# Graduate Student Handbook for <<Insert Program Name or Academic Unit Name>>

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## Instructions for using this template

Once you have completed your document, please delete this entire section. The remaining sections will renumber appropriately. Sections that are highlighted are suggested for inclusion in a complete handbook. Please remove the highlighting when you have completed your document.

### Sample handbooks

There are many excellent handbooks across campus to use as models for creating or updating your program’s handbook. Some examples that we particularly like are:

* College of Business – each of their programs has a good handbook for welcoming students to campus and defining your expectations for student behavior.
* Physics – a good overall handbook that contains many of the sections in this template.
* Rhetoric, Theory and Culture – this is an excellent overall handbook. It has an especially comprehensive section about professional development and support services for students.
* Civil and Environmental Engineering – a good comprehensive handbook. The section on grievances is particularly well done.

### Accessibility standards

We recommend that you work to make your handbook accessible to be compliant with [University policy](https://www.mtu.edu/policy/policies/general/1-15/).

Michigan Tech has [online training resources](https://www.mtu.edu/accessibility/training/documents/) to create accessible documents and check that your document is accessible. This document meets those standards. Using heading styles consistently will ensure this document is readable by a screen reader. In this document, headings 1-5 are used to indicate the document structure in the following manner:

* Heading 1 – reserved for title (see page 1). Do not use this heading elsewhere in the document.
* Heading 2 – use to start new sections in the handbook. This heading will automatically start on a new page.
* Headings 3 – 5 are used for subsections of Heading 2.

Headings 2 – 5 are automatically numbered, and will renumber if sections are added, deleted, or moved. The Graduate School blog has tutorials on how to [apply](http://blogs.mtu.edu/gradschool/2010/11/22/apply-a-style/), [edit](http://blogs.mtu.edu/gradschool/2010/11/23/edit-a-style/), and [create](http://blogs.mtu.edu/gradschool/2010/11/24/create-a-new-style/) styles if you wish to alter the formatting of the headings or normal text.

Headings 2 – 4 are included in the table of contents. To update the table of contents, go to the “References” tab of the ribbon and select “Update Table.” You can update just the page numbers, or you can update the entire table of contents if the document structure has changed.

Other items that are described on the [online training resources](https://www.mtu.edu/accessibility/training/documents/) for accessible documents include:

* Alt text for figures and tables
* Header rows for tables
* Proper use of hyperlinks

Hyperlinks should always be included as inline, rather than by spelling out an entire URL.

### Style considerations

Current [Michigan Tech logos](https://www.mtu.edu/umc/resources/download/) can be found online. The [Michigan Tech Editorial Guide](https://www.mtu.edu/umc/resources/editorial/) is a reference tool to assist you with University style for documents. Particularly helpful sections include:

* Guides about [appropriate use of capitalization](https://www.mtu.edu/umc/resources/editorial/capitalization/). When referring specifically to Michigan Tech, the Graduate School and University are always capitalized.
* [Style conventions](https://www.mtu.edu/umc/resources/editorial/style-conventions/) for text.
* Appropriate use of [punctuation](https://www.mtu.edu/umc/resources/editorial/punctuation/).

In the Graduate School, there are some common mistakes that we have seen on the web and in student handbooks. Please edit your materials as needed to address the following:

* Master’s degree are no longer referred to as Plan A, B, C, or D. Please use the terms thesis, report, or coursework to refer to the options for your master’s degree programs.
* The Graduate School has removed the use of “D” and “M” forms on our website. Please refer to forms using their full titles. Banner forms and Perceptive Content will be updated as part of the Banner 9 upgrade.
  + Example: Use “Degree Schedule” instead of M4.
* The Graduate School no longer maintains a catalog. Please refer to the appropriate section of our website.
* Research only mode or research mode is now known as candidacy. Once students achieve candidacy they are eligible for their research credits to be billed at a reduced tuition rate.
* Residency does not require that students reside on campus. See our [PhD requirements page](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/policies-procedures/requirements/phd/) for a full description.
* Hyperlinks on our site (and others) change more often than you think. Please regularly check all hyperlinks to ensure they are active and not redirecting to another page on our site.

## Program Specific Information

Please include information here that is specific to your program. Links to Graduate School policies may be included rather than restating those policies.

### Department Structure

[insert text here]

### Keys, Desk, Computers, and Research Space Assignments

[insert text here]

### Email, Mail Service, Photocopier, Supplies and Printers

[insert text here]

### Forums, Colloquiums, and Other Conferences

Include whether attendance is mandatory or recommended.

### Responsible Conduct of Research

[insert text here]

### Continuous Enrollment & Residency Requirements

[insert text here]

### Grades

It would be helpful to include the program’s policies on BC/C grades. The Graduate School allows up to six credits of BC/C to count toward a degree. Each program may define their own criteria for allowing – or not allowing – the credits to count toward a degree.

### Student Standing

[insert text here]

### Academic Probation

[insert text here]

### Grievance Procedure

[insert text here]

### Voluntary Withdrawal

[insert text here]

### Dismissal

[insert text here]

### Safety

[insert text here]

### Absence Policy

[insert text here]

### Academic Integrity

[insert text here]

### Plagiarism

[insert text here]

### Student Responsibility

[insert text here]

### International Students

[insert text here]

### Accommodation Policies for Americans with Disabilities

[insert text here]

## Financial Support

### Procedure and Schedule for Awarding Support

[insert text here]

### Funding Terms

[insert text here]

### Types of Support

[insert text here]

### Support Packages

[insert text here]

### Department and Student Commitment to Contracts

Include information about workload expectations that are in line with [Graduate School policy](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/financial/assistantships/).

### Enrollment Requirements for Students Receiving Assistance

[insert text here]

## Advisors

### Coursework MS Advisor

[insert text here]

### Research Advisors – Selection Process

[insert text here]

### Advisory Committee

[insert text here]

### Changing Advisors or Committee Members

Before initiating the process to change your graduate advisor, please consider all the options listed on the [Graduate School’s website](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/resources-for/students/academic/succeeding/index.html) for how to address difficulties in the student-advisor relationship.

Once you have decided to change your graduate advisor, you must follow the steps listed below.

1. Meet with your graduate program director to initiate the process to change advisor. If meeting with the graduate program director is not feasible or appropriate, meet with the chair or college dean of the department or college. If you are in an interdisciplinary program, you may meet with the chair or school dean of your administrative home department or college.
2. Discuss the following with the graduate program director (or chair/college dean) and, if appropriate, the current advisor:
   1. Whether additional resources within or outside the academic unit (such as the Ombuds office) could help resolve the situation.
   2. The impact of the change of advisor on your time to complete the degree. Coursework, qualifying exam(s), and the research proposal examination are all factors that could be impacted with a change in advisor.
   3. Your current and future funding.
   4. Research already conducted. Whether this will be incorporated into the dissertation, thesis, or report, and if so, how.
   5. Impact on immigration status (if any). Consult International Programs and Services (IPS), if necessary.
   6. Record the agreement from the discussions in writing, including indications of agreement from all affected faculty advisors, and provide copies to the student, the graduate program director, and all affected faculty advisors.
3. File an updated [Advisor and Committee Recommendation Form](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/documents/policies-procedures/forms/advisor-committee.pdf) for approval by the Graduate School.
4. If the student and the graduate program director are unable to reach agreement on the advisor change, contact the assistant dean of the Graduate School to determine additional steps to resolve the situation.

## Graduate Degree Requirements

[insert text here]

### Graduate Course Schedule

[insert text here]

### Timely Written Feedback

All graduate programs at the university provide constructive written feedback to students who are completing a report, thesis, or dissertation, at least annually. This formal process ensures that both students and advisors are aware of the student's academic progress and plans for the future. The form used in our department is here [provide link to the department specific form]. When completed by the student and advisor, the copies are provided to the student, advisor, graduate program director, and Department Chair / College Dean. If deficiencies are identified in a student’s performance, written feedback will be provided twice yearly, specifically addressing the area(s) of deficiency, timeline for making up the deficiency, and consequences for continued unsatisfactory performance.

[The minimum for the written evaluation is to address the student's strengths and areas to improve. What is serious enough to trigger the twice yearly feedback? Programs are free to interpret this rather broadly, but if a student’s performance puts funding and/or continuation in the program in jeopardy, then written feedback must be at least twice annually until the deficiencies are resolved.]

### Masters Form Submission Schedule

[insert text here]

### Master of Science

Include details for each program within the academic unit.

[insert text here]

#### Thesis Option

[insert text here]

#### Report Option

[insert text here]

#### Coursework Option

[insert text here]

#### Timeline for Completion

[insert text here]

### Doctor of Philosophy

Include all programs in the academic unit.

[insert text here]

#### Residency

[insert text here]

#### Coursework

[insert text here]

#### Qualifying Examination

[insert text here]

##### Purpose & Scope

[insert text here]

##### Exam Topics

[insert text here]

##### Exam Committee

[insert text here]

##### Exam Content

[insert text here]

##### Reading Lists

[insert text here]

##### Timing of Exam

[insert text here]

##### Structure of Written Exam

[insert text here]

##### Evaluating Written Exam

[insert text here]

##### Oral Exam

[insert text here]

#### Research Proposal Examination

[insert text here]

#### Doctoral Dissertation and Final Oral Examination

[insert text here]

#### Timeline for Completion

Typical milestones; PhD

How long should it take you to complete your PhD program? Those who enter the program with a Masters may complete the PhD in as little as three years. Others, perhaps entering with a Bachelor’s, may take four or five years. Durations greater than eight calendar years require approval from the Graduate School.

The table below shows some typical milestones for your program, and indicates a typical range of times by which you should reach that milestone.

[You can include the table below (adapted to your program) or link to the timelines ([PhD](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/policies-procedures/timelines/dissertation/), [Masters thesis](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/policies-procedures/timelines/thesis/), [Masters report](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/policies-procedures/timelines/report/), and [Masters coursework](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/policies-procedures/timelines/coursework/)) on the Graduate School website. If you use the table, and your program doesn’t have a particular milestone, delete it.]

**Table 1.** Typical milestones in a PhD program and typical timeframes in which they are completed.

| What: | **When** (semesters): |
| --- | --- |
| Choose a research advisor | Within 2 |
| Complete required coursework | 4 to 5 |
| Choose a committee | 2 to 4 |
| Pass qualifying exam | 2 to 4 |
| Pass research proposal examination (note that this is part of the qualifying exam in some programs) | 4 to 6 |
| Enter Candidacy / Start writing products to be included in dissertation | 4 to 6 |
| Dissertation Defense / Final Oral Examination | 6 to 10 |

#### Time Limit

[insert text here]

## Professional Development Opportunities and Support Services

List all activities relating to your graduate program, department, or college. Examples are below.

### Opportunities

[insert text here]

#### Committees

[insert text here]

#### Graduate Student Government

[insert text here]

#### Study Abroad

[insert text here]

#### Student Internships

[insert text here]

### Support Services

[insert text here]

#### Conflict Resolution

[the text below is recommended by the Graduate School and may be modified]

Occasional differences of opinion and interpersonal disagreements are an inevitable part of graduate school. Individuals have different goals, working styles, and personalities and because of this, conflict can occur. A conflict handled effectively is a learning opportunity that can result in creative solutions, benefiting students, faculty and the University.

Lack of clarity in expectations is often the cause of conflicts. Expectations should be clear and commonly understood by all parties; putting them in writing, if necessary, helps to clarify the situation. Students and advisors may find that using an Individual Development Plan, such as the [MiTechIDP](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/resources-for/students/professional/idp/), can assist in the advisor/mentoring process.

There is a significant power differential in the student/advisor relationship, and conflict resolution requires that we acknowledge this fact and arrive at beneficial solutions.

Some conflicts require reporting to the appropriate office and following established University procedures. These include:

* [Academic Grievance procedure](https://www.mtu.edu/deanofstudents/academic-policies/grievance/) for grading disputes
* [Discriminatory harassment or treatment](https://www.mtu.edu/equity/policies-procedures/university/): [Office of Institutional Equity](https://www.mtu.edu/equity/)
* [Research misconduct](https://www.mtu.edu/research/administration/research-integrity/misconduct/)
* Sexual or physical assault: [University’s Public Safety and Police Services](https://www.mtu.edu/publicsafety/) (dial 9-1-1 or call 487-2216 for non-emergency situations).
* Violations of the [Student Code of Conduct](https://www.mtu.edu/conduct/policies-procedures/student-conduct/)

If the conflict does not require review by a specific office, it is recommended to resolve them early. It is better to handle small issues as they arise and before they become major problems. There are often more options to resolve conflicts when an early resolution is sought. There are several avenues to resolve conflicts:

* informal resolution at the department/program level,
* advice and mediation by University Ombuds,
* advice or facilitated dialogue from the Conflict Resolution Network, or
* formal grievance processes.

People closest to the case are often in the best position to resolve the situation, so the first step should be at the lowest unit level, between the parties (student and faculty, student and staff, student and student) involved and an appropriate third party, if necessary (eg., advisor, other faculty, advisory committee members, graduate program director, lab supervisor, department chair). Resources are available to assist parties in resolving conflicts. Consult with the Ombuds, Office of Academic and Community Conduct, Conflict Resolution Network, or Institutional Equity for advice. Disagreements are varied and the people closest to the situation are in a position to consider the specific programmatic/departmental details and help resolve the issues. Thus, an amicable, quick informal resolution at the department/program level is the best course.

If a resolution cannot be reached at the lowest level, there are several avenues a student may consider. Working with the [Ombuds](https://www.mtu.edu/ombuds/) is an independent and neutral way to obtain informal mediation services for conflict resolution. Mediation by the Ombuds is confidential; no written records are preserved. Facilitated dialogue or restorative justice may also be utilized; contact the [Conflict Resolution Network](https://www.mtu.edu/conduct/conflict-resolution) to determine if their services may be appropriate. If informal means are unable to resolve the conflict, the [Graduate Grievance policy](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/policies-procedures/academic/grievance/) may be appropriate.

#### Graduate Student Professional Development Seminars

[insert text here]

#### Reading Groups, Dissertation Support Groups

[insert text here]

#### Job Placement Assistance

[insert text here]

#### Writing and Technology Resources at Walker

[insert text here]

#### The J.R. Van Pelt and Opie Library

[insert text here]

#### Graduate School Thesis, Dissertation and Report Guide & Seminars

[insert text here]