GRADUATE HANDBOOK UPDATES for 2015

UPDATES:

New Items or Revisions of Existing Policies to add to handbooks:

- **Mandatory Training:** All TAs and RAs must complete the on-line training about the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy. To Access the training, login to the ORA training website at: [http://goo.gl/pLh01o](http://goo.gl/pLh01o). Click "Register," "Complete Registration" and then "Launch" to begin the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct (RVSM) Policy - Faculty, Staff Training. (If it indicates that you have already registered, use "In Progress Training", then "Launch."). You will want to reserve approximately 30 minutes to complete all assignments. If you need assistance, contact the Helpdesk at 517-884-4600 or train@ora.msu.edu.

- **999 Credits:** 24 credits are required for graduation; students can enroll for a maximum of 36. Requests for overrides to exceed the maximum of 36 (24 in the College of Education) credits of 999 must be directed to the Office of the Registrar. To do so, access the "Request for RNR Override" at the Registrar's Online Forms Menu at [https://www.reg.msu.edu/Forms/FormsMenu.aspx](https://www.reg.msu.edu/Forms/FormsMenu.aspx). Select the RN override and fill in the requested information. Should the total number of credits go above 45 the RO will confer with the Graduate School before considering the request for an override.

- **New language in Academic Programs catalog for Ph.D. guidance committees (as approved by UCGS):** The guidance committee shall be formed no later than the third semester of doctoral study, or within two semesters beyond the master's degree or its equivalent. Within one semester after the committee has met, the chairperson of the guidance committee shall file a guidance committee report with the dean of the college, listing all degree requirements.

- **New language in Academic Programs catalog for Ph.D. residency status (as approved by UCGS):** A year of residence will be made up of two consecutive semesters, involving the completion of credits at the level of full-time status of graduate work each semester.

- **New language in Academic Programs catalog for dual doctoral degrees (as approved by UCGS):** All dual major doctoral degrees must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. A request for the dual major degree must be submitted within one semester following its development and within the first two years of the student’s
enrollment at Michigan State University. A copy of the guidance committee report must be attached. See Academic Programs (https://www.reg.msu.edu/academicprograms/Text.aspx?Section=111#s407) for details.

- **Credit-sharing policy:** The University Committee for Grad Studies revised the credit sharing policy for Master’s programs: if your program includes more than 30 credits, then you may share up to 30% of the total with another Master’s program.

- **Grief Absence Policy (as approved by University Council):** 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 RA 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 the MSU GEU CBU Article 18. Students in the graduate professional colleges (CHM, COM, CVM, LAW) with their own grief absence policies are excluded from the above and should follow their own policies. Students who believe their rights under this policy have been violated should contact the University Ombudsperson.

**Changes to policy that require action and revision of handbooks:**

- **Revision of Hearing Procedures:** The Academic Freedom Report (AFR) underwent significant revision last year and was retitled Student Rights and Responsibilities at Michigan State University (SRR). In addition, the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities also underwent revision with the changes going into effect this past Fall semester. As a result of these revisions, graduate programs in departments, as well as
colleges, need to revise their own hearing procedures for graduate student grievances to make them consistent with the new requirements in the SRR and GSRR. The revisions to the GSRR also require free-standing, degree granting graduate programs to develop hearing procedures for the first time. If you have already done the necessary revisions to your hearing procedures, please send a copy of your new hearing procedures to me and to the University Ombudsperson, Dr. Robert Caldwell (ombud@msu.edu). If you have not yet done these revisions, they need to be done and on file by the end of this semester, May 12, 2015. To make this easier, the Ombudsperson has developed templates for hearing procedures that meet all of the current requirements. They are available for download from the Ombudsperson’s web page (https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/grievance-procedures/index.html). If you choose to use one of these templates, all you will have to do is fill in the name of your unit and get them approved by the relevant groups in your unit. You can, of course, begin with your current hearing procedures and make the necessary revisions to that document. Either way, please remember to send them to the Dean of the Graduate School and to the Ombudsperson once they are approved by your unit.

General information and recommendations:

- **The Graduate School has moved from Linton Hall:** The new home of the Graduate School is Chittenden Hall, 466 W. Circle Drive East Lansing, MI 48824-1044.
- **Summer only option:** This option is only for Ph.D. students after passing comps and being appointed as RAs. This summer appointment option does not cover tuition. For details visit: http://www.hr.msu.edu/hiring/studentemployment/gradasst/grad_nofringe/index.htm
- **International travel:** Graduate students traveling internationally for MSU-related work (research data collection, international professional conferences, courses, or other academic business, are strongly encouraged to sign up using the International Travelers Database (even if they are not being reimbursed for travel). This is the best way for MSU to stay in touch with our students if there is an emergency. http://www.isp.msu.edu/travel/travelers_database.htm
- **GRADPLAN:** All Ph.D. students will be required to use GRADPLAN by the end of Spring semester of 2017. Starting in Summer of 2017 GRADPLAN will be the only way to process final degree certification. Until then, both paper and GRADPLAN can be used.