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Introduction

Welcome to the graduate program in Arts, Cultural Management, and Museum Studies at the College of Arts & Letters at Michigan State University. We are excited about the possibilities that arise from each cohort’s arrival in the program. We know that each of you has something important to contribute to our intellectual community and our discipline's future.

Entering and completing graduate school is an exciting time filled with new opportunities. This handbook is a key source of information for guiding students through their degrees. The handbook will inform students, faculty, and staff on course and program requirements, standards for professional conduct in that field, the timetable for the selection of a faculty advisor and the formation of a guidance committee, examinations, graduation requirements, and policy for dismissal. Informing students of these requirements is required by Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities (2.3.2). The handbook is a crucial element for welcoming new students, supporting existing students, and ensuring the integrity and quality of the graduate program overall.

If this handbook conflicts with the GEU contract, the contract supersedes it. The policies contained within the GEU contract for teaching assistants shall apply to teaching-excluded and research assistants in the ACM&MS graduate program.

Links to Select University Policies

All University policies override all inconsistent provisions of this handbook, including the following:

Academic Programs Catalog
Anti-Discrimination Policy (ADP)
Code of Teaching Responsibilities
Disability and Reasonable Accommodation Policy
Digital Accessibility Policy
General Student Regulations
Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR)
Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities
Integrity of Scholarship & Grades
Law Student Rights and Responsibilities (LSRR)
Medical Student Rights and Responsibilities (MSRR)
MSU Guidelines for Graduate Student Mentoring and Advising
MSU-GEU Contract
Policy on Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct
Mission, Vision, and Values

Welcome to the graduate program in Arts, Cultural Management, and Museum Studies. Our mission is to cultivate capable, reflective, and compassionate leaders in the arts, cultural, and museum sectors.

Our values-driven program intentionally places emphasis on:

- **Flourishing**: We believe the arts and museums can help everyone thrive. We strive to enable human flourishing in our program, in our fields, and in the world around us.
  - We value thriving, facilitating meaning, doing what matters, enabling curiosity, being intentional, reflection, and compassion

- **Interconnectedness**: We recognize that everything is linked, from the systems within a single person to the larger systems across time and space. Our program honors the networks and relationships that exist within and among our fields.
  - We value relationship-building, collaboration, integration, embracing diversity, equitability, coherence, harmoniousness

- **Resilience**: Flexibility, versatility, and adaptability are vital skills for survival in today’s world, and together they enable resilience. Our customizable program builds resilience while teaching it.
  - We value customizability, flexibility, adaptability, innovation, relevance, ethical being, freshness, trusting in emergence.

As a program, we envision a world...

...where our audiences, professionals, and communities flourish
...where we nourish interconnections within and beyond our fields
...where heritage, creativity, and performance are cherished by all as valuable assets

Structure

Our interdisciplinary program sits within the College of Arts & Letters (CAL) at MSU, where we value and enact a Culture of Care. Our program's mission, vision, and values are aligned with this atmosphere of respect, compassion, and kindness, which are embedded in all we do. From daily interactions to admissions processes to course activities and more, these serve as central guides, enabling our program's participants to affect change in practice toward greater flourishing through museums and the arts. As a highly interdisciplinary program, we also value perspectives from a broad range of fields and experiences, believing that this diversity dramatically expands and enhances curricular learning.
1. **Program Overview**

Our MA in Arts, Cultural Management, and Museum Studies (ACM&MS) program uniquely combines museum studies and arts management curricula and, as such, draws diverse cohorts of students from across the performing arts, visual arts, and music, but also from the sciences, history, anthropology, and more. At each stage of the program, we are committed to fostering the perspective that management offers an opportunity to engage with people and to make a difference in community well-being. To this end, we connect our students with a rich network of experienced faculty and professional mentors who are immersed in the worlds of arts, cultural institutions, and museums.

Students will choose from one of two plans—with a thesis (Plan A) or non-thesis (Plan B) options—depending on their area of interest and future goals.

2. **Program Components/Plan Options**

This section serves as a “road map” for graduate students to see the big picture for their degree program and to begin to understand the faculty's expectations. Most students complete this degree program in two years.

The Master of Arts degree in Arts, Cultural Management, and Museum Studies is a multidisciplinary degree administered by the College of Arts & Letters that prepares students for leadership positions related to the management and advocacy of arts and cultural organizations or industry dimensions of an artistic and humanistic entrepreneurial career. Students will customize their program electives for deeper exposure to museum, artistic, and cultural management, depending on their area of interest.

**Graduate Guidance Committee (GGC)**

The GGC is expected to share responsibility for reviewing the graduate student’s progress, guiding the student toward completion of course and program requirements, and preparing the student for professional success after graduation. (see section 4).

**Advising**

All MA students are advised by the Program Director, who will assist students in completing a degree plan in the student’s first semester and guide them with revisions and changes along the way. The degree plan will be shared via a secure link to Microsoft Teams. At the end of their second semester in the program, students form a GGC and designate one faculty member of that committee to serve as Committee Chairperson (see Section 4).

**MA Plan Options**

The following explains the elements that constitute Plan A (thesis) and Plan B (final evaluation) options. **Each student must select an option by their first annual review meeting.** Students
interested in preparing for doctoral work often select Plan A, and students interested in pursuing a professional degree often select Plan B. The work of each plan’s deliverables typically takes place in the second year of the two-year program.

Each plan includes the following milestones beyond coursework:
- Submit Proposal to Committee
- Submit Deliverables to Committee

**Plan A: Thesis**
A thesis project allows a graduate student the opportunity to practice their research, planning, synthesizing, and writing skills. The project is the culmination of the student’s learning in the program, resulting in a deliverable appropriate to the size and scale of the intended audience. For some students, this project may be aimed at an academic audience in anticipation of further study in doctoral programs. For other students, this project may be aimed at a professional audience for publication. Students are encouraged to work with their advisor (GGC Chairperson) and GGC to discuss the expectations of scope, audience, and length.

The following phases and steps outline the typical process for students completing Plan A:
- Ideation
- Prospectus
- Research
- Deliverable
- Certifying Exam
- Filing / Launch

**Plan A: Thesis Overview**
If you think you might like to do the Plan A thesis option, the earliest you can begin to discuss ideas with your advisor and/or chair, the better. With your chair, you should develop an individual development plan (IDP) that considers your strengths, career goals, and interests, as well as the courses and experiences you have had thus far. For IDP template ideas, see myIDP (Biological & Physical Science fields) and ImaginePhD (Humanities & Social Science fields). No later than the second semester of your degree, you should meet with your GGC Chairperson to develop this plan. A thesis takes time to plan, conduct, write, and prepare for defense. It cannot be done quickly or without careful planning. Work your timeline backward to consider the time you’ll need to successfully work on each stage of your thesis. Your GGC Chairperson will be your thesis advisor and your GGC is your thesis committee.

Those Master’s students electing Plan A should:
- inform their GGC Chairperson of that intention no later than your first annual meeting;
- prepare a short prospectus (3–5 double-spaced pages, or the equivalent, plus a short bibliography) for the thesis project in consultation with GGC Chairperson;
• present the prospectus to the entire advisory committee during the semester before the student plans to finish the thesis for the committee’s approval;
• complete at least 4 credits of ACM 899 Master’s Thesis Research, usually taken at the end of the MA coursework while writing the thesis;
• complete a thesis (typically 50–100 pages or a publishable journal article), which is (a) a substantial piece of research or scholarship, (b) shows specific knowledge within the field, (c) shows understanding of the field, and (d) is of publishable quality;
• schedule an oral presentation and defense of that thesis before the GGC, which must be passed as a final certifying exam; and
• file the thesis (prepared in accordance with the specifications provided by the Graduate School).

During this process (ideally early in this process), the student may decide to replace one or more of the members of the advisory committee to better suit the planned thesis topic.

Plan A: Thesis Preparation and Process

Step 1. Preparation and Planning
Preparation will vary depending on the scope of the thesis topic. The initial discussion of the focus may involve GGC members, especially the GGC Chairperson. The discussion could include samples of coursework or informal ideas.

Planning should involve deciding the semester(s) in which to enroll for ACM 899 credits, any additional courses that may be relevant to the thesis topic, an outline, a schedule for drafting, consultation with the GGC Chairperson, time for feedback, and discussion with colleagues.

Students who are producing a thesis in a format other than traditional print should:
• Compose a written project synopsis, which can resemble a thesis chapter or take a different shape. The project synopsis should address some or all the following issues: theoretical framework for the project, methodology, rationale for making the project in its particular medium, argument for the need of this project in our field, and a discussion of other projects in the field that it complements/competes with.

• Create a plan for preserving the artifact the student produces. Students may want to create a written preservation rationale when considering how their thesis project can be preserved for future viewings, interactions, or uses.

Step 2. Research and Drafting
While doing research and drafting the project, students work primarily with their GGC Chairperson. It’s crucial to stay in regular contact with the GGC Chairperson, providing intermittent progress reports, asking questions, and meeting for discussion as needed or scheduled. It’s also crucial to discuss with the GGC Chairperson how to handle revisions and relevant types of feedback.
Step 3. Completion
The student drafts and revises sections of the project with the GGC Chairperson. Then, the Chairperson approves the sections for release to the other GGC members for review and feedback. This helps to maximize everyone’s time and energy.

Step 4. Oral Defense
Once the final version of the thesis has been approved, the student schedules the oral exam. The exam will focus not only on the thesis but also on the student’s coursework. The candidate may prepare questions for the oral exam in collaboration with the GGC Chairperson. As a conversation between peers meant to further the candidate’s work and thinking, the defense should remain a small event that allows for the kind of interaction between the candidate and GGC members that provides the most value to the candidate as they continue their educational and professional trajectories. Having more than a few non-committee members at a defense can be intimidating to both the candidate and GGC members and can substantially shift the tone of the defense from one of intellectual support and guidance to sheer performance, making it impossible for a candidate to have a productive, useful defense meeting with their GGC where everyone’s attention is on helping the candidate move forward with the project—the last such group meeting that the program provides. Because a public performance, showing, sharing, or installation could serve a different—and differently helpful—purpose than the defense, if a candidate desires a public performance, showing, sharing, or installation of their thesis work, it must be held separately from the defense meeting. Consistent with the purpose of this policy, candidates who decide to host a separate, more public event are not required to invite GGC members to the event, nor are GGC members required to attend this public event.

Plan B: Final Evaluation
The final evaluation allows graduate students completing Plan B the opportunity to collect, organize, and situate their work to demonstrate learning across the program. The final evaluation is the culmination of the student’s learning in the program, resulting in a public or private portfolio piece appropriate to the size and scale of the intended audience. For some students, this final evaluation may be aimed at a professional audience for workplace placement. For other students, this project may be aimed at an academic audience for future work in higher education. Students are encouraged to work with their GGC Chairperson and GGC to discuss the expectations of scope, audience, and length.

The following steps outline the typical process for students completing Plan B:

At the end of your final semester of study (preferably the final week of the semester or exam week), you will meet with your GGC for a 45-minute meeting. This meeting is a chance to examine your progress throughout the program and assist you in preparing you for ultimate success upon graduation.

At least 10 days before the meeting, you must deliver to your GGC members the following:
During the final GGC meeting, you will deliver a **20-minute presentation** using various platforms (preferably doc/x, .pdf, .ppt/x, Prezi, or video) on the following prompt:

*What were the most profound concepts, theories, or understandings (a maximum of 3) you learned during your coursework in ACM&MS? How, and in what way, did you learn them, and how might you bring them into your future professional life? Be specific in citing sources and connecting your learning to the field’s research.*

Following the presentation, the GGC will ask questions and engage in dialogue regarding the concepts presented.

Following the GGC meeting, you will receive an email from your GGC chairperson regarding the successful completion of this final evaluation, or you will be provided with information about how to complete your MA degree.

**Optional Certifications and Certificates**

Students may wish to examine internal certificate programs, such as the Graduate Certificate in Digital Humanities, Graduate Certificate in Global Studies, Graduate College Teaching Certification Program offered by CAL programs within the University structure, and external certifications related to deeper mastery of certain subjects. A student may seek alternate forms of funding (grants from the Graduate School, the GEU, the University, the College, or the Program) to complete external certifications.

**Admission Information**

*MA in Arts, Cultural Management, and Museum Studies*

For Fall admittance, and to be considered for potential funding opportunities, the application deadline:

- for international students is **January 1**
- for domestic students is **February 1**

Note: We will accept domestic applications until **June 1** (not eligible for partial funding). Currently, we do not accept applicants for Spring admission.

**To be admitted to the M.A. program on regular status, an applicant must have:**

- A baccalaureate degree, with a cumulative grade–point average of at least 3.00 in the junior and senior years of the baccalaureate degree program.

**Requirements for application to the MA Degree Program:**

- [MSU Graduate Application](https://admissions.msu.edu/apply/graduate-students), found at [https://admissions.msu.edu/apply/graduate-students](https://admissions.msu.edu/apply/graduate-students), here you will include the following:
  - Personal Essay: Tell us about yourself. What drives you? Why this degree? Why now?
Academic Essay: What is your background? What are your academic interests? What is the relationship between academic and professional for you? Why will this degree, and ours in particular, help you to achieve your professional goals? Tell us about how your values coincide with ours.

- A writing sample that must reflect aptitude for critical and scholarly writing (approximately 10-20 double-spaced pages). Papers from your undergraduate courses are appropriate to use.

- A portfolio that demonstrates professional experience/interest related to Arts, Cultural Management and/or Museum Studies—a compilation of evidence (documents, videos, website, photos, brochures, etc.) showing what you’ve done that helps us see if you are a good fit for the program. What to include can mean different things to different people. Anything that you have done in the past that supports your interest could be compiled; it can include, for example, budgets you created, flyers you made, tours you designed, catalogs you have created—anything that reveals some connection between your experience and this program of study. You can turn it in as a combined PDF or make a website; we just ask that you explain your role in what you submit and provide a table of contents.

- Letters of Recommendation (3): Professional and/or academic, not personal. Must be on letterhead, signed, and submitted to the portal by the writers themselves.

- Transcripts: Please have official versions sent to the MSU Admissions office. You may upload unofficial versions to the application portal but only in addition to the official one(s) (please send transcripts directly to Office of Admissions 426 Auditorium Rd. Rm. 250, East Lansing, MI 48824)

- CV or resume

In addition, international students must also submit English Language Proficiency scores and an Affidavit of Financial Support.

- See more on International Application Requirements.

Graduate Certificates in Arts & Cultural Management and Museum Studies
Admittance to the certificate is rolling. The certificate can be earned in one of two ways:
1. If you are already a graduate student at MSU and would like to do the Museum Studies or Arts & Cultural Management certificate.
2. If you are not a current student at MSU but have completed an undergraduate degree (elsewhere or at MSU) and would like to obtain the Graduate certificate.

Requirements for application to the ACM&MS Graduate Certificates:
If you are from Category 1, please fill out the Application for ACM&MS Graduate Certificate @ MSU. You will shortly hear from the Program Director, who is the certificate's advisor.

If you are from Category 2, please submit the following to apply:

Submit an MSU Graduate Certificate Application, where you will also upload:

- A personal/academic statement (this can be combined or not)
  - Personal Essay: Tell us about yourself. What drives you? Why this degree? Why now?
  - Academic Essay: What is your background? What are your academic interests? What is the relationship between academic and professional for you? Why will this degree, and
ours in particular, help you to achieve your professional goals? Tell us about how your
values coincide with ours.

- Letters of Recommendation (3): Must be on letterhead, signed, and submitted to the portal
  by the writers themselves.
- Resume or CV
- Official transcripts (please send transcripts directly to Office of Admissions 426 Auditorium
  Rd. Rm. 250 East Lansing MI 48824)
- **IMPORTANT:** When you have completed the MSU application, please submit an Application
  for ACM&MS Graduate Certificate @ MSU (this alerts the ACM&MS Program Director that
  you have applied).

### 3. Degree Requirements

#### Program Requirements

**MA in Arts, Cultural Management, and Museum Studies**

The **MA in ACM&MS** is available under both Plan A (with thesis) and Plan B (without thesis). A
total of 31 credits are required for Plan A and 30 credits for Plan B.

**Requirements for Both Plan A and Plan B:**

1. **All of the following courses (13 credits):**
   - ACM 801 Introduction to Arts, Cultural Management, and Museum Studies (3)
   - ACM 861 Strategic Planning, Human Capital and Financial Management for Arts,
     Cultural and Museum Management (3)
   - ACM 865 Leadership Development for Arts, Cultural and Museum Management (3)
   - ACM 869 Policy and Advocacy for Arts, Cultural and Museum Management (3)
   - ACM 892 Arts, Cultural Management and Museum Studies Seminar (1)

2. **At least 14 credits from the following courses:**
   - ACM 862 Public Communications in Arts, Cultural and Museum Management (3)
   - ACM 863 Event Management and Design for Arts and Culture (3)
   - ACM 864 School and Community Education in Arts and Cultural Management (3)
   - ACM 866 Operations and Facilities Management in Arts and Cultural Management (3)
   - ACM 867 Development and Fundraising Theory and Practice for Arts, Cultural and
     Museum Management (3)
   - ACM 868 Non-Profit Law for Arts, Cultural, and Museum Management (3)
   - ACM 872 Practicum in Arts and Cultural Management (3)
   - *ACM 880 Arts and Cultural Management Experience (1)
   - ACM 890 Independent Study (1-3)
   - ACM 891 Special Topics in Arts and Cultural Management (1-4)
   - *MUSM 880 Museums and Cultural Management Experience (1)
   - MUSM 885 Fundamentals of Museum Studies (3)
   - MUSM 887 The Digital Museum (3)
   - MUSM 888 Curatorial Practices in Museums and Cultural Organizations 3
   - MUSM 889 Museum Collections (3)
   - MUSM 890 Independent Study (1-3)
MUSM 894 Exhibit Communication (3)
MUSM 892 Special Topics in Museum Studies (1-3)
MUSM 897 Practicum in Museum Studies (1-3)
MUSM 898 Museum Visitor Studies (3)

*The maximum amount of credits allowed in ACM 880 and MUSM 880 is 6 credits.

Other management-focused or arts and humanities courses may be substituted with the approval of the academic advisor.

Additional Requirements for Plan A:
1. Complete 4 credits of ACM 899 Master’s Thesis Research.

Additional Requirements for Plan B:
1. Complete a minimum of 3 credits from the following:
   ACM 872 Practicum in Arts and Cultural Management (1-3)
   ACM 896 Internship in Arts and Cultural Management (1-3)
   MUSM 896 Museum Internship (1-3)
   MUSM 897 Practicum in Museum Studies (1-3)
2. Pass a final evaluation.

Graduate Certificate in Arts and Cultural Management
The Graduate Certificate in Arts and Cultural Management provides both working professionals and graduate students the opportunity to improve employment possibilities in creative and artistic positions while expanding their knowledge around related fields through building skills in management and administration.

Students must complete 12 credits from the following:
1. The following course (3 credits):
   ACM 801 Introduction to Arts, Cultural Management, and Museum Studies (3)

2. A minimum of 6 credits from the following courses:
   ACM 861 Strategic Planning, Human Capital and Financial Management for Arts Cultural and Museum Management (3)
   ACM 862 Public Communications in Arts, Cultural and Museum Management (3)
   ACM 863 Event Management and Design for Arts and Culture (3)
   ACM 864 School and Community Education in Arts and Cultural Management (3)
   ACM 865 Leadership Development for Arts, Cultural, and Museum Management (3)
   ACM 866 Operations and Facilities Management in Arts and Cultural Management (3)
   ACM 867 Development and Fundraising Theory and Practice for Arts, Cultural and Museum Management (3)
   ACM 868 Non-Profit Law for Arts, Cultural, and Museum Management (3)
   ACM 869 Policy and Advocacy for Arts, Cultural and Museum Management (3)
   *ACM 880 Arts and Cultural Management Experience (1)
   *MUSM 880 Museums and Cultural Management Experience (1)
3. **One of the following courses (3 credits):**
   - ACM 872 Practicum in Arts and Cultural Management (3)
   - ACM 896 Internship in Arts and Cultural Management (3)

*The maximum amount of credits allowed in ACM 880 and MUSM 880 is 6 credits.*

In cases where an outside internship or professional practicum is not possible, a substitution may be made with advisor approval. With departmental approval, requirement #3 may be substituted for a like offering in another department.

**Graduate Certificate in Museum Studies**

The **Graduate Certificate in Museum Studies** provides students with theoretical and practical experience in museums and focuses on object-based collections. The certificate enhances a specific field of study through consideration of various museological areas such as curation, education, technology, exhibition, and administration.

Students must complete 12 credits from the following:

1. **The following course (3 credits):**
   - MUSM 885 Fundamentals of Museum Studies (3)

2. **A minimum of 6 credits from the following courses:**
   - *ACM 880 Arts and Cultural Management Experience (1)*
   - *MUSM 880 Museums and Cultural Management Experience (1)*
   - MUSM 894 Exhibit Communication (3)
   - MUSM 898 Museum Visitor Studies (3)
   - MUSM 887 The Digital Museum (3)
   - MUSM 888 Curatorial Practices in Museums and Cultural Organizations (3)
   - MUSM 889 Museum Collections (3)
   - MUSM 892 Special Topics in Museum Studies (1-3)

3. **One of the following courses (3 credits):**
   - MUSM 896 Museum Internship (3)
   - MUSM 897 Practicum in Museum Studies (3)

*The maximum amount of credits allowed in ACM 880 and MUSM 880 is 6 credits.*

In cases where an outside internship or professional practicum is not possible, a substitution may be made with advisor approval.

**Related Program Information**

**Provisional Acceptance**

An applicant for the MA program may be accepted provisionally if, in the judgment of the ACM&MS Program Director and advice from faculty, the student has sufficient promise of success in the graduate program but lacks the requisite entry academic credits in arts, cultural management, and museum studies. The Program Director will recommend specific courses or experiences for the student that may be achieved concurrently with graduate course
enrollment or prior to entrance to MSU. When the specific provisions of the admission are accomplished, the student is moved to regular status.

**English Language Proficiency**
MSU candidates for Teaching Assistant appointments who were required to demonstrate English proficiency as a condition for regular admission to Michigan State University must also demonstrate that they meet a minimum standard of proficiency in spoken English before they can be assigned teaching work that involves oral communication with undergraduate students.

*International teaching assistants (ITAs) may meet this requirement as outlined by the MSU Office of Admissions: [https://admissions.msu.edu/apply/international/language-requirements](https://admissions.msu.edu/apply/international/language-requirements).*

**Dual Degrees**
For MSU undergraduates who minored in ACM or MUSM, up to 9 credits may be counted towards the MA degree, provided that the undergraduate degree was at least 120 credits, but the undergraduate must be enrolled in the dual degree program. Meet with your ACM or MUSM advisor to clarify expectations before you begin your MA. Note that you will still need to apply for admission to the ACM&MS MA and go through the normal review procedures. See the [dual enrollment form](#). See [financial aid implications](#).

**Transfer and Lifelong Education Credits**
Students in any master's program in the College may apply a maximum of 9 credits earned through any combination of courses taken through lifelong education, graduate certification, or in transfer from another institution if they are appropriate to a student's program and provided they were completed within the time limits approved for the earning of the degree desired at Michigan State University. Only courses in which at least a 3.0 grade, or its equivalent, was received will be considered for transfer. For more information regarding transfers, visit the [Transfer Credits](https://admissions.msu.edu/apply/international/language-requirements) section of the Academic Programs Catalog. See [Master's Programs Transfer Credits](#) for more details. With the approval of the Program Director and Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in the College of Arts & Letters, these transfer credits may fulfill specific MSU degree requirements; not all transfer credits will necessarily fulfill specific MSU degree requirements.

**Enrollment**
To be considered full-time for academic purposes, students at the master’s level must carry a minimum of 9 credits per semester.

The Student Information System ([http://student.msu.edu](http://student.msu.edu)) can tell you what courses are still available, when they meet, how many credits, etc.

**Overrides**
During the enrollment period, many students require an override to enroll in their courses. Students should meet in advance with the Program Director to work out any overrides. The overrides will need to be done by the ACM&MS Academic Program Coordinator with approval from the Program Director and/or Instructor of the course.
Academic Calendar
Go to the Office of the Registrar’s Academic Calendar for a list of special dates and deadlines for the academic year. Available are links to several years at a time on this site. Students are expected to complete the courses for which they register. (Note: You must be enrolled to receive financial aid, scholarships, University privileges, etc.)

4. Formation of the Graduate Guidance Committee (GGC)

Purpose
Students are encouraged to collaborate with their committee to generate individual development plans that consider the student’s strengths, challenges, and career goals. Faculty GGC members and students are encouraged to review the materials available in MSU Guidelines for Graduate Student Mentoring and Advising, paying particular attention to those mentoring and advising areas identified as the essential responsibilities of students, faculty, and units.

Students should consult regularly with their GGC, at a minimum of two or three times per year (or more often if circumstances warrant). Students who fail to form an advisory committee by the end of their first year are considered to not be making satisfactory progress (See section 5).

Committee Responsibilities
The GGC performs the following:
- Reviews the student’s academic progress each year, with the chairperson responsible for reporting the student’s progress to the Program Director.
- Provides a written formative evaluation of the student’s work and progress each year.
- Serves as the thesis committee for Plan A students, guiding and evaluating the student’s thesis project; or serves as the committee certifying the final evaluation for Plan B students.

Timing and Selection
During their second semester in the program, all graduate students must form a GGC by March 15th, including selecting a chairperson of their GGC. It is the student’s responsibility to make the selection and gain permissions (however, the Director is available to assist in making choices, if needed). Most importantly, choose your members based on who you know in the program and who has the expertise and connections related to your interests.

In the event that a graduate student’s GGC chairperson leaves MSU before that student completes their degree, the student will be required to find a new chairperson. Ideally, another member of the student’s committee who is familiar with their work can fill this role. All efforts will be made to ensure the student’s program proceeds as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

Committee Composition
The guidance committee consists of three MSU faculty members, two of whom must be ACM&MS faculty members. Anyone teaching in the ACM&MS program (tenure stream,
academic specialist, or fixed term) is valid to serve on the GGC. The student will designate one faculty member as the chairperson. The student’s guidance committee must be approved by the Program Director. The student may make changes in their guidance committee at any time and for any reason with the Program Director’s approval through submission of this form: ACM&MS MA Graduate Guidance Committee (GGC).

If you are a Plan A (thesis) student, you must select at least one member from another program on campus with “regular” faculty status. Regular faculty consists of all persons appointed under the rules of tenure and holding the rank of professor, associate professor or assistant professor and all persons appointed as librarians.

In some cases, faculty members from another program or practitioner staff members from one of our partners on campus (e.g., Abrams Planetarium, MSU Broad Art Museum, MSU Museum, Wharton Center for Performing Arts, W. J. Beal Botanical Garden, etc.) will be appropriate to serve on a student’s GGC. Non-ACM&MS members must be approved by the Program Director.

Change in Graduate Guidance Committee Chairperson
The student or the GGC Chairperson may initiate a change of GGC Chairperson. The student must secure the change agreement with the proposed new GGC Chairperson before informing the Program Director. The Program Director will review this request for procedural compliance with both Program and MSU Graduate School rules and guidelines. If the request is not in compliance, the Program Director will meet with all involved parties to see a resolution. Conflicts that remain will be reported to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies of the College of Arts & Letters. Conflicts concerning the Program Director must be referred to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies of the College of Arts & Letters.

Change in Graduate Guidance Committee Member
If a change of committee member becomes necessary, it may be initiated by the student or by the committee member. The student must secure the change agreement with the proposed new committee member before informing their GGC Chairperson. If their GGC Chairperson sees any problems with the assignment, the matter will be reviewed by the Program Director, who will review this request for procedural compliance with both Program and MSU Graduate School rules and guidelines. If the request is not in compliance, the Program Director will refer the matter back to the GGC Chairperson for review. (Refer to GSRR 2.4)

5. Program Policies: Academic and Professional Performance

Annual Academic Review of Acceptable Academic Standards
The Program Director monitors the annual reviews of all graduate students. It is the responsibility, however, of the GGC to conduct the annual reviews. The Program Director, in turn, considers these annual evaluations to determine that students are making reasonable progress within their course of study. A student who does not maintain reasonable progress toward the degree, maintain professional integrity, or fulfill other Program and MSU Graduate School requirements may be denied funding support and/or denied further registration in the program. Program and Graduate School procedures apply in all cases.
All MA Candidates must:

1. Maintain a cumulative grade–point average of at least 3.0*.
2. Accumulate no more than six (6) credits with a grade below 3.0 in courses that are to be counted toward the degree.
3. Credit will not be counted towards the degree for any course in which the student receives a grade less than 2.0. However, all grades are counted in calculating the GPA.
4. Accumulate no more than six (6) credits of DF-Deferred or Incomplete grades: The required work must be completed, and a grade must be reported within six (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.

*If, at the end of a semester, a graduate student fails to meet the grade-point average (GPA) requirement specified above, the graduate student shall receive a warning and be allowed to hold the graduate assistantship (if applicable) for one additional semester. If the deficiency is not removed within one calendar year, the graduate student will not be allowed to continue in the degree program.

Maintaining Good Academic Standing

The time limit for completion of the master’s degree is 5 years from the beginning of the first semester in which credit was earned toward the degree. Applications for an extension of the 5-year period of time toward degree completion must be submitted to and approved by the Dean of the College of Arts & Letters and the Dean of The Graduate School.

Satisfactory Progress Toward Degree

In addition to these time limits, students are expected to make “satisfactory progress” toward completion of their degree—that is, complete required coursework, annual GGC meetings, and complete the thesis (if applicable) according to the general timelines established by the program. If a student falls too far behind the expected timeline for completion of a degree, the GGC should warn the student about this problem. Failure to make satisfactory progress could result in the loss of teaching or research assistantships (which typically require satisfactory progress toward the degree as a condition of employment).

Restoring Academic Good Standing

If, at the end of a semester, a graduate student fails to meet the GPA requirement, accumulates an excessive number of DF and Incomplete grades (6), or in any other way fails to meet the standards for progress and for academic good standing in the program (as determined by the Program Director or by the student’s GGC), the student shall receive a written warning that details the options for restoring good academic standing. Students may respond to this warning in writing to the GGC Chairperson and/or the Program Director. The student must remedy the problem within one semester following the one in which the problem occurred. (For example, if
the student’s GPA falls below a 3.0 in spring, the student has until the end of the following fall semester to bring their GPA to the appropriate level).

**Independent Study Courses**

Students may take an independent study course to explore a specialized topic for which there is no current MSU course. Independent study courses should not be used as substitutes for existing courses. The student needs to find a faculty member willing to sponsor the course, and the course material and number must be at the graduate level. Guidelines for independent study courses can be found online at the Registrar’s site.

The independent study request must specify the number of credit hours, what work will be completed for the independent study, how it will be evaluated and graded, how often the student and sponsoring faculty member will meet, etc. Students should save a copy of the form for their own records and must file a copy of the request form with the Academic Program Coordinator to be enrolled in either ACM 890 or MUSM 890. The request must be approved by the sponsoring faculty member and the Program Director.

**Internships and Practica**

**Definitions:**

**Internship:** A supervised applied experience in a museum, garden, zoo, nature center, historic home, arts and cultural organization, or other learning environment associated with management and operational studies and related to a student's area of study.

**Objectives:** Students will gain intensive experience and synthesize and apply knowledge and skills learned in arts, cultural management, museum studies, and other relevant graduate courses to a professional experience within a museum, zoo, nature center, historic home, arts, cultural organization, or another learning environment. Students will develop and apply skills in decision-making, planning, critical thinking, and plan implementation.

**Practicum:** A practical experience in museum studies or arts and cultural management, which may involve project-oriented activities.

**Objectives:** Students will gain hands-on experience in the day-to-day operations and planning in a museum field or arts and cultural organization related to the student’s area of interest. Topics may include legal and ethical issues, collections management, community engagement, and others depending on organizational and student expertise. Students will render a network of industry professionals and prepare future arts managers to recognize and appropriately deal with issues facing individual cultural entrepreneurs and arts and cultural organizations. Students will hone analytical and practical application skills necessary to enter the professional arts and cultural workforce. If taken as a project-based course, students will complete a specific project developed with a museum or arts and cultural institution.

**Overview:**
Graduate students enroll in internships and practica as part of their plan of study. These can be both more traditional workplace internships/practica to help students gain experience in the kinds of places they may someday find employment or special teaching internships/practica to provide students with teaching experiences they might otherwise not have access to during their program of study.

For both kinds of internships/practica, the faculty advisor must approve an application for the given semester. The application details the kind of work that the student will be engaged in during the internship/practicum and how this work will be evaluated.

The Program Director and ACM&MS faculty members will assist the student in finding an appropriate site for the internship or topic for the project; however, the primary responsibility for finding an internship placement or development of a practicum rests with the student. The internship site should be at a museum or arts and cultural organization aligned with the student’s area of concentration. In many organizations, volunteer work is also internship/practicum work, they need not be formal programs. Internships will normally be completed during the summer following the student’s first year of study, but this may vary depending on the student’s degree plan and site availability.

Additionally, the application designates a work supervisor or project manager (who evaluates the student’s performance in the internship/practicum for the faculty instructor) and a faculty instructor (who records the final grade based on the work supervisor’s evaluation). The internship/practicum application forms are available on the ACM&MC website.

ACM&MS Internship/Practica Process:
An internship/practicum is like a mini job. You choose a place to work for a designated time to get work experience.

- The student inquires about the internship to an advisor; if the position is appropriate to the student’s experience and coursework (e.g., there should be at least a minimum of coursework already taken by the time the internship starts), they can proceed. Fill out an Internship Agreement Form (ask the Program Director for the link).
- Once the student secures a plan for an internship site, with advising, sign up for the semester(s) for the internship “course” (1 credit hour= 40 experience hours; 3 credit hours of internship equals 120 hours of work time over 15 weeks)
- Before starting the internship, the student should work with the advisor and supervisor to create a set of 5-8 objectives for the internship (objectives are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-Focused, Time-Focused).
- When the internship begins, the student must log hours as they work them, commenting on each log entry. An online space where this information can be stored and viewed by your advisor in real-time should be used (e.g. Google Docs or Google Sheets)
- The internship faculty instructor will check in to the site regularly to ensure that the student is doing okay. No comments will necessarily occur during this period unless there is a question.
- At the end of the internship, the student will write a reflection on the experience, specifically discussing the relationship between the course material learned, actual experience in practice, and the objectives set for the internship.
- Both the student and the supervisor (separately) will submit an evaluation of the experience. Both forms must be turned in for the student to receive credit.
- Overall: A good practice is to finish the internship completely one week prior to the end of classes and turn in the evaluation form during finals week. Ask your internship/practica faculty instructor for a specific due date.

**Graduate Student Academic Files and Viewing Procedures**

**Typical Inventory in Academic File***:
- Original Admission Application
- Official Academic Transcript
- Graduate Guidance Committee Form
- Graduate Guidance Committee Annual Evaluations

*Graduate Assistants have a separate “personnel file” required by the GEU/MSU contract.*

**Viewing Policy of Academic File**:  
A graduate student shall have the right to inspect her or his own academic record and shall also have the right to inspect reports and evaluations of her or his conduct. The personnel file has similar viewing rights.

All viewing must be in the presence of the GGC Chairperson, Academic Program Coordinator, or Program Director.

**Access to Student Information**:  
All policies concerning access, maintenance, and release of students’ records must follow University guidelines: https://reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.aspx?Section=112#s542.

**Graduation Requirements**

Degree candidates must complete an Application for Graduation* early in the semester in which they plan to graduate. The online graduate application form is available at http://www.reg.msu.edu/StuForms/GradApp/GradApp.asp. For further instructions and information about ceremonies, regalia, etc., see http://grad.msu.edu/graduation.

* Verify that MSU has your correct mailing address for mailing the diploma.

**Exit Survey for all graduate students**

All students who have applied for graduation will have access to the survey. The survey asks questions about educational experiences in MSU graduate programs, as well as about immediate professional plans. The MSU Graduate School uses data from this survey when reviewing graduate programs and to guide decisions about services and initiatives for graduate students.
The identities of all respondents will be kept confidential, and only aggregate information will be made available to faculty and administrators. The students will receive an e-mail message from the Dean of the MSU Graduate School with a link to the survey. However, students do not need to wait for that e-mail message to complete the survey after applying for graduation. Instructions for completing the survey are also available from http://grad.msu.edu/etd/.

6. Program Policies: Integrity and Safety in Research and Creative Activities

Ethical Expectations: Integrity in Research and Professional Conduct
When you enter the ACM&MS graduate program at MSU, you enter an intellectual community in which integrity in professional, research, and creative activities is highly valued. Faculty in the program believe that the best way to ensure the integrity of our collective efforts is to create a climate of care and ethical expectations in which graduate students are taught, advised, mentored, and supported in their teaching and research activities.

That climate includes several components:
- a shared understanding of what constitutes appropriate professional conduct and explicit criteria for dismissal of students who violate those professional standards;
- a shared understanding of what constitutes unethical or dishonest behavior and explicit criteria for dismissal of students who practice unethical or dishonest behavior while engaged in research, scholarly, and creative activities;
- a shared understanding of what constitutes ethical mentoring and advising, and explicit guidelines and policies for mediating conflicts and handling grievances/appeals between students and mentors, and between students and students.

Integrity in research and creative activities is based on sound disciplinary practices as well as on a commitment to basic values such as fairness, equity, honesty, and respect. Students learn to value professional integrity and high standards of ethical behavior through interaction with members of their academic unit and their faculty advisor and by emulating exemplary behavior.

The ACM&MS program expects that students adhere to the responsible conduct of research and creative activities of graduate students (GSRR 2.4.7). See MSU’s Integrity of Scholarship & Grades policy, GSRR 8.1.2, and GSRR, Article 5.


Appropriate Professional Conduct
As faculty in an academic program, we share some common standards about what constitutes appropriate professional conduct, and we are responsible for sharing these standards with graduate students. Our collective understanding of these professional standards comes from our own practices as professionals in the disciplines and fields within the ACM&MS and from
our common belief that humans, in general, should treat each other decently, with respect, care, and generosity.

In general, we believe that appropriate professional conduct includes:

- respect for others’ personhood and diversity of personhood, including but not limited to race, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, style of dress, manner of speaking, political viewpoint, etc.
- a shared commitment to basic values such as fairness, equity, honesty, and respect
- honest and accurate representation of one’s identity, credentials, and professional background
- awareness that appropriate professional conduct does not entail the transfer or appropriation of the work of others without shared decision-making, credit, and benefits—a standard for how to work appropriately within a community and to collaborate professionally
- acknowledgment of the collaborative and social nature of the scholarly enterprise, which extends beyond the use of formal scholarly citations to an acknowledgment of how fellow scholars have helped one to form ideas, review drafts, suggest revisions, etc.
- actively and respectively listening to and engaging with people, their ideas, and how they experience (and represent) cultural and intellectual institutions
- respect for human subjects involved in research
- explicit training of graduate students in sound disciplinary practices (including appropriate methodological instruction) in core courses and in the interactions that we have with one another as colleagues

Faculty in the ACM&MS graduate program believe that any of the following constitute unethical and/or dishonest scholarly and/or research practices:

- violation of policies outlined in the Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities published by the MSU Office of Research Ethics and Standards in the Research Integrity Newsletter (Spring 2004, pp. 12–14)
- violation of policies outlined in the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) Handbook
- violation of ethics and research integrity guidelines developed and published by professional organizations such as the following, as applicable according to field of study: American Alliance of Museums, American for the Arts, Association of Arts Administration Educators, National Association for Museum Exhibition, Visitor Studies Association, etc.
- violations of the above that include but are not limited to misrepresentation, falsification, fabrication, and plagiarism
- violations of professional standards:
• Attempting to function in rehearsal, meetings, or performance under the influence of abusive substances (i.e., alcohol, illegal drugs, etc.)
• Abusive behavior (including but not limited to inappropriate language) to peers, colleagues, collaborators, etc.
• Lack of punctuality for deadlines, rehearsals, performances, public relations demands, etc.
• violation of the standards mentioned above of appropriate professional behavior

Reporting Unethical or Dishonest Scholarly and Research Practices and/or Inappropriate Professional Conduct
To report inappropriate professional conduct, contact the Program Director. If you are uncomfortable doing so or believe there is a better venue to express concerns, please contact the University Ombudsperson (https://ombud.msu.edu/).

Consequences of Unethical or Dishonest Scholarly and Research Practices
For dishonest scholarly practices in a course, the instructor will follow the university regulations found in the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR) Handbook. The instructor will also inform the Program Director and the student’s GGC.

Refer to MSU’s Procedures Concerning Allegations of Misconduct in Research and Creative Activities for further information: https://rio.msu.edu/misconduct

Mandatory Reporting, Discrimination, and Harassment
Faculty are considered mandatory reporters. This means that they are required to report incidents of sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexual misconduct, stalking, credible threats of harm to oneself or others, and relationship violence that they learn about or observe in their professional capacity. Professional capacity includes information learned in classroom contexts, at individual meetings, in research contexts, and in spaces outside of the university, including on social media.

Similarly, you are considered a mandatory reporter if you have a teaching assistantship at MSU, in our department, or elsewhere. Workshops are offered through the Graduate School so that graduate students can better understand their roles and possible actions as mandatory reporters.

MSU’s Office for Civil Rights and Title IX Education and Compliance (OCR) reviews concerns related to discrimination and harassment based on age, color, gender, gender identity, disability status, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, and weight under the University's Anti-Discrimination Policy (ADP) and Policy on Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct (RVSM). OIE staff is available to provide information on the policies, connect MSU community members to resources, investigate complaints, and provide training. More information is available at https://civilrights.msu.edu/.
The University Policy on Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct is available at
https://safeplace.msu.edu/msu-policy-reporting

Restorative Justice @ MSU provides an alternative source of training, information, and resources on issues dealing with harassment, discrimination, and violence. This includes support-based resources for counseling, advocacy, and guides to navigating both MSU and legal systems of reporting. You can access more information at
https://www.deanofstudents.msu.edu/restorative-justice

Campus Safety

General MSU Safety Resources are available at https://msu.edu/state-transparency-reporting/campus-safety-information-resources

The MSU Travel Clinic promotes safe and healthy travel by providing counseling to travelers about appropriate vaccines and preventive medication. More information is available at
https://travelclinic.msu.edu/

Safety Guidelines for an Active Shooter Situation are available at

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Training

All students, faculty, and staff must complete MSU’s online DEI training. Visit the Training page from MSU’s Office of Research Regulatory Support for FAQs and the link to take the training.

Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research (RECR)

MSU’s Graduate School has put into place requirements for all graduate students requiring responsible and ethical research. The ACM&MS program’s RECR requirements are available on the ACM&MS website: https://artsmuseumsmanagement.cal.msu.edu/requirements-for-master-of-arts-in-arts-cultural-management-and-museum-studies/. There are annual requirements and expectations, and progress must be documented and filed with the Program Director and Academic Program Coordinator. Failure to comply with the RECR requirements will affect degree completion. MA students will begin work to complete their RECR in ACM 801. The module-based RECR requirements are completed and tracked through the system at https://orrs.msu.edu/train; students must track their overall progress using the Plan of Study.

Ethical Mentoring

Mentors are faculty members who take a special interest in helping students develop into successful members of the profession by optimizing their education experiences, assisting their socialization into disciplinary culture, advancing their personal growth as professionals, and helping them find jobs after they finish their degrees.

Effective mentoring is characterized by mutual trust, understanding, and respect for students’ professional and personal needs. A successful mentor is prepared to deal with population-diversity issues, including those peculiar to ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, and disability.
Good mentoring practices include the following:

- careful, patient listening
- building a relationship with a student beyond the classroom and studio
- using authority ethically
- nurturing self-sufficiency
- establishing focused time for one-on-one mentoring engagement
- sharing work and professional ethics
- providing introductions to important scholars/artists in the field
- offering constructive feedback
- providing personalized training and advice about the formation of a professional profile and the formation of a professional ethos in the student’s chosen field/discipline

Additionally, mentors should regularly reference and review the graduate school’s guidelines on mentoring and mentorship: [https://grad.msu.edu/msu-guidelines-graduate-student-mentoring-advising](https://grad.msu.edu/msu-guidelines-graduate-student-mentoring-advising).

**Environmental Health & Safety (EHS)**

EHS oversees University efforts to protect occupational health and the environment. EHS assists faculty and staff in maintaining safe, compliant workplaces. For more information, please see: [https://ehs.msu.edu/index.html](https://ehs.msu.edu/index.html)

EHS supports Michigan State University’s mission and guiding principles through leadership, guidance, education, and partnership to promote and establish programs in health and safety, environmental protection, and regulatory compliance.

### 7. Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution

As a student in ACM&MS, your reputation is of the utmost importance, and as such, your collaborative attitude is expected to remain positive throughout your interactions with everyone at MSU.

The University has established a judicial structure and process for hearing and adjudicating alleged violations of recognized graduate student rights and responsibilities, outlined in the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities handbook, article 5: [https://spartanexperiences.msu.edu/about/handbook/graduate-student-rights-responsibilities/article-five-adjudication-cases-involving-graduate-student-rights-and-responsibilities.html](https://spartanexperiences.msu.edu/about/handbook/graduate-student-rights-responsibilities/article-five-adjudication-cases-involving-graduate-student-rights-and-responsibilities.html)

**Conflicts and Grievances**

If a student has a disagreement or a conflict with an instructor, administrator, or another student or feels that in some way their academic rights have been violated, they should attempt to resolve that conflict directly with the person(s) involved through informal discussion. If you have questions, concerns, issues with committee members, committee composition, or any other conflicts, please initiate a discussion with your committee chair first. If need be, your next point of contact should be the Program Director.

Every graduate program on campus is required to have a formal, written grievance policy for graduate students. The ACM&MS program follows the Conflict and Grievance Systems at MSU outlined on the Office of the University Ombudsperson’s website. Each of these policies stipulates that at any point, the student may file a formal, written grievance for consideration by a hearing board at the appropriate level. For disputes about a final grade received in a course, students must initiate the process by speaking to the instructor no later than the midpoint of the semester following the one in which the grade was received (excluding summer terms).

If a student finds themselves in this situation and has exhausted the internal resources for resolving the issue, they may contact the Office of the University Ombudsperson. The Office of the University Ombudsperson provides assistance to students, faculty, and staff in resolving university-related concerns. Such concerns include student-faculty conflicts, communication problems, concerns about the university climate, and questions about the options available for handling a problem according to Michigan State University policy. The University Ombudsperson also provides information about available resources and student/faculty rights and responsibilities. The office operates as a confidential, independent, and neutral resource. It does not provide notice to the University—that is, it does not speak or hear for the University.

**College-Level Hearing Procedures**

For Graduate students, the hearing request letter must include the following information:

- The student’s name and PID
- The student’s local address, phone number and e-mail address
- A detailed explanation of the alleged violation of student rights to justify a hearing, with reference to the specific article in the SRR, GSRR, LSRR, MSRR, or Code of Teaching Responsibility
- The name of the individual the student believes violated his or her rights
- The date of the alleged violation
- The name of the MSU instructor, student, or staff member, if any, who will assist the student throughout the hearing process
- The names of witnesses, if any, who will speak on the student's behalf at the hearing, if the hearing board grants the request for a hearing
- The redress sought to rectify the situation.

**Deadline:** The student should sign and date the letter and submit it before the middle of the semester following the initial dispute.

Graduate hearings initiated at the unit, school, or program level may be appealed to the college hearing board or to the University Graduate Judiciary.
Based on the specific type of grievance, the hearing process for graduate students will follow one of the patterns listed below:

- Academic Grievance Hearing alleging violations of student rights (including grade disputes) established in the SRR, GSRR, LSRR, or MSRR.
- Refer to the Office of the University Ombudsperson for additional information regarding MSU policies: http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/

8. Work Related Policies

Graduate Assistantships
Graduate assistantship is a generic term referring to financial support of graduate students that results in a stipend and compensation, and for which performance of defined duties is expected. A variety of graduate assistantships, fellowships, and funding opportunities are available to graduate students at MSU, depending on the student’s level of professional and instructional experience.

Typically, MA students are admitted without an assistantship package; however, the program can help MA students find support for their studies. Assistantship reappointments are based on satisfactory academic performance, position performance, and availability of funding.

For a list of the assistantship information provided by the Graduate School, access https://grad.msu.edu/assistantships.

For a link to your Graduate Employee Union Contract, access https://hr.msu.edu/contracts/documents/geu-2019-2023.pdf

Criteria and Procedures for Reappointment
The ACM&M program policy is that Graduate Assistant appointments will be awarded according to enrollment in particular programs. Continued unit-level support is not assured and is dependent upon semester-by-semester reappointment. Funding depends on satisfactory progress toward the degree, as referenced in this section of the handbook, and is not guaranteed.

English Language Proficiency Level
Refer to section 3 of this handbook for GA expectations.

Summer Appointments
Summer appointments are separate from regular academic year appointments, and positions to be available are announced in the Spring Semester. The Program Director, in consultation with area faculty, will select graduate assistants for the summer term.

Appointment Responsibilities
According to the Graduate Employees Union contract, the academic year encompasses two appointment periods: August 16–December 31 and January 1–May 15. During each
appointment period, a graduate assistant’s responsibilities require an average of 10 hours per week for a quarter-time appointment and 20 hours per week for a half-time appointment. For more information on Graduate Student’s Rights and Responsibilities, access https://spartanexperiences.msu.edu/about/handbook/graduate-student-rights-responsibilities/index.html.

Graduate students with a half-time appointment may, with permission of the Program Director, work hourly for no more than 9 hours per week during the academic year.

Anticipated distribution of duties over the weeks of a semester should be communicated to the graduate assistant by the appointing unit at the time of appointment. To the extent that current policies and procedures contain provisions about wages, benefits, or other terms and conditions of employment, they are, for teaching assistants included in the collective bargaining unit, subject to negotiations with the Graduate Employees Union and the American Federation of Teachers.

Graduate Assistants receive bi-weekly stipend payments. In addition to the stipend, Graduate Assistants receive remission of general and instructional fees and, as applicable, resident tuition for each semester of registration. Summer appointments are made separately from the regular academic year. The Graduate Assistantship does not cover MSU Student Voted Taxes. Student Government Taxes, FM Radio Tax, and The State News assessment are refundable upon presentation of the appropriate receipt at the respective organization's office by the publicized date.

Program Expectations for Graduate Assistants (GAs)
GAships are subject to the policies and evaluation procedures of the units in which they are appointed. GAs are expected to observe the following norms of professional behavior established by the GGC and enforced by the Program Director:

Expectations of GAs
• The faculty member(s) with whom a graduate assistant is working should clearly specify the assistant’s duties and responsibilities at the start of the semester or at a time sufficiently in advance of the date of expected completion
• Assistants should be available for work for the number of hours specified from the start of the contract to the end of the semester (the last day of the final exam week)
• Assistants should report to the person(s) to whom they are assigned at the start of their contract
• Assistants have the responsibility of reporting to the person(s) to whom they are assigned at least once per week
• The student will receive a regular evaluation each semester as part of their GGC meeting and submit a response to the discussion, including a list of goals for the next semester
• Inability to perform assigned duties should be communicated immediately to the faculty member directly or through the department’s main office
• For TAs specifically:
  o Compliance with the University Code of Teaching Responsibilities
  o Desire2Learn (D2L) systems support instruction; tutorials on how to use the system
Violations of These Expectations
Violations of the above expectations and norms will be detailed in the student's written evaluations at the end of each semester. The Program Director will review these evaluations when making decisions regarding the recommendation of students for assistantship positions. At that time, the Program Director may write a warning indicating expectations violations or choose not to forward a recommendation for retention in that position.

Graduate Assistantship Levels
The following levels of assistantships have been contractually established by the Graduate Employees Union (GEU):

Graduate Assistants, Level 1. These graduate students have a bachelor’s degree and have less than one year’s experience as graduate assistants or as full-support fellows. They teach, do research, or are assigned supervised duties such as reading and grading papers.

Graduate Assistants, Level 2. These graduate students have a relevant Master’s degree (or equivalent) and/or one year’s experience as graduate assistants or as full-support fellows in the appointing department or school or in a unit considered relevant by the chair of the appointing department or school. They teach, do research, or perform administrative tasks with moderate supervision.

Graduate Assistants, Level 3. These graduate students have a relevant Master’s degree (or equivalent) and have at least 2 years of experience as graduate assistants (or equivalent experience at the faculty level) in the appointing unit or in a unit considered relevant by the chair of the appointing unit. They teach, do research, or perform administrative tasks with minimum supervision.

Advancement to the rank of Graduate Assistant Level 3 is on a merit basis, with the above prerequisites considered minimal. The office of the registrar further requires that Level 3 be granted only to graduate students who have successfully completed doctoral comprehensive exams, as defined by the department in which the student is enrolled, and have experience as a graduate RA/TE at Michigan State University or equivalent.

Within the range established for the university, the stipend depends on the individual's qualifications and on the availability of funds in the appointing unit.

Graduate Assistantship Eligibility Policy
The College of Arts & Letters mandates that each graduate program in the College implement a policy limiting the total number of semesters of Graduate Assistantship eligibility and tying eligibility for assistantships to progress toward the degree. Students are encouraged to review the MSU rules and GEU contract.

For MA students in ACM&MS
- Students are eligible for graduate assistantships within the program for a maximum of
• Students who have exhausted their assistantship eligibility may be given an assistantship if such are available after assistantships have been given to all normally qualified and eligible candidates.
• Students who are not making satisfactory progress toward the degree are not eligible for an assistantship.
• Academic-year funding provided by fellowships or other achievement awards will not count towards the number of eligible semesters.

Disability Accommodations for Graduate Students
Graduate assistants (RAs, TAs, and TEs) are both students and employees. Thus, they are eligible for disability accommodations in both roles, which are provided through distinct documents coordinated by RCPD. Graduate assistants can register for both situations using RCPD’s MyProfile portal.

Allowable Reasons for Leave
• Illness, Injury, or Pregnancy: In the event that a graduate student is unable to attend courses because of illness, injury, or pregnancy. Graduate teaching assistants (TAs) should refer to the medical leave policies in the GEU contract Article 18, and other graduate assistants should refer to Academic Programs.
• Religious Observance: It is university policy to allow graduate students to observe those holidays set aside by their chosen and practiced religious faith.
• Professional Conferences: It is the policy of the program to encourage graduate students to attend professional and scholarly conferences.
• Adoption and Parental Leave: This policy applies to graduate students who are unable to attend courses because they adopt a child or become parents by birth.
• Bereavement: In the event that a graduate student is unable to attend courses because they experience a death in their immediate family.
• Jury Duty: Refer to MSU policies on jury duty covered by the GEU contract.
• Military Service: In the event that a graduate student is unable to attend courses because they are called to do military service.

Medical Leaves
Graduate teaching assistants (TAs) should refer to the medical leave policies in GEU CBU Article 18.

Personal Leave Policy
This policy is designed to address leave from coursework and scholarly obligations required by the program. Graduate students who also hold teaching assistantships should consult Article 18 of the GEU Contract for policies governing them as employees of Michigan State University.

General Guidelines
If a student misses a class (for any of the allowable reasons referenced below), they should inform their GGC Chairperson and all course instructors as promptly as possible so that arrangements for completing missed coursework may be made. Every effort will be made to assist the student in making up missed work, but the final responsibility for completing missed
work in a timely fashion rests with the student. If a student will be missing from the program for more than a week, they should also inform the Program Director and request a formal leave of absence from the program. In the event of such a leave, the student shall have the right to return to the program, within the dates of the current appointment, at such time as they are able to resume the required program of study. If a leave occurs while a student is taking a comprehensive examination, the student’s GGC Chairperson should consult with the Program Director about how to best restart that component of the exam process.

Grief Absence Policy
For master’s (Plan A), master’s (Plan B) with research responsibilities, and doctoral students, it is the responsibility of the student to: a) notify their advisor/major professor and faculty of the courses in which they are enrolled of the need for a grief absence in a timely manner, but no later than one week from the student’s initial knowledge of the situation, b) provide appropriate verification of the grief absence as specified by the advisor/major professor and faculty, and c) complete all missed work as determined in consultation with the advisor/major professor and faculty. It is the responsibility of the advisor/major professor to: a) determine with the student the expected period of absence – it is expected that some bereavement processes may be more extensive than others depending on individual circumstances, b) receive verification of the authenticity of a grief absence request upon the student’s return, and c) make reasonable accommodations so that the student is not penalized due to a verified grief absence. If employed as a GA or TE, the graduate student must also notify their employer. Both employer and student will swiftly communicate to determine how the student’s responsibilities will be covered during their absence. Graduate teaching assistants (TAs) should refer to the bereavement policy in GEU contract Article 18.

Outside Employment and Work for Pay
Graduate students who hold half-time graduate assistantships (either teaching assistantships or research assistantships) at MSU may not hold full-time employment elsewhere.

At times, students may find it necessary to work additional hours beyond their assistantship assignments. TA and RA assignments typically require 20 hours of work per week. Working too many additional hours beyond the assistantship can interfere with progress toward the degree. For this reason, we strongly recommend that students limit the number of extra hours they work while they are holding an assistantship so as not to jeopardize their performance in courses or their progress toward the degree.

A Graduate Assistant (50%) who is considering additional employment outside the program or the University must first obtain permission from their GGC. The GGC Chairperson must evaluate the impact of the additional employment commitments on the student’s academic progress and on their GA responsibilities. The GGC’s recommendation will be sent to the Program Director for final approval.

Program Resources
The ACM&MS program provides the following support for GAs assigned to work in the department: office space, a desk, a desk chair, and storage space. GAs also have access to copying services. The ACM&MS program greatly values the comradery and collaborative
aspects of working in a shared space and expects all students utilizing the shared office space to regard one another and each other’s workspaces with respect.

9. **University Resources**

Resources provided by the Graduate School:
- Graduate Career Development
- Diversity, equity, & inclusion programs
- Events
- Forms
- Funding
- Graduate Educator Advancement and Teaching (GREAT)
- Graduate School Office of Well-Being (GROW)
- Mentoring
- Out-of-State tuition waivers
- Policy information
- Professional development
- Research integrity
- Traveling scholar opportunities
- University Committee on Graduate Studies

Resources provided by university-level units: OISS, RCPD, Office of Spartan Experiences, the Libraries, the Olin Health Center, Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, the Burgess Institute for Entrepreneurship & Innovation, the Writing Center, and University Outreach & Engagement, and the Ombudsperson’s Office.

Resources provided by the Student Life & Engagement Division: Student Parent Resource Center, the Gender and Sexuality Campus Center, the Student Veterans Resource Center, and Women’s Student Services.

Additional funding resources include: Program graduate funding, CAL support and funding, Graduate School research support, Graduate School travel funding, COGS conference awards, COGS professional development awards.

**Local Information Sources**

Lansing – [Greater Lansing website](#) or [Discover Our Town](#)

East Lansing – [City of East Lansing](#) website, including information on [Parking in East Lansing](#)

10 Things to do at MSU – [On-campus activities outside of class](#)

Lansing Regional Capital Airport - [LAN](#)

Detroit Metro Airport - [DTW](#)

Michigan Flyer - Bus service to/from DTW

[CATIA](#) – Capital Area Transit Authority - Campus bus service and local bus service information

Local News
- [CBS WLNS](#)
- [ABC WLAJ](#)
- [NBC WILX](#)

Newspapers
- **Lansing State Journal**
- **State News** - MSU Newspaper

**State of Michigan Secretary of State** - Drivers licenses, Michigan ID cards, license plates, etc.

**Hotels/Motels** – Local listings in Greater Lansing

**Apartments** – Local listings in Greater Lansing

**Religious Organizations** – Organizations and Institutions in Greater Lansing and/or associated with MSU

**Dining Options** – Restaurants, food trucks, and eateries in the Greater Lansing Area