with a grade below 3.0 in EC 812A and/or EC 812B are required to take and pass the May Economics Qualifying Examination in microeconomics. A pass will be considered equivalent to earning one grade of 3.5 or better for purposes of the qualifying requirements in section VI.C.1 above.

    b. Students with a grade below 3.0 in EC 820A and/or EC 820B are required to take and pass the May Economics Qualifying Examination in econometrics. A pass will be considered equivalent to earning one grade of 3.5 or better for purposes of the qualifying requirements in section VI.C.1 above.

    c. Students with grades of 3.0 in all four required first-year courses (i.e., EC 812A, EC 812B, EC 820A, and EC 820B) do not meet the qualifying requirements in section VI.C.1 above and thus will be required to take and pass one May Economics Qualifying Examination (microeconomics or econometrics). The student may choose which of these qualifying examinations to take (microeconomics or econometrics). A pass on the selected qualifying examination will be considered equivalent to earning one grade of 3.5 or better for the purposes of the qualifying requirements in section VI.C.1 above.

    d. Retaking a qualifying examination to meet these requirements is not allowed.
3. AFRE Ph.D. students pursuing a doctoral dual major with Economics must take the Economics Qualifying Examinations in microeconomics, econometrics, and macroeconomics in the first academic year of doctoral study. AFRE dual major students who pass these qualifying examinations will be considered qualified in AFRE.

4. A student's GPA is based on the grades received in their courses regardless of qualifying examination outcomes.

D. Full Time Status

1. In order for a doctoral student to be considered full-time for academic purposes, they must be enrolled in a minimum of 6 credits (pre-comprehensive exam).

2. Full-time status for doctoral students is defined as a minimum of 1 credit for those students who:

    a. Have successfully completed their comprehensive exam and are actively engaged in dissertation research; or
    b. Are doing department-approved off-campus fieldwork related to preparation of their dissertation. This off-campus fieldwork will be granted for one semester at a time up to a maximum of three semesters. The dean's office of the student's college will request the change of status by the Office of the Registrar at least one month prior to the beginning of the semester for which the status is requested.

3. All graduate assistants are classified as full-time students during the semester(s) of their appointments, as long as they are enrolled in the minimum required credits for the assistantship.

    a. For a quarter-time, half-time, and three-quarter-time graduate assistantship, minimum enrollment is 3 credits for doctoral students (pre-comprehensive exam).
    b. Minimum enrollment for doctoral students who have successfully completed their comprehensive exam is 1 credit.

E. Dissertation Proposal and Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination

1. The dissertation proposal requirement shall serve as the Ph.D. comprehensive examination for AFRE Ph.D. students. Successful completion of the dissertation proposal requirement constitutes completion of the Ph.D. comprehensive exam.

2. Each Ph.D. candidate is required to circulate a written dissertation research proposal and to present a department seminar on the proposed research at an early stage in the research process. The principal purpose is to help gain feedback from the guidance committee, other faculty, and graduate students, and to ensure that the proposed research problems and methodology are appropriately specified. The candidate must be physically present at a location on the MSU campus for the proposal seminar; remote presentation of proposals is not allowed. The student should submit the written research proposal to their full guidance committee at least two weeks prior to presenting the proposal.

3. The public portion of the proposal defense shall include a presentation by the student for 30-40 minutes, followed by a brief Q&A with the general audience. The student then goes into closed session/oral defense with the guidance committee.

4. A student's performance on the written proposal, presentation, and oral defense constitutes their comprehensive exam for the Ph.D. program. The comprehensive exam is graded by the student's guidance committee. Each committee member indicates their assessment of the student's performance (pass or fail). A student receives an overall grade of pass on the comprehensive exam if the pass assessment is unanimous or if there is at most one assessment of fail. If multiple committee members assess the attempt to be a fail, the student fails the comprehensive exam. A fail means the student is no longer in good academic standing.

5. When the student has completed their comprehensive exam/dissertation proposal, the student's major professor reports the results (the pass/fail assessment of each committee member and the overall pass/fail outcome) by submitting a Record of Comprehensive Examination and Dissertation Research Proposal form to the Academic Program Coordinator.

6. If the comprehensive exam/dissertation proposal is failed, a second attempt can be arranged by the student and the student's guidance committee in consultation with the Graduate Program Director. The second attempt should be focused on addressing the concerns noted in the first attempt. A maximum of two attempts is allowed for the comprehensive exam. Per MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources policy, "If the student fails to pass, there may not be a reexamination until after one semester of additional work toward the degree is completed."

7. Students must complete their first comprehensive exam/dissertation proposal attempt by the end of their third year of doctoral study. If a second attempt is required, it must be completed no later than fall semester of the student's fourth year.

8. The written dissertation proposal shall include a plan for all three dissertation essays and demonstrate substantive readiness for dissertation research:

    a. Essay 1 must be a well-developed research paper that is at the advanced draft stage or beyond. (While not required, students are strongly encouraged to submit this essay to a journal before the end of their third year.) The essay must demonstrate original research based on a sound synthesis and critical assessment of the state of economic research in a particular area. Additionally, the original research component, which must go beyond a literature review, should be sufficiently well-developed that, with reasonable revisions, it would result in a publishable paper.
    b. Essays 2 and 3 must each include an introduction, clearly stated research questions or hypotheses, a description of the data to be used or collected (if relevant), and a description of the methodological plan. A timeline for completion and a discussion of potential pitfalls or challenges should also be

included for Essays 2 and 3. Preliminary results are not required for Essays 2 and 3 but can be included if available. The written proposals for these two essays must be sufficiently well developed that the guidance committee can provide substantive feedback on the proposed direction of the research.

F. Doctoral Dissertation

1. A doctoral dissertation that is based on original research which makes a significant contribution to knowledge is required for the degree. By University regulation, each student must register for a minimum of 24 credits and no more than 36 credits of AFRE 999 Doctoral Dissertation Research prior to awarding of the degree. The guidance committee and student have wide latitude in determining the design and format of the dissertation, but in any case, the dissertation should be designed so as to facilitate publication of the results. A common alternative to the traditional dissertation is a set of three related essays written in journal article format and combined in one volume with an introduction and concluding chapter that highlight the essays' common research focus and principal findings.

2. Essays that the student has co-authored while in the doctoral program may be included provided the major professor certifies that the student is the Lead author (i.e., senior author) as defined in the Michigan State University Guidelines on Authorship: "The Lead author is defined as the person who leads a research/scholarly effort or creative work and makes a major contribution to a multi-authored work." If the essay has been submitted for publication elsewhere, the authors should be listed in the order on the submitted document.

3. Students reprinting previously published copyrighted material, wholly or in part, must follow MSU thesis and dissertation guidelines.

4. Students must complete Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research (RECR) requirements (see Annex D) and ensure that they comply with the university requirements and guidelines pertaining to research involving human subjects, vertebrate animals, and environmental health and safety (see section V.C.2).

G. Final Oral Examination

1. Upon completion of the dissertation research, the major professor schedules and chairs a two-hour final oral examination for the student's defense of the dissertation. This dissertation defense should be announced to all faculty and graduate students at least a week in advance by the Academic Program Coordinator.

    a. The examination should be scheduled to permit attendance of all guidance committee members. If a member other than the major professor or the dissertation supervisor cannot attend the examination, other modes of faculty participation such as through conference call or written questions and comments

may be adopted with the approval of the department chairperson. A minimum of four approved graduate faculty members of the guidance committee must attend the examination. If travel to participate in the defense represents a significant hardship for the student, the student may petition the examination committee and department chair for a remote defense. Approved remote defenses are subject to the following conditions:

i. The student must present a seminar that is viewable (either recorded or in person) by the examination committee and other people on the MSU campus.
ii. The student must be interactively examined.
iii. Logistical arrangements for the defense are the responsibility of the student and committee.

b. The final oral examination cannot be conducted before the dissertation is in final draft form. The student should submit the draft dissertation to guidance committee members at least two weeks prior to the examination date. The student must be registered for a minimum of one credit during the semester in which the final oral examination is taken (including in summer semester).

c. Research Presentation Requirement: Each candidate is required to make a presentation (~30 minutes) of their research prior to the normal two-hour period of the final oral examination. The research presentation is open to all. Only Ph.D. guidance committee members may attend the subsequent oral examination.

2. On the basis of the dissertation and the student's defense of it, the guidance committee either approves or rejects the dissertation. Approval may be subject to conditions. A three-fourths majority vote of the voting examiners, with not more than one dissenting vote from among the Michigan State University regular faculty members of the guidance committee, is sufficient to approve the dissertation and pass the candidate. The candidate may be passed subject to additional work that must be approved by one or more members of the examination committee and the major professor. If the student is required to make revisions in the dissertation, the faculty member designated by the examination committee to review the revised work is expected to do so in a timely manner, normally within four weeks following the date the revised work is delivered to the faculty member. If the student does not receive a response within four weeks, the student should contact the faculty member or major professor, and if necessary, may request assistance from the department chairperson in obtaining a timely decision on the acceptability of the proposed revisions.

H. Preparation and Submission of Final Dissertation

1. The dissertation must be prepared according to the formatting guidelines prescribed by the Graduate School.

2. The dissertation supervisor must approve the final version of the document. An electronic copy of the dissertation must be submitted to the Graduate School via ProQuest. An electronic copy of the dissertation approved by the Graduate School must also be submitted to the Academic Program Coordinator before the degree will be certified. The student should also provide copies to the major professor, the dissertation supervisor (if different from the major professor) and any other members of the guidance committee indicated by the major professor.

3. The student is responsible for submitting all required forms to the Graduate School and the department.

4. In addition to the main body of a thesis or dissertation, the Graduate School now permits the submission of supplementary materials to ProQuest. These supplemental materials will not be reviewed by the Graduate School for formatting requirements, but they must be acceptable by ProQuest and comply with ProQuest's criteria and storage limits. All supplementary materials need the approval of the thesis/dissertation committee chair on the ETD (Electronic Theses and Dissertation) approval form.

I. Recognition of Outstanding Ph.D. Dissertation

Each year the Department selects the outstanding Ph.D. dissertation. The student's recognition and monetary award are the same as for the author of the outstanding M.S. thesis or Plan B research paper (see section V.F).

VII. DEPARTMENT POLICIES: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

A. Introduction

Careful screening during the admissions process results in selection of students who are well prepared for the program. The faculty and department staff strive to support them and facilitate their success in every way possible. Consequently, only a small number of students encounter significant academic difficulty. At the same time, the integrity of the program and the rights of the student require clear and equitable criteria and procedures for evaluating academic performance. These criteria and procedures are set forth in the rest of section VII.

B. Grades

1. Following university policy, a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 in the student's approved course program is required. A grade of 3.0 or better is

required in each course used to satisfy the minimum quantitative methods requirements for the M.S. program (see V.B.8). A grade of 3.0 or better is required in each course used to establish a Ph.D. student's major field in agricultural, food, and resource economics and their AFRE methods field, and the student's cumulative GPA across their major field and methods field courses combined must be greater than 3.0. A grade of 3.0 or better is also required in both 1.5-credit courses used to fulfill the research design and communication in applied economics requirement for doctoral students. Finally, Ph.D. students must meet the qualifying requirements described in section VI.C.

2. Department and college approval is required to repeat any course in which a grade of 2.0 or 2.5 is earned. When a course is repeated, the last grade replaces the previous grade in computing grade point averages. When repeating a course it allowed, it may be repeated only once.

3. A student may have no more than two deferred course grades (identified as DF-Deferred) outstanding at any one time, other than for research credits (AFRE 898, 899, and 999).

4. DF-Deferred grades: The required work must be completed and a grade reported within 6 months with the option of a single six-month extension. If the required work is not completed within the time limit, the DF will become U-Unfinished and will be changed to DF/U under the numerical and Pass-No Grade (P-N) grading systems, and to DF/NC under the Credit-No Credit (CR-NC) system. This rule does not apply to graduate thesis or dissertation work.

C. Academic Progress: Review Procedures and Criteria

1. All graduate students have a right to periodic, written evaluation of their academic progress, performance, and professional expectations (*GSRR* 2.4.8). Regular meetings of students with their guidance committees are encouraged as a constructive and effective means of providing this information, and of addressing any concerns which the student may have.

2. A formal annual review of all graduate students will also be conducted. The procedures for this review are as follows:

   a. Each student should meet with their major professor and assistantship supervisor to discuss progress, achievements, concerns, and plans for the future. For students with assistantship appointments, the relationship between the student's assistantship assignment and academic program should be discussed. Among other information, the review will take into account the following indicators of student progress:

      - grade point average
      - course load
      - number of deferred courses

- program completion progress (see section C.4 below)

b. The results of the review, including comments from both the student and faculty members involved, must be recorded on the appropriate form and submitted to the Academic Program Coordinator by April 15. The Graduate Program Director may discuss the results of the review with the student's major professor and assistantship supervisor in order to reach a joint agreement on the assessment.

c. The results of the review will uploaded into the Student Information System, in which the student and faculty member will have access to the completed annual review forms. If the student wishes to challenge the results of the review, they may send the challenge in writing to the Graduate Program Director, for inclusion in the student's educational record. Students have the right to inspect their own educational records (*GSRR* 3.2.3) and will be notified in writing when academic performance or progress is judged to be unsatisfactory, and a copy of the notice will be placed in the student's academic file (*GSRR* 2.4.8.1).

3. The academic progress and performance of a student may also be evaluated at other times of the year, e.g., following completion of the qualifying requirements.

4. Detailed program timetables and progress milestones for both master's and doctoral students are contained in Annex A. University time limits for both master's and doctoral students are contained in the Academic Programs Catalog. The Department's progress milestones are intended to encourage timely degree completion by students, and to permit clear and equitable evaluation of students' academic progress.

5. Unsatisfactory Academic Progress:

   a. Unsatisfactory progress, which leads to the loss of Good Academic Standing, falls into two categories:

      1) Category 1: Grades. When grade deficiencies arise, the student will be given a written warning by the department chairperson in which the condition(s) and the time period for resolving the deficiencies are spelled out. If the conditions are not met within the specified time period, the student will receive an evaluation of unsatisfactory academic progress. An illustrative but not exhaustive list of academic difficulties of this type follows:

         a) The student's cumulative grade point average in their approved course program falls below 3.0. The student will be given two semesters in which to bring their GPA up to 3.0.

         b) The student needs to retake a course, either because a grade below 2.0 was earned, or because a grade below 3.0 was earned on a course used to satisfy the M.S. quantitative methods requirements. The student will be

given an appropriate period, based on course scheduling, in which to retake the course.

c) The student accumulates three deferred (DF) course grades. The student will be required to convert the deferred grades to satisfactory numerical grades (2.0 for graduate credit; 3.0 for the specified courses in mathematics, statistics, and econometrics) within an appropriate period, normally one semester, based on instructor or course availability.

2) Category 2: Timeliness. Students must satisfy particular requirements within a given time period. Students are responsible for knowing these requirements and how to meet them. No warning letters will be sent to students who fail to meet such a requirement on the first try, or who delay action to the point that a second try cannot be completed within the stipulated deadline. The academic difficulties indicated below will lead directly to an evaluation of unsatisfactory academic progress.

a) A doctoral student does not meet the qualifying requirements (VI.C) by the end of the fall semester of their second academic year.

b) A doctoral student does not complete their first attempt on the dissertation proposal/comprehensive exam requirement by the end of summer semester of their third academic year.

c) A doctoral student does not succeed in passing the dissertation proposal/comprehensive exam requirement by the end of fall semester of their fourth academic year.

Time spent during approved leaves of absence (e.g., military service, family obligations, financial difficulties, serious medical conditions, or to accept professionally related employment for an extended period away from the university) will not be counted when evaluating academic progress. Deadlines may also be reasonably extended if the student has an approved part-time plan of study. University time limits continue to apply. Decisions regarding leaves of absence and part-time plans of study shall be made by the department chairperson after consultation with the student's guidance committee. A written record of any approved adjustments to a student's academic progress timetable will be placed in the student's academic file.

b. Students will be informed when their academic performance or progress is unsatisfactory and will be reviewed by the department chairperson in consultation with the student's guidance committee.[3] This review will have one of two possible outcomes:

[3]In the case of a student who has petitioned the Graduate Policy Committee (GPC) for

1) Unless special circumstances are sufficient to justify continuation, the student's program will be terminated. Special circumstances include serious medical conditions, pregnancy, or extraordinary situations outside the student's control, that directly and adversely affect academic performance.

2) If special circumstances are sufficient to provide a legitimate explanation for the student's unsatisfactory performance, and if there is a reasonable prospect that the student will regain a satisfactory level of academic performance, the student will be given a written notice of condition(s) to meet and a time period in which to meet them. The student's unsatisfactory progress evaluation will remain in force and, in accordance with MSU graduate program academic policies, the student will be ineligible for departmental assistantship or fellowship support during this period. Successful completion of these conditions will restore the student's good academic standing and eligibility for departmental assistantship or fellowship support. Failure to meet these conditions will result in termination of the student's program without further review.

6. Dismissal from the Program. While such cases are expected to be infrequent, a student with unsatisfactory academic performance or progress may be dismissed from the program at the end of any semester, based on the procedures discussed in section 5 above. In the event of a dismissal, the department chairperson will notify the student, the student's major professor, and the dean of the college. A student who is dismissed from the doctoral program will have the option of switching to the master's program. In such cases, the department chairperson will inform the student in writing of the time period in which the master's degree requirements must be completed.

D. Appeal Process

As noted in section I, under extremely unusual circumstances a student or a guidance committee may petition the Graduate Policy Committee of the department for a waiver or modification of these policies for the specific student, subject to approval by the department chairperson. Students may also follow the grievance procedure specified in section IX below and further elaborated in section 5.3 of the *GSRR*.

VIII. DEPARTMENT POLICIES: RESEARCH INTEGRITY

A. Per the Graduate School, "Research integrity is foundational to our scholarship, creative work, and core identity as MSU Spartans. It is not only required by rules (including

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permission to take a comprehensive examination a third time, the review will be conducted by the GPC.

federal, state, research sponsors, and MSU's research and training policies), integrity is essential for our research to have legitimacy and impact. Research integrity is so important to our development as scholars and creators that the Graduate School has developed minimum requirements for all graduate students regarding the Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research (RECR for short). The Graduate School's RECR program requires (a) initial, basic education, and (b) supplemental, refresher training."

B. In Annex D, you will find the RECR requirements that were adopted for the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics. Please follow these guidelines as you progress through your RECR requirements.

IX. DEPARTMENT POLICIES: STUDENT CONDUCT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

A. The *GSRR* (1.2) notes that graduate students have both rights and responsibilities. Rights include the right to learn. Responsibilities include the responsibility to refrain from interfering with the rights of others, harassing other students, faculty or staff, or misusing department resources.

B. Students share with faculty the responsibility to maintain an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning, to maintain the integrity of scholarship and grades, and to maintain standards of professional behavior and relationships based on mutual trust and civility (*GSRR* 2.3). Failure on the part of a student to meet these responsibilities may result in dismissal from the program.

C. The procedure for resolving conflicts between a graduate student and their major professor or guidance committee, or between the student and another faculty member or department administrator, is outlined in general in Article 5 of the *GSRR* and in the Department By-Laws. Essential elements of the procedure are as follows:

1. It is recommended that the student first seek resolution and redress informally through discussion with the appropriate individual(s). Students are also encouraged to contact the University Ombudsperson, who can provide independent and confidential advice.

2. If informal resolution cannot be obtained, a formal written grievance may be sent to the department chairperson, who will convene a department hearing board following the Graduate Student Academic Grievance Hearing Procedures in Annex C. Details on initiating formal grievance procedures may be found at the Office of the University Ombudsperson, Conflict and Grievance Systems at MSU.

3. The findings of the department hearing board may be appealed to the college-level hearing board (*GSRR* 5.4.12).

X. GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP POLICY[4]

A. Basis for and Terms of Appointment

1. Types of Assistantships

   Departmental assistantships include teaching or research assistantships. Assistantship responsibilities are differentiated by the type of assistantship received. Assistantships, regardless of type, are expected to provide a learning experience that will contribute to the student's total graduate program.

   a. Teaching Assistantships

      Teaching assistants assist a faculty member to present a course. In so doing the assistant gains an understanding of the teaching process. Assistants may take major responsibility for a course or a section of a course. In such a case a faculty member will be responsible for the grade distribution and will also be available to provide advice and guidance to the graduate assistant. Alternatively, a teaching assistant may assist students, develop exercises and/or examinations, and grade papers under the direction of the faculty member. Various intermediate arrangements may be specified for any particular teaching assistantship.

   b. Research Assistantships

      Research assistants work on approved and funded projects in the department. The student is expected to perform whatever reasonable research tasks the assistantship supervisor may assign. A student may transfer from one assistantship supervisor to another if such a transfer is acceptable to both the new supervisor and the department. The assistantship activities may contribute directly or indirectly to the preparation of a Plan B paper, M.S. thesis, or Ph.D. dissertation.

   c. Other Assistantship Responsibilities

      Regardless of the source of funding, graduate assistants are expected to contribute to the professional activities of the department.

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[4]This policy covers only research assistants and teaching assistants who by virtue of their duties are excluded from the Graduate Employees Union (GEU) bargaining unit (coded on the appointment form as R and TE, respectively). Excluded categories of graduate assistants are listed in Article 4 of the GEU contract . Union teaching assistants (coded as T) are governed entirely by the policies and procedures set forth in the GEU contract. See *GSRR* Article 4 for further information on MSU policies related to graduate student support for graduate assistants not covered under the GEU contract.

2. Criteria for Selection

   Assistantship recipients are selected from those submitting applications based on the needs of the department, the applicant's previous academic record, work experience, letters of recommendation and Graduate Record Examination scores. To be employed as a TA, international students must meet a minimum standard of English language speaking fluency. In addition to these criteria, the department takes into account the quality of the previous educational institution, the potential of the student with respect to research accomplishment and future professional achievement, and the student's area of research interest relative to the availability of funds for specific research projects.

3. Stipends

   Stipends are established each year prior to Fall Semester. Stipend information can be obtained from the Academic Program Coordinator. Stipends are subject to taxation in accordance with Federal and State laws.

4. Assistantship Obligation of the Student

   Acceptance of a graduate assistantship creates an obligation to perform research, teaching or other activities in furtherance of departmental programs. For example, students with a one-half time appointment are expected to spend one-half time (20 hours per week) on these activities. The department attempts to allow the student flexibility in meeting this obligation. If the student puts greater emphasis on course work during a given semester, then more time on assistantship duties at other times is required to discharge the assistantship obligation.

   Before leaving Michigan State University, graduate assistants are to deliver draft publications as appropriate, given the assistantship duties. These draft publications may be journal articles, extension leaflets, computer code documentation, etc. The assistant and the supervisor should agree on the nature of appropriate publication and the designation of authorship as part of the assistantship planning process. Students who publish assistantship-related research after leaving campus are expected to appropriately acknowledge the sources of financial support for that research.

5. Assistantship Obligation of the Department

   The duties of the assistant will be supervised by a qualified person. The graduate assistant is provided a desk and office space (to the extent permitted by the space available to the department) and access to a computer as needed for assistantship work. Specific desk assignments are made by the Graduate Student Organization. Supplies for use in fulfilling assistantship responsibilities are also furnished.

   The graduate assistant is allowed 14 days (10 working days) of vacation time annually, plus University holidays. Semester breaks are considered duty time. The

assistantship supervisor should be informed of vacation plans and may request rescheduling if the timing interferes with fulfillment of assistantship obligations.

6. Duration of Appointment

This section applies to graduate assistants who are officially enrolled as students in agricultural, food, and resource economics and funded by the department. Students in other departments may be appointed as graduate assistants. Their appointments terminate as stated on the appointment form. Requests for extension must be in the department office at least four weeks prior to the end of an appointment.

The annual review of assistantship performance is conducted in April. The purpose of this review is to assess performance of graduate assistants and to review funding availability for the next academic year. Each graduate assistant's accomplishments and concerns, and the assistantship supervisor's evaluation of the student's assistantship performance, will be reported on the graduate student annual review form and submitted to the Academic Program Coordinator by April 15. Graduate assistants are notified by June 30 of the status of their assistantships for the next Fall Semester.

Assistantships supported by general research funds will typically be of short duration (1-3 semesters). Such assistantships are used primarily to support students during their first year, with the expectation that subsequent appointments will be funded under a specific contract- or grant-funded research project, or to support students who are in transition from one specific research project to another, or whose specific research funding has run out towards the end of their program.

Teaching assistantships are normally offered on a one-semester only basis with no plans for renewal. All assistantships awarded on contracts and grants are subject to the availability of funding from that particular contract or grant and may terminate earlier than the number of semesters specified below.

To ensure that funds are used effectively, and that assistants move toward completion of their programs, the department limits the number of semesters (including Summer Semester) a student can hold a graduate assistantship or fellowship or have summer hourly funding. For the student in an M.S. program, the limit is six semesters. For the student embarking on a Ph.D. program, without prior M.S. study in AFRE, the limit is 12 semesters. For the student that transfers from the AFRE M.S. program to the AFRE Ph.D. program, the limit in the Ph.D. program is 11 semesters because up to 9 credits from the M.S. program can be transferred to the Ph.D. program.

Graduate assistantships awarded to M.S. students are not automatically extended if a student is permitted to transfer to the Ph.D. program. Continuation of the assistantship should be requested in writing by the student. The department will confirm the extension in writing, if approved.

A student who is unable to complete the program in the allotted time may request an extension of the assistantship. The request will be reviewed by the department chairperson. Each case will be considered individually, taking into account the recommendations of the assistantship supervisor, the quality of the student's graduate course program, the amount of work involved in a thesis or dissertation project, the productivity of the graduate assistant, and other pertinent factors.

7. Outside Work for Pay

   The assistantship represents an obligation for the student to perform various duties of benefit to the department in return for financial assistance. It is assumed that these duties in combination with the normal course of studies will amount to a full-time load.

   Outside work for graduate assistants is discouraged. Before beginning outside employment, the assistant should discuss with the assistantship supervisor the outside employment and how the assistantship obligations will be fulfilled.

B. Termination of Appointment

1. The assistantship will terminate upon degree completion. A student who wishes to terminate an assistantship prior to that time should notify the assistantship supervisor and Academic Program Coordinator.

2. Substandard Performance

   The department may terminate a graduate assistantship for substandard performance or inability to perform expected duties. Substandard performance may be brought to the attention of the department chairperson by the assistantship supervisor or by the normal annual review of assistantship performance. Academic difficulty will result in a review of the student's overall situation by the department (see section VII.C, Academic Progress: Review Procedures and Criteria).

   Whenever questions of assistantship performance arise, the department chairperson will consider each case on its merits, giving consideration to the student's assistantship productivity, course pattern and grades, recommendations of faculty, number of deferred or repeat credits and any other pertinent evidence. If a student's academic program is terminated, the assistantship is terminated.

3. Violations

   The department may also terminate an assistantship in cases of violation of the MSU *Student Rights and Responsibilities*, or of the subsection concerning *Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR)*. This action may be initiated by the department chairperson or by the student's major professor or assistantship supervisor.

4. Budgetary Constraints

   The department may also terminate assistantships for budgetary reasons. Should this be necessary, continuing graduate assistants will be given some priority over new appointees depending on their qualifications to perform the required activities.

C. Grievance Procedure

Graduate assistants may follow the normal department grievance procedure as specified by the *GSRR* and the Office of the University Ombudsperson .

D. External Fellowships

Receipt of externally funded fellowships by students who have written their own applications worth at least $24,000 (direct costs) now makes the students eligible to be considered for an in-state tuition rate. The in-state tuition rate applies only to the semesters during which the student is supported by the fellowship. This policy applies only to grants funded through a competitive process by a US institution, agency, or foundation. Funds obtained through non-competitive processes (e.g., need-based fellowships) or from international sources do not qualify the students for in-state tuition rates. For more information, visit the MSU Graduate School Funding webpage (Out-of-State Tuition Waivers section) or the department's Graduate Program Director.

XI. UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

The following university resources are available to MSU graduate students:

- Resources provided by the MSU Graduate School:
  - Graduate Career Development
  - Community programs
  - Events
  - Forms
  - Funding
  - Graduate Educator Advancement and Teaching (GREAT)
  - Graduate School Office of Well-Being (GROW)
  - Mentoring
  - Out-of-State Tuition Waiver for External Fellowships, Traineeships, & Internships
  - Policies & Procedures
  - Professional Development
  - Research Integrity
  - Traveling Scholars
  - University Committee on Graduate Studies

- Resources provided by University-level units:
  - Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS)
  - Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD)
  - Office of Spartan Experiences
  - MSU Libraries
  - Olin Health Center
  - Inclusive Excellence and Impact
  - Burgess Institute for Entrepreneurship & Innovation
  - Writing Center
  - University Outreach & Engagement
  - Office of the University Ombudsperson
  - Campus Safety Information and Resources
  - Active Violence Incident (AVI) Awareness training – available on MSU's Ability Training platform. (Log in with MSU NetID and password > Extra Courses > Course Search > Active Violence Incident (AVI) Awareness > then click the Launch button to begin the course.)
  - Safety Guidelines for an Active Shooter Situation

- Resources provided by the Student Life & Engagement Division:
  - Student Parent Resource Center
  - Gender and Sexuality Campus Center
  - Center for Veterans and Military Affiliated Students
  - MOSAIC Center for Education and Outreach

- Opportunities for leadership development, community building, and service:
  - AFRE Graduate Student Organization (GSO)
  - MSU Council of Graduate Students (COGS)
  - Involve@State
  - Graduate Leadership Collective

ANNEX A: GRADUATE PROGRAM TIMETABLES

The following are milestones to be used for degree program planning. Specific criteria for determining satisfactory academic progress are contained in Section VII, Academic Performance.

M.S. Program

Year 1

- Fall and Spring Semesters: coursework, including mathematics, statistics, economics, and econometrics requirements
- Summer Semester: coursework or internship

Year 2

- Fall Semester: coursework
- Spring Semester: final coursework and Plan A thesis or Plan B research paper credits
- Summer Semester (if needed): completion of Plan A thesis or Plan B research paper

Ph.D. Program

Year 1
- Fall and Spring Semesters
  . coursework including econometrics and microeconomic theory
  . AFRE-EC dual major students: additional coursework in macroeconomics
- Summer Semester
  . May microeconomics and/or econometrics qualifying exam(s) as required based on grade performance in EC 812A, EC 812B, EC 820A, and EC 820B
  . research
  . internship and/or coursework (optional)
  . AFRE-EC dual major students: microeconomics, macroeconomics, and econometrics qualifying exams in May; retake of qualifying exam(s) in August (if needed)

Year 2
- Fall and Spring Semesters
  . applied microeconomics and other coursework
- Summer Semester:
  . research/dissertation proposal work
  . internship (optional)

Year 3
- Fall Semester
  . coursework including required courses for the research design and communication in applied economics requirement (if not completed in Year 2)
  . research/dissertation proposal work
- Spring Semester
  . coursework (if not already completed)
  . research/dissertation proposal work
- Summer Semester
  . research/dissertation proposal work
  . dissertation proposal defense/comprehensive exam (dissertation proposal/ comprehensive exam requirement must be completed by the end of Year 3)
  . submit Essay 1 to a journal (earlier submission is encouraged)

Year 4
  . dissertation research
  . final dissertation defense
  . complete dissertation

Year 5 (if needed)
  . complete dissertation

ANNEX B: CHECKLIST OF REQUIREMENTS BY STAGE OF PROGRAM

For M.S. Students

Year 1

Annual review sent to the Academic Program Coordinator and Graduate Annual Research Overview due April 15

Complete all Year 1 RECR requirements and ensure they are marked as completed in the Student Information System by May 15

Submit major professor, guidance committee, and course program plan in GradPlan (into the Student Information System). These items must be approved by your guidance committee and the AFRE Graduate Program Director by the end of the Spring Semester.

Complete request to transfer to Ph.D. form (if applicable)

Year 2

Apply for graduation by the end of the first week of classes during your intended graduating semester. See the Graduate School for the deadlines for thesis submission and acceptance for degree conferral by semester.

Annual review sent to the Academic Program Coordinator and Graduate Annual Research Overview due April 15

Verify that your guidance committee and course program of study are up to date (in the Student Information System)

Provide members of your examination committee with a copy of your thesis or Plan B paper at least two weeks prior to your defense date

Report of final thesis or Plan B paper defense form due immediately following defense

Submit final thesis to the MSU Graduate School following the procedures described on the. (Final Plan B papers are submitted to the AFRE Academic Program Coordinator, not the Graduate School.)

Ensure that all RECR requirements are completed in the Student Information System for your entire program are fulfilled by May 15

Forwarding Address Form due to the Academic Program Coordinator by completion of all degree requirements

Exit interview with AFRE Graduate Program Director due by completion of all degree requirements

For Ph.D. Students

Year 1

Annual review sent to the Academic Program Coordinator and Graduate Annual Research Overview (enter into the Student Information System) due April 15

Meet the qualifying grade requirements for Microeconomic Theory and Econometrics, including at least one 3.5 in these courses. If grade requirements not met, take required qualifying exam(s) in May (microeconomics and/or econometrics).

Submit your major professor and guidance committee in GradPlan (into the Student Information System) and have it fully approved by your guidance committee, the Graduate Program Director, and CANR by the end of Spring Semester

Submit your course program in GradPlan (into the Student Information System) and have it fully approved by your guidance committee, the Graduate Program Director, and CANR by the end of Summer Semester

Complete all Year 1 RECR requirements and are ensure they are marked as completed in the Student Information System by May 15

Year 2

Annual review sent to the Academic Program Coordinator and Graduate Annual Research Overview (enter into the Student Information System) due April 15

Verify that your guidance committee and course program are up to date (in the Student Information System)

Meet the applied microeconomics and qualifying grade requirements

Complete all Year 2 RECR requirements and ensure they are marked as completed in the Student Information System by May 15

Year 3

Annual review sent to the Academic Program Coordinator and Graduate Annual Research Overview (enter into the Student Information System) due April 15

Verify that your guidance committee and course program are up to date (in the Student Information System)

Complete the research design and communication in applied economics requirement by the end of Fall Semester of Year 3. (This requirement may be fulfilled in Year 2 if desired.)

Complete the dissertation proposal (comprehensive examination) requirement by the end of Summer Semester of Year 3. The Ph.D. Record of Comprehensive Exam and Dissertation Proposal Form is due to the Academic Program Coordinator immediately following the dissertation proposal defense.

Complete all Year 3 RECR requirements and ensure they are marked as completed in the Student Information System by May 15

Year 4

Annual review sent to the Academic Program Coordinator and Graduate Annual Research Overview (enter into the Student Information System) due April 15

Verify that your guidance committee and course program are up to date (in the Student Information System)

Complete all Year 4 RECR requirements and ensure they are marked as completed in the Student Information System by May 15

Year 4/Final Year

Apply for graduation by the end of the first week of classes during your intended graduating semester. See the Graduate Schools Theses and Dissertations page for the deadlines for dissertation submission and acceptance for degree conferral by semester.

Annual review sent to the Academic Program Coordinator and Graduate Annual Research Overview (enter into the Student Information System) due April 15

Verify that your guidance committee and course program are up to date (in the Student Information System)

Defend the dissertation. The report of final dissertation defense form is due to the Academic Program Coordinator immediately following dissertation defense.

Submit final dissertation to the MSU Graduate School following the procedures described on the Theses and Dissertation page

Ensure that all RECR requirements are completed and marked as fulfilled in the Student Information System for your entire program by May 15

Forwarding Address Form due to the Academic Program Coordinator by completion of all degree requirements

Exit interview with AFRE Graduate Program Director due by completion of all degree requirements

ANNEX C: GRADUATE STUDENT ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE HEARING PROCEDURES

Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics

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

The *Michigan State University Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR)* and the *Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities* (GSRR) documents establish the rights and responsibilities of MSU students and prescribe procedures to resolve allegations of violations of those rights through formal grievance hearings. In accordance with the SRR and the GSRR, the Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics has established the following Hearing Board procedures for adjudicating graduate student academic grievances and complaints. (See GSRR 5.4.)

I. JURISDICTION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL, FOOD, AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS HEARING BOARD:

A. The Hearing Board serves as the initial Hearing Board for academic grievance hearings involving graduate students who allege violations of academic rights or seek to contest an allegation of academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards or falsifying admission and academic records). (See GSRR 2.3 and 5.1.1.)

B. Students may not request an academic grievance hearing based on an allegation of incompetent instruction. (See GSRR 2.2.2)

II. COMPOSITION OF THE HEARING BOARD:

A. The Department's Hearing Board pool shall be constituted of members of the Graduate Policy Committee (GPC), which includes both faculty members and graduate students, from the current year and those from the two previous academic years who remain at MSU. The department chairperson or representative will be excluded from the Hearing board pool. Hearing Board members serve one-year terms with reappointment possible. The Hearing Board pool should include both faculty and graduate students. (See GSRR 5.1.2 and 5.1.6.)

B. The Hearing Board shall consist of a faculty Chair, two graduate students and two faculty members. The Chair of the Hearing Board shall vote only in the event of a tie. The Chair of the Hearing Board shall be the chair of the current GPC, unless conflicts of interest

arise, in which case the first alternative will be the previous GPC chair and the second alternative the prior GPC chair. The Hearing Board Chair will select Hearing Board members by lot from among graduate student and faculty members in the Hearing Board pool who are not eligible to be Chair and among whom there are no conflicts of interest (See GSRR 5.1.2, and 5.1.5.).

C. The Department will train hearing board members about these procedures and the applicable sections of the GSRR as needed, when a Hearing Board is constituted. (See GSRR 5.1.3.)

III. REFERRAL TO THE HEARING BOARD:

A. After consulting with the instructor and appropriate unit administrator, graduate students who remain dissatisfied with their attempt to resolve an allegation of a violation of student academic rights or an allegation of academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards or falsifying admission and academic records) may request an academic grievance hearing. When appropriate, the Department Chair, in consultation with the Dean, may waive jurisdiction and refer the request for an initial hearing to the College Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.3.6.2.)

B. At any time in the grievance process, either party may consult with the University Ombudsperson. (See GSRR 5.3.2.)

C. In cases of ambiguous jurisdiction, the Dean of The Graduate School will select the appropriate Hearing Board for cases involving graduate students. (See GSRR 5.3.5.)

D. Generally, the deadline for submitting the written request for a hearing is the middle of the next semester in which the student is enrolled (including Summer). In cases in which a student seeks to contest an allegation of academic misconduct and the student's dean has called for an academic disciplinary hearing, the student has **10** class days to request an academic grievance to contest the allegation. (See GSRR 5.3.6.1 and 5.5.2.2.)

E. If either the student (the complainant) or the respondent (usually, the instructor or an administrator) is absent from the university during that semester, or if other appropriate reasons emerge, the Hearing Board may grant an extension of this deadline. If the university no longer employs the respondent before the grievance hearing commences, the hearing may proceed. (See GSRR 5.4.9.)

F. A written request for an academic grievance hearing must (1) specify the specific bases for the grievance, including the alleged violation(s), (2) identify the individual against whom the grievance is filed (the respondent) and (3) state the desired redress. Anonymous grievances will not be accepted. (See GSRR 5.1 and 5.3.6.)

IV. PRE-HEARING PROCEDURES

A. After receiving a graduate student's written request for a hearing, the Chair of the Department will promptly refer the grievance to the Chair of the Hearing Board. (See

GSRR 5.3.2, 5.4.3.)

B. Within **5** class days, the Chair of the Hearing Board will:

1. forward the request for a hearing to the respondent;

2. send the names of the Hearing Board members to both parties and, to avoid conflicts of interest between the two parties and the Hearing Board members, request written challenges, if any, within **3** class days of this notification;

3. rule promptly on any challenges, impanel a Hearing Board and send each party the names of the Hearing Board members. If the Chair of the Hearing Board is the subject of a challenge, the challenge shall be filed with the Dean of the College, or designee. (See GSRR 5.1.7.)

4. send the Hearing Board members a copy of the request for a hearing and the written response, and send all parties a copy of these procedures.

C. Within **5** class days of being established, the Hearing Board shall review the request, and, after considering all requested and submitted information:

1. accept the request, in full or in part, and promptly schedule a hearing.

2. reject the request and provide a written explanation to appropriate parties, e.g., lack of jurisdiction. (The student may appeal this decision.)

3. the GSRR allows the hearing board to invite the two parties to meet with the Hearing Board in an informal session to try to resolve the matter. Such a meeting does not preclude a later hearing. However, by the time a grievance is requested all informal methods of conflict resolution should have been exhausted so this option is rarely used. (See GSRR 5.4.6.)

D. If the Hearing Board calls for a hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall promptly negotiate a hearing date, schedule an additional meeting only for the Hearing Board should additional deliberations on the findings become necessary, and request a written response to the grievance from the respondent.

E. At least **5** class days before the scheduled hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall notify the respondent and the complainant in writing of the (1) time, date, and place of the hearing; (2) the names of the parties to the grievance; (3) a copy of the hearing request and the respondent's reply; and (4) the names of the Hearing Board members after any challenges. (See GSRR 5.4.7.)

F. At least **3** class days before the scheduled hearing, the parties must notify the Chair of the Hearing Board the names of their witnesses and advisor, if any, and request permission for the advisor to have voice at the hearing. The chair may grant or deny this request. The Chair will promptly forward the names given by the complainant to the respondent and

vice versa. (See GSRR 5.4.7.1.)

G. The Chair of the Hearing Board may accept written statements from either party's witnesses at least **3** class days before the hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.9.)

H. In unusual circumstances and in lieu of a personal appearance, either party may request permission to submit a written statement to the Hearing Board or request permission to participate in the hearing through an electronic communication channel. Written statements must be submitted to the Hearing Board at least **3** class days before the scheduled hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.9c.)

I. Either party to the grievance hearing may request a postponement of the hearing. The Hearing Board may either grant or deny the request. (See GSRR 5.4.8.)

J. At its discretion, the Hearing Board may set a reasonable time limit for each party to present its case, and the Chair of the Hearing Board must inform the parties of such a time limit in the written notification of the hearing.

K. Hearings are closed unless the student requests an open hearing, which would be open to all members of the MSU community. The Hearing Board may close an open hearing to protect the confidentiality of information or to maintain order. (See GSRR 5.4.10.4.)

L. Members of the Hearing Board are expected to respect the confidentiality of the hearing process. (See GSRR 5.4.10.4.and 5.4.11.)

V. HEARING PROCEDURES:

A. The Hearing will proceed as follows:

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

    - In academic grievance hearings in which a graduate student alleges a violation of academic rights, the student bears the burden of proof.

    - In hearings in which a graduate student seeks to contest allegations of academic misconduct, the instructor bears the burden of proof.

    - All Hearing Board decisions must be reached by a majority of the Hearing Board, based on a "preponderance of the evidence." (See GSRR 8.1.18.)

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

2. If the complainant fails to appear in person or via an electronic channel at a scheduled hearing, the Hearing Board may either postpone the hearing or dismiss the case for demonstrated cause. (See GSRR 5.4.9a.)

3. If the respondent fails to appear in person or via an electronic channel at a scheduled hearing, the Hearing Board may postpone the hearing or hear the case in the respondent's absence. (See GSRR 5.4.9-b.)

4. If the respondent is absent from the University during the semester of the grievance hearing or no longer employed by the University before the grievance procedure concludes, the hearing process may still proceed. (See GSRR 5.3.6.1.)

5. To assure orderly questioning, the Chair of the Hearing Board will recognize individuals before they speak. All parties have a right to speak without interruption. Each party has a right to question the other party and to rebut any oral or written statements submitted to the Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.4.10.2.)

6. Presentation by the Complainant: The Chair recognizes the complainant to present without interruption any statements relevant to the complainant's case, including the redress sought. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the complainant by the Hearing Board, the respondent and the respondent's advisor, if any.

7. Presentation by the Complainant's Witnesses: The Chair recognizes the complainant's witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, any statement directly relevant to the complainant's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the respondent, and the respondent's advisor, if any.

8. Presentation by the Respondent: The Chair recognizes the respondent to present without interruption any statements relevant to the respondent's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the respondent by the Hearing Board, the complainant, and the complainant's advisor, if any.

9. Presentation by the Respondent's Witnesses: The Chair recognizes the respondent's witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, and statement directly relevant to the respondent's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the complainant, and the complainant's advisor, if any.

10. Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Complainant: The complainant refutes statements by the respondent, the respondent's witnesses and advisor, if any, and presents a final summary statement.

11. Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Respondent: The respondent refutes

statements by the complainant, the complainant's witnesses and advisor, if any, and presents a final summary statement.

12. Final questions by the Hearing Board: The Hearing Board asks questions of any of the participants in the hearing.

VI. POST-HEARING PROCEDURES

A. Deliberation:

After all evidence has been presented, with full opportunity for explanations, questions and rebuttal, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall excuse all parties to the grievance and convene the Hearing Board to determine its findings in executive session. When possible, deliberations should take place directly following the hearing and/or at the previously scheduled follow-up meeting. (See Section IV.D above.)

B. Decision:

1. In grievance (non-disciplinary) hearings involving graduate students in which a majority of the Hearing Board finds, based on a "preponderance of the evidence," that a violation of the student's academic rights has occurred and that redress is possible, it shall recommend an appropriate remedy to the Department Chair or School Director. Upon receiving the Hearing Board's recommendation, the Department Chair or School Director shall implement an appropriate remedy, in consultation with the Hearing Board, within **3** class days. If the Hearing Board finds that no violation of academic rights has occurred, it shall so inform the Chair or Director. The Chair of the Hearing Board shall promptly forward copies of the final decision to parties and the University Ombudsperson. (See GSRR 5.4.11.)

2. In grievance (non-disciplinary) hearings involving graduate students in which the Hearing Board serves as the initial hearing body to adjudicate an allegation of academic dishonesty and, based on a "preponderance of the evidence," the Hearing Board finds for the student, the Hearing Board shall recommend to the Department Chair or School Director that the penalty grade be removed, the Academic Dishonesty Report be removed from the student's records and a "good faith judgment" of the student's academic performance in the course take place. If the Hearing Board finds for the instructor, the penalty grade shall stand and the Academic Dishonesty Report regarding the allegation will remain on file, pending an appeal, if any to the College Hearing Board within **5** class days of the Hearing Board's decision. If an academic disciplinary hearing is pending, and the Hearing Board decides for the instructor, the graduate student's disciplinary hearing before either the College Hearing Board or the Dean of The Graduate School would promptly follow, pending an appeal, if any, within **5** class days. (See GSRR 5.5.2.2, 5.4.12.3, and 5.5.2.2)

C. Written Report:

The Chair of the Hearing Board shall prepare a written report of the Hearing Board's findings, including recommended redress or sanctions for the complainant, if applicable, and forward a copy of the decision to the appropriate unit administrator within **3** class days of the hearing. The report shall indicate the rationale for the decision and the major elements of evidence, or lack thereof, that support the Hearing Board's decision. The administrator, in consultation with the Hearing Board, shall then implement an appropriate remedy. The report also should inform the parties of the right to appeal within **5** class days following notice of the decision, or **5** class days if an academic disciplinary hearing is pending. The Chair shall forward copies of the Hearing Board's report and the administrator's redress, if applicable, to the parties involved, the responsible administrators, the University Ombudsperson and the Dean of The Graduate School. All recipients must respect the confidentiality of the report and of the hearing board's deliberations resulting in a decision. (See GSRR 5.4.12 and 5.5.2.2)

VII. APPEAL OF THE HEARING BOARD DECISION:

A. Either party may appeal a decision by the Hearing Board to the College Hearing Board for cases involving (1) academic grievances alleging violations of student rights and (2) alleged violations of regulations involving academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, professional standards or falsification of admission and academic records.) (See GSRR 5.4.12.)

B. All appeals must be in writing, signed and submitted to the Chair of the College Hearing Board within **5** class days following notification of the Hearing Board's decision. While under appeal, the original decision of the Hearing Board will be held in abeyance. (See GSRR 5.4.12, 5.4.12.2 and 5.4.12.3.)

C. A request for an appeal of a Hearing Board decision to the College Hearing Board must allege, in sufficient particularity to justify a hearing, that the initial Hearing Board failed to follow applicable procedures for adjudicating the hearing or that findings of the Hearing Board were not supported by the "preponderance of the evidence." The request also must include the redress sought. Presentation of new evidence normally will be inappropriate. (See GSRR 5.4.12.1, 5.4.12.2 and 5.4.12.4.)

VIII. RECONSIDERATION:

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

IX. FILE COPY:

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

ANNEX D: RESPONSIBLE AND ETHICAL CONDUCT OF RESEARCH (RECR) PLAN

Training in Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research is essential in the preparation of future scholars and professionals. An understanding of the issues concerning the conduct of research in an increasingly complex world has become critical in successfully navigating the research landscape. To help prepare Michigan State University graduate students for their future scholarly work, a plan for providing the foundation of responsible conduct has been developed in coordination with the Graduate School, the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies Office, and college associate deans for graduate education. The plan is predicated on the principles that a basic understanding of issues is necessary through didactic training and a periodic reinforcement of the principles through discussion. It is the belief that this plan will provide a foundation for all graduate students as well as others pursuing a career in research and will offer the basic information to meet most, if not all, federal agency granting requirements.

The plan below represents AFREs' plan, which incorporates the basic university requirements.[5]

For all graduate professional, master's and doctoral students:

1) Year 1
All new graduate and graduate professional students will complete 4 CITI online modules within the first year of enrollment in their program:

- Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research
- Authorship
- Plagiarism
- Research Misconduct

2) Discussion-Based Training
All graduate and graduate professional students must complete 6 hours of discussion-based training prior to reaching candidate status for Ph.D. students, and prior to receiving their degrees for master's students. The Graduate School RECR Workshop series may be used to help fulfill the annual refresher or discussion-based training requirements. (However, a given training cannot be double-counted toward multiple requirements.)

[5] Students who are supported by NSF, NIH, or USDA grants may be required to complete additional specific training; they must meet the timeline and content requirements of training for that grant. Students engaged in research involving human subjects or animal use must complete the Michigan State University training modules for those subjects before submitting IRB or IACUC approvals. These modules may be completed as part of the training requirements below.

For master's plan A and doctoral students:

In addition to 1 and 2 above, master's plan A and doctoral students will complete:

3) Year 2
Within the first 2 years of enrollment in their program, master's plan A and doctoral students will complete 3 additional CITI modules chosen from the RECR Basic modules listed in CITI. See the Graduate School's Research Integrity website for further details.

In addition to 1, 2 and 3 above, doctoral students will complete:

4) Annual Refresher Training
Starting in year 3, all doctoral students must complete 3 hours of annual refresher training; this can include discussion-based training and CITI RECR Basic modules beyond the 7 required in basic training. See the Graduate School's Research Integrity website for further details.

Completion of RECR requirements will be tracked in the Student Information System (student.msu.edu).

Approved by Faculty (October 21, 2016). Updated in March 2022 to reflect updates to MSU requirements. Updated June 2024 to reflect name change from RCR to RECR.