



**Michigan
Technological
University**

**Rhetoric Theory & Culture
Graduate Handbook**

Updated Fall 2026

Michigan Technological University is located within Ojibwa (Chippewa) homelands and ceded-territory established by the Treaty of 1842, the shared lands and waters of Native American nations in Gakiiwe'onaning (Keweenaw Bay), Gete-gitgaaning (Lac Vieux Desert), Mashkii-ziibing (Bad River), Odaawaa-zaaga'iganing (Lac Courte Oreilles), Waaswaaganing (Lac Du Flambeau), Miskwaabikong (Red Cliff), Wezaawaagami-ziibiing (St. Croix), Zaka'aaganing (Sokaogon Mole Lake), Nagaajiwanaag (Fond du Lac), Misi-zaaga'iganiing (Mille Lacs), and Gaa-mitaawangaagamaag-ininiwag (Sandy Lake). We are committed to respecting the land and each other.

This Handbook is a reference to help you navigate the RTC program. The RTC program office and its director are here to support you and your efforts to earn either a MS or a Ph.D. While we try to keep you advised about changes in policy, and to keep the RTC Handbook updated, if you have questions, please feel free to seek clarification from the RTC graduate director, your advisor, the department staff, and the MTU Graduate School.

MTU and MTU Graduate School policies take priority over this content.

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1. Introduction to the RTC Graduate Program

The graduate program in Rhetoric, Theory, and Culture at Michigan Technological University is a vibrant intellectual community of faculty-scholars and students.

Grounded in an interdisciplinary vision of the Humanities, the program strives to facilitate an environment for open discussion and collaboration, which prepares students to pursue diverse academic and professional careers.

The RTC program is notable for its commitment to research in areas that include but are not limited to: AI; algorithmic culture; writing studies, writing pedagogy and writing program administration; digital media and media technologies; disability studies and social justice; ethics and philosophy; feminism and gender studies; haptic studies and human-machine communication; literature and creative writing; rhetoric; social informatics; and science and technical communication. These diverse areas of study are grounded in a shared commitment to critical inquiry and pedagogy and to fostering innovative scholarship through the integration of diverse theoretical and methodological frameworks.

Student coursework and completion of milestones are tracked by individual students, the RTC program, and the Graduate School. Each spring, RTC graduate students are required to submit an Annual Student Progress Evaluation (ASPE) report. Students submit their ASPE form, with an accompanying one-page narrative, during their annual advising meeting.

The RTC program is unique at Michigan Technological University. Its humanities focus and its interdisciplinarity encourage students to be innovative in their approach to and expression of humanities-grounded topics with historical, local, and global scope. historical, local, and global challenges we encounter as researchers, humanists, and inhabitants of this world. The program also recognizes the significance of pedagogical practice in our scholarship and research and with regard to the practicalities of future prospects on the job market.

Students are encouraged to pursue their research interests and to explore other interests in coursework seminar papers, and afterwards through reports and theses at the M.S. level and Ph.D. dissertations. Students often draft and revise this work for conference presentations and/or publication.

As Graduate Teaching Instructors (GTIs) and Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), students develop as academic professionals and are encouraged to shape their pedagogical style and philosophy through teaching practica and through alternative pedagogical trainings available through CTL (Center for Teaching and Learning) and other professional venues.

1.1 Degrees Offered

The Humanities Department offers three advanced degrees in Rhetoric, Theory, and Culture:

- Accelerated Master's in Rhetoric, Theory, and Culture (MS)
- Master's in Rhetoric, Theory, and Culture (MS)
- Doctorate in Rhetoric, Theory, and Culture (PhD)

2. Coursework: Required Courses, including RCR trainings, Teaching Practica, Supplementary Coursework, and Elective Pathways

Offered courses may be canceled if they do not reach enrollment minimums.

2.1 Required Courses

2.1a Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) Trainings

- ***Basic RCR***

The Graduate School requires all graduate students to complete Responsible Conduct of Research courses. All graduate students must complete the Basic RCR course, which is offered online during the new graduate student orientation prior to the start of classes each semester. This includes students seeking a master's degree, doctoral degree, or a graduate certificate. If the training is not completed, a registration hold will be placed on the student's account. Students may not register for future semesters, graduate, or enter candidacy if the training is not complete. To fulfill this requirement, students will complete Orientation to Graduate Studies and Research on Canvas.

- ***Advanced RCR***

In addition to Basic RCR training, all doctoral students and master's students completing either a thesis or report option must complete Advanced RCR training in their second or third semester. This requirement can be fulfilled by taking one of the courses offered throughout the year by various departments on campus. The Humanities Department typically offers a Research Integrity Workshop each summer that fulfills this requirement.

- ***IRB Training***

When RTC research involves human subjects, students must follow the guidelines for research integrity and work with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure ethical standards. All students should consider the Institutional Review Board's question: Does Your Project Require Review?

2.1b Introduction to Graduate Studies (HU 5000)

Introduction to Graduate Studies is a 3-credit course taken in the student's first year.

The course may

- Introduce students to disciplinary-focused and interdisciplinary scholarship
- Introduce students to the academic genres of writing, which include the conference paper, book reviews, peer-reviewed publications
- Engage students in activities related to professional development
- Assist students in exploring a variety of different research areas and the professional networks associated with them
- Facilitate student discussions with faculty in the department and across campus

2.1c Theory Courses

Graduate study in the RTC program includes a requirement to take courses grounded in theory. The MS and PhD programs have specific requirements for the number of courses needed. Students can select these courses according to availability and interest.

Theory Courses

HU 5002 Rhetoric & Composition

HU 5004 Cultural Theory

HU 5012 Communication & Media Theory

HU 5112 Theoretical Perspectives on Technology

2.1d Methods/Methodologies Courses

Graduate study in the RTC program includes a requirement to take courses grounded in methods/methodologies. The MS and PhD programs have specific requirements for the number of courses needed. Students can select these courses according to availability and interest.

Methods/Methodologies Courses

HU 5008 Critical Approaches to Literature and Culture

HU 5100 Qualitative Humanistic Research

HU 5105 Research Methods in Writing Studies

HU 5114 Visual Theory & Analysis

2.2 Supplementary Coursework Options

The RTC Program offers a variety of courses for students who want to pursue individual scholarship under the supervision of a faculty member. Note that while such independent work may be a valuable part of graduate work, it must be considered in the context of other departmental needs. Thus, the RTC Steering Committee recommends that such independent work be reserved for advanced students (second year and beyond), that is, students who have completed a significant portion of their coursework. Students will normally only be permitted to apply three (3) credits total of Independent Studies, Directed Reading, or Internship credits toward the coursework requirements for their degree.

There are eight (8) categories for Supplementary coursework, each requires a Supplementary Coursework Form, which must be completed and signed by the student, the relevant faculty, and the RTC Director as part of the process of enrolling for these credits.

- **4000-level courses.** MS and PhD students are limited to taking one 4000-level course, with the stipulation that they consult with the course professor on appropriate additional readings, papers, etc. This must be approved by the RTC Director of Graduate Studies, and in consultation with the student's advisor, if distinct from the RTC Director.

- **Graduate coursework offered in other departments on campus.** All coursework taken outside the RTC program must be approved by the RTC program's Director of Graduate Studies, and, if the student has chosen an advisor, in consultation with their advisor.
- **Independent study and directed reading are coursework** options under the direct supervision of a faculty member. The RTC Steering Committee recommends that independent study coursework be reserved for special circumstances. Students may apply a maximum of three (3) credits toward the 36-credit coursework portion of their degree.
- **Doctoral Qualifying Exam (QE) Preparation** (PhD only).
- **Thesis or Doctoral Research Preparation for oral defense** (MS thesis option & PhD)
- **Report** (MS Report option only)
- **Pedagogical Practica** (PhD only)
- **Internships**

Notes. 1. Supplementary courses must be approved prior to registration.

2. Students with a compelling reason for applying more than three (3) credits of supplementary coursework during the coursework portion of their degree may, with approval of the student's advisor, submit a request for a waiver to the RTC Director using the [RTC Waiver Form](#).

2.3 Practica (Pedagogy)

2.3a Composition Pedagogy (HU 5931)

HU 5931 is a 3-credit practicum required of new graduate student instructors of first-year writing courses, typically UN 1015: College Writing, Reading, and Research. The course introduces students to research and scholarship on writing pedagogy and curriculum. Students complete weekly reading and assignments, prepare and review materials and lesson plans, and peer teaching observations.

2.3b Other Practica

Other practica are available on a rotating basis. These practica are required for students who have an interest in teaching courses other than first-year writing.

The RTC program will work with faculty and students to schedule practica for students. All practica are 3-credit courses and provide students with opportunities to understand disciplinary pedagogical practices and increase their disciplinary knowledge in the practicum subject. Students will be required to

- Attend scheduled undergraduate lectures associated with the practicum
- Meet regularly with the professor of record to discuss course content and various teaching strategies
- Compose a syllabus for the course and write statements of teaching philosophy and teaching practice
- Engage with assignments and norm grading

Current practica offered include:

- HU 5932 Technical Communication Practicum
- HU 5934 Communication Practicum
- HU 5935 Writing Center Practicum
- HU 5937 Literature Practicum
- HU 6715 Advanced Composition
- HU 6740 Media Practicum
- HU 6741 Film Practicum
- HU 6760 Philosophy Practicum
- HU 6090 General Practicum

In the interest of program transparency and making practica available to all students, those interested in specific practica should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies prior to the faculty/instructor of record.

2.4 Elective Pathways

2.4a Communication, Technology, Media

The emphasis in Communication, Technology, and Media (CTM) studies provides students with opportunities to study communication, technology, and media from critical, cultural, philosophical, and ethical perspectives. CTM offers students scholarly pathways towards a variety of careers, e.g. academia, nonprofits, government, and industry.

- HU 5012 Communication Theory
- HU 5112 Theoretical Perspectives on Technology
- HU 5004 Cultural Theory
- HU 5100 Qualitative Humanistic Research

2.4b Writing and Rhetoric

The emphasis in Rhetoric and Writing studies provides opportunities to study rhetoric and writing/composition studies, technical communication, rhetorical criticism, writing program administration, writing center studies, and creative writing. Rhetoric and writing studies is designed to offer a scholarly pathway towards a variety of careers in rhetoric and writing studies as well as writing program administration.

- HU 5002 Rhetoric and Composition
- HU 5003 Technical and Scientific Communication
- HU 5070 History and Theory of Rhetoric
- HU 5105 Research Methods in Writing Studies

2.5 Transfer Credits

Credits earned in other graduate programs but not applied to previous degrees may be considered for transfer to fulfill up to nine credits for graduate degrees in the RTC Program. The RTC Director of Graduate Studies reviews written requests for transfer

credits and recommends to the Graduate School what transferred credits will and will not be accepted by the RTC Program. The student should complete the RTC Waiver Form and provide transcripts, course descriptions, and other relevant materials to document the request for transfer. (See also the Graduate School's website about transferring in Graduate Credits for additional forms.)

3. Master's degrees (MS) in Rhetoric, Theory, and Culture

This degree is designed to prepare students for careers in the public and private sector and to provide a foundation for further graduate study. The degree offers students a groundwork in theoretical frameworks and methodological practices in the humanities.

- The RTC program's **Accelerated Master's degree** is for students who have or will earn an undergraduate degree at MTU. Typically, MTU undergraduate students can earn a Master's degree with one additional year of coursework by applying up to nine approved credits from their bachelor's degree. MTU students should consult their department's undergraduate advisor, the Humanities department's undergraduate advisor, Jenni Nance, and/or the RTC graduate program director for more information about this degree.
- The **Master's degree in Rhetoric, Theory and Culture** is a two-year program. Masters students take a minimum of 30 credits of coursework. Students have three (3) degree options, which are completed in the fourth semester.

1. Coursework Only Option.

The RTC program offers a coursework option. For this, students complete four semesters of coursework. This option does not require an advisory committee, but each student should work with a chosen advisor or the RTC graduate director. The degree requires the satisfactory completion of all coursework.

2. Report.

A report includes 3-6 research credits in addition to completed coursework. The report option requires a report proposal, a proposal defense, and a public

defense of their report. At the end of the third semester, students will form a committee that includes an advisor and two additional faculty. Reports are more limited in scope than a thesis. They consist of a report on an independent study project.

Students must submit the departmental Two-Week Notification form at least 2 weeks prior to the thesis defense.

Of the minimum total of 30 credits, at least 24 must be earned in coursework other than those associated with the project.

3. Thesis.

This option includes 9 research credits in addition to completed coursework. The thesis option requires a thesis proposal, a proposal defense, and a public defense of their thesis. At the end of the third semester, students will form a committee that includes an advisor and two additional faculty. A thesis offers readers in-depth research and analysis of a topic related to the student's research interests. The scope of research and writing should be appropriate to 9 research credits. A thesis is typically 40-60 pages in length and must include references.

Students must submit the departmental Two-Week Notification form at least 2 weeks prior to the thesis defense.

3.1 Curriculum, Timeline, and Forms for MS Degrees

3.1a RTC Accelerated Masters (30 credits minimum)

As a coursework degree, the accelerated masters degree is a MTU bachelor's degree + 1 year. MTU students can apply up to 9 credits of their undergraduate work toward the masters degree. For the fifth year, students take 12 credits of coursework each semester.

Please consult with the Undergraduate and Graduate directors and your advisor(s) to develop your accelerated masters plan.

Basic RCR training during Orientation

3 credits Introduction to Graduate Studies (HU 5000)

6 credits 2 theory courses. These can be taken in either or both semesters, according to availability and/or student interest.

3 credits 1 methods/methodology course. This can be taken in either of the two semesters, according to availability and/or student interest.

21 credits up to 6 courses are electives.

Report and Thesis options are available but require additional semesters.

Timeline for Accelerated MS Degree

Undergraduate Credits	Bring in a minimum of 6 credits of approved undergraduate coursework or senior rule coursework.	
Orientation	Basic RCR Training	
	Fall semester	Spring semester
Year 1	(Intro to Graduate Studies) 3 cr. course 3 cr. course 3 cr. course 3 cr. course	3 cr. Intro to Graduate Studies 3 cr. course 3 cr. course 3 cr. course

3.1b RTC 2-year Master's degree

Students enrolled in the two-year MS program take 36 credits or 2 years of full-time coursework. The final 9 credits may be taken as thesis credits, report credits, or coursework.

Basic RCR training during Orientation

3 credits Introduction to Graduate Studies (HU 5000)

6 credits 2 theory courses. These can be taken in either or both semesters, according to availability and/or student interest.

3 credits 1 methods/methodology course. This can be taken in either of the two semesters, according to availability and/or student interest.

24 credits up to 7 or 8 courses are electives.

See the [Graduate school degree completion timelines](#) for specific dates and advice.

Timeline for the two-year MS Degree

Orientation	Basic RCR Training	
	Fall semester	Spring semester
Year 1	3 cr. HU 5000 (Intro to Graduate Studies) 3 cr. course 3 cr. course	3 cr. course 3 cr. course 3 cr. course
Summer	Advanced RCR training for those students doing a Report or a Thesis	
Year 2	3 cr. course 3 cr. course 3 cr. course Proposal defense	Coursework Option: 9 cr. courses Report Option: 3-6 cr. HU 5991 + 3-6 cr. courses Thesis Option: 9 cr. HU 5990

Year 1 Fall and Spring semesters: coursework (3 courses/semester; 18 credits)

Year 2 Fall semester: coursework(3 courses/semester; 9 credits)

Spring semester:

- Coursework Option: enroll in 3 courses (9 credits)
- Report Option: enroll in 3-6 credits of HU 5991 + 3-6 credits in coursework
- Thesis Option: enroll in 9 credits in HU 5990

If a student chooses to submit a report or a thesis,

- Enroll in an advanced RCR training during the summer semester of first year.

- Choose an advisor and form a committee in the second or third semester.
- Schedule a proposal defense, typically scheduled in the late in the third semester.
- Schedule a thesis/report defense, typically at the end of the fourth semester.

3.1c MS Student Required Forms

Form	Due
ASPE Form (<u>ASPE for students who began their degree prior to fall 2026 / ASPE for students who began their degree in fall 2026 or later</u>)	Every spring semester
<u>Advisor & Committee Recommendation Forms</u>	Prior to fall semester of the second year
<u>Supplementary Coursework Forms</u>	Prior to spring registration of the second year
<u>Two-week notification form for thesis/report proposal defense</u>	Two weeks prior to proposal defense
<u>Two-week notification form for thesis/report defense</u>	Two weeks prior to report/thesis defense
<u>Report on Final Oral Examination Form</u>	After the oral exam is complete and before submitting the final draft of the report or thesis

3.2 Choosing an Advisor or Co-Advisors and Forming Advisory Committees (MS Thesis or Report Option)

3.2a Early Advisor (Co-Advisor) and Committee Member Conversations.

The RTC Director is the initial advisor for all incoming students. If choosing a thesis or report, MS students are encouraged to have discussions with RTC graduate faculty whose interests align with their own during their coursework. In the second and third semesters of their coursework, students considering a MS thesis or report should be speaking with graduate faculty, choosing their advisor, and forming their committee.

To facilitate these early these conversations, you might speak about to faculty about your

- Earned degrees and current coursework
- Areas of interest and expertise
- Directions and goals for graduate degree
- Career goals
- Preliminary plans and/or a prospectus draft for Report or Thesis

3.2b Choosing an Advisor and forming a Committee

Students who pursue the coursework option must have an advisor but are not required to form an advisory committee. The student may wish to retain the RTC graduate director or choose another faculty member from the department's list of graduate faculty. The advisor's purpose in this case is to assist students in selecting courses suitable to their research interests and career goals.

Prior to or during the student's conversations with RTC graduate faculty about writing a MS thesis or report, the RTC committee suggests that students draft a preliminary prospectus describing their research interests.

MS committees consist of three faculty members chosen from the RTC graduate faculty. If desired, students may choose a committee member from another department other than the Humanities Department. This faculty member must hold graduate faculty status at MTU. Students should consult with the RTC Director of Graduate Studies if they wish to include a non-MTU faculty member on their committee.

It is in the student's best interest to begin considering potential committee members as soon as they begin coursework. Students must have advisor and committee approval of their thesis or report prior to their fourth semester.

Once the student has chosen their advisor and committee, they must submit an [Advisor Recommendation Form](#) and [Committee Recommendation Form](#) to the RTC program assistant for the RTC director's signature.

Often students and their advisor(s) choose to work closely with one another. It is each advisor's responsibility to work with students and the RTC Director to guide and monitor student progress.

Student progress is formally reviewed every year. Students are required to complete and submit their Annual Student Progress Evaluation Form ([ASPE for students who began their degree prior to fall 2026](#) / [ASPE for students who began their degree in fall 2026 or later](#)) every spring. Advisors should complete their section of the form and sign it before returning it to the student to complete and submit to the RTC office prior to their annual meeting with the RTC Director.

Student-Initiated Committee Changes

Students may occasionally request to change their advisor or committee members. Students may request to make changes to their committee for the following reasons:

- Research interests change
- Committee members are no longer able to serve
- Irreconcilable differences develop between a student and a committee member

Students should discuss potential changes to their committee with any member of their committee and with the Director of Graduate Studies. Students who decide to change their committee must have the RTC Director's approval and follow the same procedures required when constituting their original committee.

Faculty-Initiated Changes

Faculty may request that they be removed from a student's committee. Such requests are appropriate for the following reasons:

- A student's research interests develop in a direction that no longer coincides with the committee member's areas of expertise or professional development
- The faculty's other commitments no longer make it possible for them to serve in this capacity (this may be relevant especially in the case when faculty go on leave or take sabbatical)
- Irreconcilable differences develop between faculty and a student.

Faculty members should address any written requests to be removed from a student's committee to the RTC Director.

3.3 Two-Year MS Thesis and Report Planning

Proposal and Proposal Defense (thesis and report)

The RTC program requires students in the MS program to submit a thesis or a report proposal to their committee. The purpose of the proposal is for students to demonstrate that they have a feasible project and are prepared to move forward with their report or thesis. The proposal defense allows the committee to provide the student with additional feedback and suggestions.

The proposal should be five to ten pages in addition to a bibliography. The student should consult with their advisor regarding content and format.

Proposals should:

- Identify an area of research and describe its purpose and significance
- Review the relevant research associated with the topic
- Describe relevant methods or methodologies being proposed for the thesis/report
- Provide reference list
- Include a timeline for completion

The proposal defense includes the full committee and should be held at the end of the third semester or the beginning of the fourth semester. This defense is not public.

- **Report**

Reports are 25-30 pages and include a reference list. They can be structured as a journal article or a project report. Report formats are flexible but should include a legible theoretical and/or methodological framework that explains the project's relevance and a review of the scholarship and/or practices that are germane to the project.

- **Thesis**

A thesis is 40 to 60 pages and must include a reference list. A thesis can be structured as a journal article or as a case study of the student's research project. A thesis requires in-depth analyses and extensive research. The scope of the research and writing should be appropriate to masters-level work and to the allotted time of a semester (9 research credits).

- **Report and Thesis Defense**

Students must let their committee know they plan to graduate at the beginning of the semester of planned graduation. The student should develop a completion plan with their committee by the first week of the semester that includes sharing drafts and setting deadlines for completion.

Students are expected to work with their committee prior to the thesis or report defense to seek feedback on drafts and to ensure a defensible project that is well-conceived and written in a professional manner. After the student has completed the Report or Thesis, they should meet with their advisor and committee to determine if and when they should move forward with a defense of their work. If the committee considers the work unsatisfactory, they should meet with the RTC Director of Graduate Studies, who will then meet with the student and the committee to determine an appropriate course of action.

It is the student's responsibility to reserve the room for their defense and to arrange for any required technology. Students also need to submit the two-week notification form to the department and fulfill any of the Graduate School's pre-defense requirements prior to the Defense.

The Defense or Final Oral Examination consists of two parts: a public presentation lasting 25-35 minutes explaining the project. Students should be prepared to answer questions from the audience after the presentation. The student's advisor should moderate the discussion to ensure an open and respectful dialogue.

After the public defense, the student meets with the committee and is expected to defend and support their research. This discussion lasts approximately 45 minutes. During this time, the committee examines the student's conception and understanding of their project through questions regarding relevant contexts, theoretical perspectives, methods, and/or methodological frameworks. The student may also be asked to respond to broader questions relevant to their project and the field(s) most closely associated with it. They might also be asked to consider how the project could be further developed.

After this discussion, the student will be excused from the room, and the committee will decide 1) whether the student has passed and 2) if there are any required revisions.

Report and Thesis Evaluation

After completing their defense, students will receive one of three evaluations: passing, passing with revisions, and unsatisfactory completion.

- **Passing**

A student passes when all committee members are in consensus with regard to the quality of the work submitted and presented.

- **Passing with Revisions**

If the committee determines that the student's work requires revision, they may ask the student to revise the thesis or report before certifying the Master's degree. The advisor will determine whether the student's revisions are satisfactory.

- **Unsatisfactory Completion**

A student receives an unsatisfactory grade when more than one member of the committee is in dissent about the quality of the work.

Students may petition the RTC Graduate Committee to retake the examination once, but this cannot be scheduled before the next academic semester. A second unsatisfactory completion provides grounds for dismissal from the RTC program. The RTC Committee determines the status of students who fail twice.

4. The PhD in Rhetoric, Theory, and Culture

4.1 Previous Coursework Preparation

Prior Master's in RTC at Michigan Tech

In consultation with the RTC Graduate Director and the RTC committee, students who have completed an MS in the RTC program **may** be able to count required theory and methods/methodology courses that match distribution requirements for the PhD for up to 12 credits. Thus, PhD students who have graduated from the RTC MS program would have to complete an additional 24 coursework credits.

4.2 PhD Degree Coursework Requirements

Upon admission, the RTC Director will discuss coursework requirements with the incoming students. The PhD program requires 36 credits of coursework, which is completed during the first two years.

PhD students take 36 credits over a period of 2 years.

	Basic RCR training during Orientation
1-3 credits	Advanced RCR training
3 credits	Introduction to Graduate Studies (HU5000)
3 credits	Composition Pedagogy (HU 5931) or other Teaching Practicum
9 credits	3 theory courses. These can be taken in either or both semesters, according to availability and/or student interest.
3 credits	1 methods/methodology course. This can be taken in any semester, according to availability and/or student interest
18 credits	up to 6 courses are electives

See the Graduate school degree completion timelines for specific dates and advice

4.3 Timeline and Forms for PhD

Orientation	Basic RCR Training	
	Fall semester	Spring semester
Year 1	3 cr. Intro to Graduate Studies 3 cr. Composition Pedagogy (or other Practicum) 3 cr. course	3 cr. course 3 cr. course 3 cr. course
Summer	Advanced RCR training	
Year 2	3 cr. course 3 cr. course 3 cr. course	3 cr. course 3 cr. course 3 cr. course
Year 3	QE Exams (Written & Oral) 9 credits of HU 6903 (usually 3 credits with each committee member. If taking a practicum, the distribution of credits will change.	Dissertation Proposal and Defense Petition to Enter Candidacy 9 credits of HU 6990 (usually 3 credits with each committee member)
Year 4	Dissertation Writing Candidacy Mode 9 credits of HU 6990 (usually 3 credits with each committee member)	Dissertation Writing 9 credits of HU 6990 (usually 3 credits with each committee member)

Year 5 is contingent on demonstrating significant academic progress toward completion and meeting all requirements associated with their graduate assistantship (GTA), effectively maintaining their “good standing” as defined by the MTU Graduate School.

Ph.D. Student Required Forms

Form	Due
ASPE Form (<u>ASPE for students who began their degree prior to fall 2026 / ASPE for students who began their degree in fall 2026 or later</u>)	Every spring semester
<u>Advisor & Committee Recommendation Forms</u>	Prior to fall semester of the second year
<u>Supplementary Coursework Forms</u>	Prior to spring registration of the second year
<u>Two-week notification form for Qualifying Exams,</u>	Six weeks prior to QE oral exam
<u>Two-week notification forms for Dissertation Proposal Defense</u>	Two weeks prior to Dissertation Proposal Defense
<u>Two-week notification form for Dissertation Defense</u>	Two weeks prior to Dissertation Defense

4.4 Choosing an Advisor or Co-Advisors and Forming QE and Dissertation Committee)

4.4a Early Advisor (Co-Advisor) and Committee Member Conversations.

The RTC Director is the initial advisor for all incoming students. As Ph.D. students progress through their coursework and move toward their Qualifying Exams (QEs), they are encouraged to schedule conversations with RTC graduate faculty whose interests align with their own. In the second and third semesters of their coursework, Ph.D. students should be meeting with and speaking to graduate faculty, ultimately choosing an advisor and forming their QE committee.

To facilitate these early these conversations, students might speak about to faculty about their

- Earned degrees and current coursework
- Areas of interest and expertise
- Directions and goals for graduate degree
- Career goals
- Drafted QE (Qualifying Exam) reading lists
- Preliminary ideas for their dissertation

4.4b Choosing an Advisor (Co-Advisors) and forming a QE and a Dissertation Committee

The RTC committee recommends that students converse with a number of different graduate faculty within the HU department throughout the first two years of their coursework. Each student in conversation with the RTC Graduate Director should create a list of potential faculty whose research interests align with their own.

QE committees consist of a core of three faculty members chosen from the RTC graduate faculty. If desired, students may choose a committee member from the Humanities Department's list of affiliated faculty or from another department on campus other than the Humanities Department. This faculty member must hold graduate faculty status at MTU. Students should consult with the RTC Director of Graduate Studies if they wish to include a non-MTU faculty member on their committee.

It is in the student's best interest to form their QE committee prior to completing their second year (fourth semester) of coursework.

Once the student has chosen their QE advisor and committee, they must submit an Advisor and Committee Recommendation Forms to the RTC program assistant for the RTC director's signature.

After completing the written and oral parts of the Qualifying Exams (QEs) at a satisfactory level, the student's QE committee will dissolve. Each student will have 30 days to schedule a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss any changes they wish to make to their committee. If the student does not indicate any desired changes within this time period, the QE committee members will join the student's **Dissertation Committee**. When forming their **Dissertation Committee**, students will need to add an external committee member.

An **external committee member** may be a member of MTU's graduate faculty from any department across campus or a faculty member from another university. In either case, the faculty's expertise should align with the student's research and career goals. Students are required to contact their chosen external committee member to request their participation and a copy of their CV. After receiving an affirmation from the faculty and a copy of the CV, the student should forward the CV with the external member's name and email address to the RTC Program Assistant and RTC Director. The RTC Director will follow up by contacting the external committee member to confirm their willingness to serve on the student's committee and to make sure they are added to MTU's list of graduate faculty.

Often students and their advisor(s) choose to work closely with one another. It is each advisor's (or the co-advisors') responsibility to work with students and the RTC Director to guide and monitor student progress.

Student progress is formally reviewed every year. Students are required to complete and submit their Annual Student Progress Evaluation Form ([ASPE for students who began their degree prior to fall 2026](#) / [ASPE for students who began their degree in fall 2026 or later](#)) every spring. Advisors should complete their section of the form and sign it before returning it to the student to complete and submit to the RTC office prior to the student's annual meeting with the RTC Director.

Student-Initiated Committee Changes

Students may occasionally request to change their advisor or committee members.

Students may request to make changes to their committee for the following reasons:

- Research interests change
- Committee members are no longer able to serve
- Irreconcilable differences develop between a student and a committee member

Students should discuss potential changes to their committee with any member of their committee and with the Director of Graduate Studies. Students who decide to change their committee must have the RTC Director's approval and follow the same procedures required when constituting their original committee.

Faculty-Initiated Changes

Faculty may request that they be removed from a student's committee. Such requests are appropriate for the following reasons:

- A student's research interests develop in a direction that no longer coincides with the committee member's areas of expertise or professional development
- The faculty's other commitments no longer make it possible for them to serve in this capacity (this may be relevant especially in the case when faculty go on leave or take sabbatical)
- Irreconcilable differences develop between faculty and a student.

Faculty members should address any written requests to be removed from a student's committee to the RTC Director.

4.5 PhD Qualifying Exams

4.5a Purpose

Qualifying Exams are distinct from Comprehensive Exams, which require students to demonstrate their expertise in a particular academic discipline. QE exams are an opportunity for students to further develop and synthesize their knowledge. QEs in the RTC program should be interdisciplinary and address two or three related fields. The successful completion of QEs marks a student's preparedness to write a dissertation proposal.

4.5b Preparation for QE

Exam Committee Selection

In their third or fourth semester of coursework, students should choose their QE advisor and form their QE committee. Students can choose to have one advisor or two co-advisors. The QE committee consists of three (3) members, which should be drawn from HU graduate faculty. Students can choose one member from the roster of the department's affiliated faculty.

Quick Overview

Students are encouraged to begin preparing for their exams during the summer months prior to their fifth semester, particularly in terms of formulating their lists and formally establishing their committee. Much of the reading for the exam will occur during the fifth semester, and students are expected to meet regularly with each committee member throughout the semester to discuss the list's content and to formulate one or two questions for each reading list. Questions should provide students with an opportunity to formulate their own scholarly argument about an issue, engaging relevant theories, methods, and traditions relevant to the topic and/or area. Full-time Ph.D. students should take their exams at the end of the fall semester or the beginning of the spring semester in their third year.

Students register for QE credits (HU 6903) for their fifth semester.

4.5c QE Examination Reading Lists

Students begin drafting their three (3) reading lists in consultation with each member of their committee. Each reading list should reflect a particular field/topic and be composed and amended by the student in consultation with each committee member. Each committee member may and should offer specific suggestions, but are not expected to create the student's list.

Reading lists should

- Include the most relevant research in the given area/topic/field
 - Primary & secondary sources
 - Groundbreaking studies
- Offer the student the theoretical and/or methodological frameworks necessary to articulate a position within the area/topic/ field
- Help the student develop their own understanding of the primary issues and controversies in the area/topic/field.

It is recommended that students submit their three preliminary lists to each committee member at the end of their fourth semester. At the beginning of the fifth semester, students should submit their finalized lists for each committee member's approval. These submissions should take form as a list of readings in bibliographic form and can include a one to two page explanatory preface or introduction for each list. If writing an introduction for each list, the student should articulate each list's purpose. In this introduction, a student might consider how the list(s) help the student articulate a subject, or a specific issue or question they wish to address.

Reading List Guidelines. The student should create a reading list for each topic/field. It should take the form of a bibliography and can be drawn from coursework readings but should not be limited to this source. Lists can overlap in their content. These lists mark the range of writers and works for which the student is expected to demonstrate competence. Lists are not comprehensive of either a topic or a field, but they should gesture toward relevant questions and frameworks that further ground the student's approach to the topic/field. Students should consider carefully the purpose of each list, and the three lists should establish an interdisciplinary foundation for dissertation research.

The RTC committee recommends that the student in consultation with each committee member consider how many pages of reading is viable for each week of the semester while preparing for the QEs. The committee also recommends each of the three lists not exceed 30-50 article-length items and be composed of published essays, book chapters, monographs, and edited collections.

After the reading lists have been approved, each list is considered final. When all three lists have been finalized, students are encouraged to write and submit to their committee a ~1,000-word synthetic statement explaining the focus and scope of their research. The final version of the reading list must be submitted to the RTC Graduate Program Coordinator who will date the final version and place a copy in the student's file.

4.5d Scheduling Exams

Working closely with their advisor and committee members, full time students should schedule their exam during the third year, at the end of the fifth semester or the beginning of the sixth semester. The QE consists of written and oral segments. Questions for the written exams will be drawn up by the faculty committee and will relate to each reading list, its topic(s), and the formal discussions between the student and each committee member that have taken place throughout the semester. As the student is completing the paperwork for the QE, they should schedule tentative dates and appropriate meeting rooms for the oral exam and to ensure faculty and room availability.

4.5e Qualifying Examination: Timeline & Details

The initial paperwork is due to the RTC Office six (6) weeks before the Qualifying Exam oral exam is scheduled:

- **2 Weeks Notification:**
 - Students submit the Two-Week Notification form to the RTC Program office. This form includes scheduled dates for both the written and oral parts of the exam. Students reserve a room and a date for their oral exam date in advance.
 - The student's advisor(s) collects the reading lists and questions from each committee member and sends them to the RTC Program office at least two weeks prior to the exam.
- **3 Weeks for Written Exam:** The student writes three (3) qualifying exams over the course of three weeks in response to the questions provided by each committee member. Each essay should respond to one exam question and engage the relevant reading list. The student should submit 11-15 pages (3,000-4,000 words) per question and include a words cited list.
 - On the first day of the written exam period, the RTC Program Assistant will email the student the exam questions.

- Upon completing the written exam, the student emails their responses to the RTC Program Assistant, who will distribute the answers to the committee members.
 - NB. Students can use their notes and consult texts, but cannot discuss the contents of their exam or their responses with other students or faculty during this time.
 - Students cannot use Chat GPT or GAI (Generative Artificial Intelligence). The submitted exam must be solely the student's work.
 - If the student requires clarification at any time during the exam, they should email the RTC Program Assistant, and they will contact your advisor with any question you might have.
- **1 Week for Committee Review:** Once the student submits their written responses, all responses will be distributed to all committee members by the RTC Program Assistant. The committee has one week before the scheduled date of the Oral Exam to review the answers and agree that the student can move forward with their QE Oral Exam. The Advisor(s) should notify the RTC Director and Program Assistant that the committee agrees to proceed with the QE Oral Exam prior to the scheduled date for the oral exam.
 - If the committee decides collectively that the student should not proceed to the oral exam, the advisor should notify the RTC Director and Program Assistant immediately. The student and committee should convene and discuss how to proceed. A student can reschedule and retake the qualifying exam a second time. A second failure leads to dismissal from the program.

- **Two-hour Oral Exam or QE Defense:** When the QE committee agrees that it is appropriate to proceed, the student should meet with their advisor to prepare for the oral exam. The oral exam often begins with the student providing a brief presentation of their responses to the committee. Following this, the committee engages in a conversation with the student that includes questions regarding particular aspects of the written exam. Eventually, this conversation leads to larger questions that invite the student to consider dissertation-related topics and the dissertation proposal. The QE oral exam is not open to the public.

- **Faculty Evaluation of the QE Oral Exam/Defense**

After excusing the student from the room, the QE committee will discuss the student's presentation and responses. The QE committee should base their decision about whether to pass the student on two criteria: quality of the written responses, and quality of preparation and presentation demonstrated during the oral defense.

- **Passing/Failing QE Written & Oral Exams**

Pass: A student passes their Qualifying Exam when the QE committee agrees that the student has performed satisfactorily. The RTC committee does not recommend the committee ask for revisions or supplementary work in order to pass but to decide either that the student has passed or failed.

Upon the successful completion of the QE, the student's QE committee is officially dissolved. The student has 30 days to meet with the RTC Director and the RTC Program Assistant to discuss the constitution of their Dissertation committee. If the student does not make any changes within this 30-day period, the student's QE committee will become their Dissertation committee.

Fail: If one member of the student's QE committee is dissatisfied with the student's responses on either one or both parts of the exam, the student may fail. The committee then takes appropriate steps, which may include requiring the student to reschedule and retake either one or more parts of the exam. This second exam will require new questions and requires full committee approval. A second failure leads to the student's dismissal from the program.

4.5f Qualifying Exam Results

Following the exam, the committee members will fill out a departmental form to report the results.

4.6 PhD Dissertation Proposal and Proposal Defense

After passing the written and oral parts of the qualifying exam, and (re-)forming their dissertation committee, the student begins the process of writing their dissertation proposal or prospectus and should be prepared to submit and defend it by the end of the third year (the 6th semester).

Sixth semester students register for doctoral research credits (HU 6990).

4.6a A dissertation proposal or prospectus should offer a provisional description of the student's planned research project.

The proposal should:

- Delineate the student's research question in terms of an overarching argument or thesis
- Identify the core subject of the dissertation
- Address the project's significance in terms of how the project will contribute to or challenge existing scholarship
- Be no more than 15-20 pages (3,700-5,000 words) plus references.

Generally, a dissertation prospectus is organized into sections that include

- **An Introduction** that articulates the dissertation's focus and identifies the major questions(s) that structure the dissertation
- A **literature review** situates the argument within existing scholarship
- A **rationale** that explains the significance of the topic and the student's contribution in terms of their perspective or approach to the topic
- An explanation of the student's use of particular **methodological or theoretical perspectives**
 - This section should convey an understanding of the appropriate frameworks to be used in archival research and/or in undertaking the collection and analysis of data, as approved by the student's advisor (particularly in cases where an IRB is required)
- **Chapter Outline:** synopses of the planned chapters
- **Timeline**, which should include a description of any anticipated need to travel to conduct research, or trainings needed to develop skills. Student's timelines should also take into account time needed for advisor(s) and committee members to read and respond to drafts. If the student's timeline includes summer work, the student should consult with their advisor and/or committee members about their summer availability.
- Working **Bibliography**

Once the advisor and other committee members agree that the proposal is sufficient to defend, the student can move ahead and schedule the proposal defense.

4.6b The Proposal Defense

Prior to the defense, the student and their advisor should meet to discuss the format for the defense. The oral exam often begins with the student providing a brief presentation of the proposal. The committee's responses and questions should then move toward an open discussion that engages particular aspects of the proposal and toward addressing issues relevant to the dissertation. The defense is not open to the public.

The student should have their defense set a date set and reserve a room in advance of their oral defense.

At least two weeks prior to their defense, the student must submit a copy of the proposal to the RTC Program Office along with the Two-Week Notification form.

4.6c Dissertation Proposal Defense Evaluation

After excusing the student from the room, the committee members consider the quality of the student's work and performance during the defense. They should base their decision on two criteria: quality and effectiveness of the written proposal, and the student's presentation of their work during the oral defense.

If at least one member of the student's committee is not satisfied with the student's Proposal and Defense, the student may fail. The committee and student must take appropriate steps as a result, which may include scheduling another defense in a future semester. Committees, however, are urged to consider if a proposal seems defensible ahead of time and reschedule.

Following a defense, the committee members will fill out a departmental form to report the results.

4.7 PhD Candidacy

Following a successful defense and the appointment of an external member to the student's committee, students are required to petition for PhD candidacy by completing the Petition to Enter Candidacy form.

External committee members

- provide an “external” perspective of the student’s research
- ensure academic quality appropriate to the student’s degree objective and field/disciplinary standards
- promote interdisciplinary perspectives and future collaboration
- serve as a liaison to the Graduate School and ensure that Graduate School policies and procedures are followed.

Students should initiate contact with their chosen external committee member to formally request them to be an external committee member and to request a copy of their CV. Students should then forward this email and a copy of the external committee member’s CV to the RTC program director and program assistant. This is required for the Graduate School and to ensure the external committee member’s formal appointment.

After the approval of their petition for candidacy, students register for Doctoral Research Credits (HU 6990) at a reduced tuition rate.

4.8 PhD Dissertation

The primary doctoral degree requirement is the dissertation, a completed research project that contributes to the scholarship in a particular field or with regard to a specific topic. Dissertations can reflect a variety of perspectives and methods in their form and content.

Although the creation of manuals, videos, digital tools, including software may form a part of the doctoral research, such artifacts cannot be submitted in place of dissertations.

4.8a Working on the Dissertation

Students should communicate regularly with their dissertation advisor and committee members while writing. Students should try to adhere to the timeline set in the dissertation prospectus and submit chapter drafts to their advisor for review on a regular basis. Students are not advised to wait until they have a complete draft before submitting their work to their advisor. Prior to the summer, students should contact their advisor or committee members about their availability to read dissertation chapters or participate in summer defenses.

Advisors and committee members must provide feedback on draft chapters in a timely manner but no later than one month after they have received them. Once all members of the committee have read the final full dissertation draft and decided it is defensible, the advisor should meet with the student to discuss the logistics of the oral defense. The oral defense is then scheduled to take place at least two weeks after the committee has agreed to go forward. An external member must be present for the Dissertation's Oral Defense.

4.9 Dissertation's Oral Defense

The Oral Defense or Final Oral Examination should be scheduled once the advisor and the student's entire dissertation committee agree that the student may defend their dissertation. All committee members are required to have read and offered the student constructive feedback on the full version of the dissertation prior to the student's defense of their dissertation.

4.9a Student Responsibilities in Preparing for the Oral Defense

Students work in consultation with their advisor to prepare a dissertation abstract and to schedule the time and place for their defense. At least two weeks prior to their examination, the student must submit to the RTC program assistant

- The pre-examination version of their dissertation
- An abstract of their dissertation

- A notification of the examination date in addition to the Two-Week Notification form.

The Graduate School has additional requirements, as indicated in the policies for defending the dissertation.

Copies of pre-defense drafts of the Dissertation must be distributed to all members of the student's Committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense date. Copies of pre-defense dissertation drafts may also be made available in the Petersen Library to interested faculty and graduate students within this timeframe. Students should bring the Report on the Final Oral Examination form to their defense.

4.9b Committee Responsibilities in Preparing for the Oral Defense

The student's advisor or co-advisors should convene the full dissertation committee prior to the Oral Defense to discuss issues such as appropriate examination format and procedures. The procedure and format for the oral defense should be finalized prior to the defense date.

4.9c Procedures for the Oral Defense

The student's oral defense of their dissertation consists of two parts: a public presentation and a closed discussion. During part one, the student makes a brief, public presentation including an overview of the dissertation's major contributions. The student then fields questions from the audience. This section of the defense should run no longer than one hour, and the advisor moderates the discussion to ensure an open dialogue.

During part two of the oral defense, committee members engage the student in a discussion of their dissertation in a closed session for no longer than one hour. Committee members may ask questions about the theoretical foundations, the methods used, the significance of the student's research with respect to the larger body of existing scholarship about the topic/field, and the conclusions made in the dissertation by the student. Part two is closed to the public.

4.9d Evaluating the Oral Defense

After the oral defense, the student's dissertation committee asks the student to leave, allowing the committee the opportunity to deliberate in private about the quality of the student's work and performance during the oral defense. They should base their evaluation on two criteria:

- Quality of research represented in the dissertation and oral defense;
- Knowledge and evidence of contribution to the field represented in the dissertation and oral defense.

Passing

A student passes their oral defense when no more than one member of their dissertation committee is in dissent about the quality of the work demonstrated in both the dissertation and oral defense. If a member of the dissertation committee dissents, the student must address that member's dissenting comments prior to receiving final approval for passing. The student's advisor or co-advisors and the Graduate School will judge when the student has satisfactorily addressed the dissenting committee member's comments.

Passing with Revisions

If the Dissertation Committee agrees that the student's work needs revision, they may ask the student to revise the Dissertation before being certified for completing the requirements of the Doctoral degree. The student cannot proceed with submission of the dissertation to the Graduate School or with graduation until the Advisor approves these revisions.

Unsatisfactory Completion of the Final Oral Examination

A student fails their Oral Defense when more than one member of the Dissertation Committee is in dissent about the quality of the work demonstrated in the Dissertation and Oral Defense.

Students who fail their Oral Defense may petition the RTC Steering Committee to defend again, no sooner than the next semester and perhaps with some different committee members. However, students must wait at least one semester before proceeding with a second Oral Defense. A second failure of the Oral Defense provides sufficient grounds for dismissal from the RTC Program. The RTC Steering Committee determines the status of students who fail their Final Oral Examination twice.

Post-Evaluation Procedures

When the Advisory Committee has completed deliberations, it will reconvene to inform the student regarding their evaluation of the written document and oral defense, as above. If the student is judged to have passed, their Committee will discuss any additional conditions or recommendations. If the student has failed or has passed with revisions, the Committee will discuss their reasons.

Upon successful completion of the Final Oral Examination or after the second failure of the Examination, the Report on Final Oral Examination form must be submitted by the Advisor to the RTC Program Office who will then forward it to the Graduate School. Details regarding this form and other required documentation are on the Graduate School's Forms and Deadlines webpage.

Following the successful defense/revision of their Dissertations, the student must submit an electronic copy to the Graduate School, along with other documents. Please consult their updated policies for “Completing Your Dissertation” and “After Completing Degree.”

University Graduation Requirements

All graduate students must complete a Graduation Application by the fifth week in the semester they plan to complete their degree. Their [Academic Audit](#) contains information and a link to the application. It collects information about where to mail the credential, the term it will be completed, how the name will appear, and whether the student is participating in the commencement ceremony.

Note that the RTC program does not permit “early walks.” PhD students must complete all requirements for the degree prior to participating in graduation ceremonies.

Congratulations on reaching this stage!

5. General Program Policies

Section 5 deals with general RTC program policies and MTU's Graduate School's policies, including financial support.

5.1 Student Policies

5.1a Continuous Enrollment

The Michigan Tech Graduate School requires all graduate students to maintain continuous enrollment. Once students begin the RTC graduate program, they must be enrolled for fall and spring semesters until graduation. Students who receive financial support during the summer semester must be enrolled for that term as well.

Please consult the RTC program assistant and the Graduate School's website noted above with questions about continuous enrollment. Enrollment expectations vary based on candidacy, international status, and other factors. If a student is not able to maintain enrollment, the Graduate School has a range of options, including Continuous Enrollment courses.

The RTC Director of Graduate Studies and the Dean of the Graduate School must approve all waivers of continuous enrollment, including Leaves and Withdrawals. Such waivers are approved only when it is necessary for students to interrupt their studies for some reason.

The Graduate School recognizes that circumstances might prohibit students maintaining enrollment and offer several options to help support student success.

- Parental leave allows for excused absences from classes following the birth or placement of a child under 18 years of age in the home for the purposes of adoption or foster care. Students will be enrolled while on parental leave.
- A leave of absence can be requested for up to one year to allow students time off to resolve any circumstances impeding their ability to make progress toward their degree. The requirement to enroll is waived while on a leave of absence.

- A medical withdrawal waives the requirement to enroll while receiving treatment for medical, psychological, and substance-related conditions.
- Eligible students may also enroll in UN5951 to satisfy the continuous enrollment policy. Eligibility generally includes active military duty and online programs with inactive terms.

According to MTU's Graduate School, any graduate student who has officially withdrawn from Michigan Tech (by submitting a withdrawal form to the Registrar's Office) must submit a new application for admission. This application will be reviewed and considered along with all other applications.

Students returning after failing to maintain continuous enrollment must apply for and be granted readmission. The readmission fee is \$200.

Readmission is not automatic. Students who apply for and are denied readmission will not be allowed to continue in their graduate program.

5.1b Residency Requirements

The RTC Program currently expects that students will be on campus for the required coursework for a Ph.D. degree. Research credits used to satisfy degree requirements (such as, HU6990 Doctoral Research) can be taken remotely but must be taken through Michigan Tech and must be supervised by a member of the RTC graduate faculty.

Students conducting either on- or off- campus research or internships are considered to be using university services and thus must be enrolled for at least one credit each term.

5.1c Student Progress

Time and Funding Limits

All MS students, including Accelerated MS students are self-funded. According to Graduate School MS requirements, all work required for the Master's degree must be completed within five calendar years from the first semester of enrollment.

According to Graduate School PhD requirements, Doctoral students (both those who enter with a Bachelor's degree and those who enter with a Master's degree) must complete their Qualifying Exams within five calendar years and must complete all requirements within eight calendar years from their first enrollment in the RTC Program. However, the funding limit for RTC doctoral students is four years, with a possibility of an extension of one year that is contingent on maintaining good academic standing and satisfactory progress.

5.1d Student Teaching and Student-Faculty Expectations

Incoming Ph.D. students will often be enrolled in HU 5931 (Composition Pedagogy). Students will also be able to take other practica and rotate into other teaching opportunities, when appropriate.

For all MTU teaching instructors and faculty, Michigan Tech maintains syllabus requirements.

Supported graduate students are mentored by the Director of First-Year Writing (if teaching first year writing) and/or the faculty members teaching their practicum.

During this experience, RTC students may

- Work with faculty before the term begins to articulate the instructional goals associated with a course
- Draft and revise syllabus and/or policy statements
- Learn strategies for making assignments appropriate to a course
- Learn to provide effective feedback on student assignments (e.g., papers, drafts, presentations, and tests)
- Develop productive strategies for grading, evaluating, and conferencing
- Observe experienced teachers and arrange for observation of their work
- Reflect systematically on instructional goals, assignments, and class activities
- Connect theoretical perspectives on course content with practical pedagogical approaches to class activities
- Compose statements of teaching practice and teaching philosophy

While teaching, students are required to adhere to best practices in the classroom and to seek guidance from their practicum instructor or the Director of First-Year Writing when questions arise regarding process and best practices.

The William G Jackson Center for Teaching and Learning offers numerous instructional resources for graduate students and faculty.

Student teaching will be assessed yearly during the ASPE process.

5.2 Student Evaluation

5.2a Grades

Graduate students must earn grades that meet the scholastic standards of the Graduate School in order to apply the credits earned for a graduate degree or graduate certificate. Courses taken as a graduate student with grades that have not met the scholastic standards of the Graduate School may be repeated. According to the Graduate School's Good Academic Standing policies, graduate students must maintain at least a 3.0 cumulative grade-point average in the courses required for a graduate degree. Graduate students are expected to

- receive grades of P (progress) and/or a S (Satisfactory) in status credits
- maintain continuous enrollment
- pass required defenses
- make satisfactory progress toward completion of their degree

Status Grades include:

- I (incomplete) grade for extenuating circumstances preventing completion of a course.
- P (progress) grade for satisfactory work in a 5000- or 6000-level research course that is not completed in a single semester (i.e. HU 6990 Doctoral Research).

- Q (inadequate progress) for unsatisfactory work in a 5000- or 6000-level research course that is not completed in a single semester (i.e. HU 6990 Doctoral Research). A Q grade means that a graduate student is no longer in good academic standing.
- S (satisfactory) for satisfactory completion of a 5000- or 6000-level research course that is not completed in a single semester (i.e. HU 6990 Doctoral Research).

The Registrar's Office maintains additional [Michigan Tech Grading Information](#).

In the RTC Program, grades generally reflect progress as described in the following table.

Grade	Level of Progress
A	Excellent and good graduate work
A/B	Acceptable graduate work
B	Marginally acceptable graduate work
B/C	Unacceptable graduate work
C	Unacceptable graduate work (all requirements completed)
F	Unacceptable graduate work (all requirements not completed)

5.2b Annual Student Progress Evaluation (ASPE) Forms

The Annual Student Progress Evaluation Form ([ASPE for students who began their degree prior to fall 2026](#) / [ASPE for students who began their degree in fall 2026 or later](#)) verifies that students are making timely progress toward degree completion and provides students with guidance and feedback from their committees. Annual Student Progress Evaluation Forms are also a factor in determining students' future funding in the program. With the exception of students who are officially on leave or have withdrawn temporarily, any student not making satisfactory progress toward the degree will not be considered in good standing and may be subject to academic probation, suspension, or dismissal. Each student's stipend and funding is contingent upon maintaining good academic standing, full-time status, and continuous enrollment.

The Annual Progress Evaluation process takes place in spring of each academic year and includes conversations between students and their Advisors as well as one-on-one meetings between each student and the RTC Director of Graduate Studies. When submitting the ASPE form, students must also include a short statement regarding their progress toward degree completion and list any publications and/or conferences they attended.

The student's Advisor and the Director of the First-Year Writing Program (or alternatively, the instructor of a practicum, or lead instructor for some course other than UN 1015/1014) will mark the student's progress in these areas as "Satisfactory," "Needs Improvement," or "Serious Concerns."

If an Advisor/Director/Lead Instructor has serious concerns about the student's teaching and/or progress and their ability to maintain good academic standing, they should indicate this on the form by selecting "Needs Improvement" or "Serious Concerns," and contact the Director of Graduate Studies immediately to discuss any actions a student must take to improve and maintain their good standing.

5.2c Probation, Suspension, and Dismissal

According to the Graduate School policy, students who fail to maintain good academic standing will be subject to a sanction of graduate academic probation, graduate academic suspension, or graduate academic dismissal.

Probation

Students are placed on academic probation for the following violations of the University requirement that graduate students must maintain good academic standing:

- Failing to maintain a cumulative overall GPA of at least 3.0
- Receiving a “Q” grade in a research course

If a student does not maintain good academic standing, the Graduate School informs the student, the student’s department chair (or college dean), their graduate program director, and their advisor via email of the student’s probation.

The RTC Director will consult with the student, the student’s committee, the Department Chair, and when appropriate with the RTC Steering Committee to discuss the student’s probation and to determine measures to help remediate their probationary status.

Students will be removed from academic probation when their cumulative University GPA is 3.0 or greater and/or when they receive an “S” grade in a research course.

Suspension

If a student is on academic probation for two sequential semesters of enrollment, the Graduate School will place the student on academic suspension. Students who are placed on academic suspension will not be permitted to enroll in the University during the upcoming semester or session. This means, for example, that if a student is placed on probation as the result of grades during fall semester and fails to return to good academic standing in spring semester they will be suspended for summer session and will not be allowed to enroll during summer session but will be expected to return the following fall semester.

If a student has been suspended because they received a “Q” grade in research, the student must develop a plan for the returning semester with benchmarks and deadlines for satisfactory progress. This plan must be approved by the current (or new, if necessary) research advisor(s) prior to reinstatement. If the student is unable to obtain approval of the plan, the student will be dismissed from the graduate program. Students have the right to appeal the dismissal.

Students who return after the suspension period will remain on probation. If their cumulative GPA is at least 3.0 and/or they receive a “S” grade in a research course during their first semester as a reinstated student, they will return to good academic standing. The students who fail to raise their GPA to at least 3.0 and/or do not receive a “S” grade in a research course during their first semester as a reinstated student will be dismissed from their graduate program by the Graduate School.

The student, student’s department chair (or college dean), graduate program director, and advisor will be informed via e-mail of the suspension. Suspensions are effective on the date final grades are posted.

Students may either

- Appeal the suspension as described in the Graduate Appeals of Suspension or Dismissal policy, or
- Leave campus

Students leaving campus or who file an unsuccessful appeal must

- Vacate their University offices and laboratories
- Return any keys to the University
- Leave data collected with their advisor

Students on academic suspension are exempt from continuous enrollment requirements for the period of the suspension. Students who are already enrolled in courses for the upcoming semester or session at the time of the suspension will have their schedules dropped. Suspended students may continue to occupy University housing until the end of the semester during which they are on suspension. The Graduate School will initiate suspension of keycard access to academic buildings as appropriate.

Dismissal

Students will be dismissed from their graduate degree program by the Graduate School in the following situations.

- A student fails to achieve good academic standing or show substantial academic progress within one (1) semester following reinstatement from suspension.
- A student is unable to pass an oral or written exam required for the degree after the allowed number of attempts prior to the time limit for completion of the exam, or otherwise fails to make satisfactory progress toward the degree.

Students will be notified in writing by the Graduate School via email to their mtu.edu email account.

Students may

- Appeal the dismissal as described in the Graduate Appeals of Suspension or Dismissal policy, or
- Leave campus, or
- Apply for admission to another graduate program.

Students who are dismissed from a PhD program may apply for admission to a master's program within the same or a different academic discipline. Transition from a PhD program to a master's degree program housed within the same department or college requires the approval of the academic unit. Please submit a master's degree schedule with the appropriate signatures to the Graduate School to transfer to the master's program.

Application to a new program (MS or PhD) can be submitted at any time; there is no deadline. Admissions decisions, however, are made by each program according to their own process and timeline.

Unless a campus ban is in place or other limitation on access to University buildings and grounds, students are permitted to remain on campus, including campus housing (subject to the approval of Housing and Residential Life) while they consider filing an appeal following the Graduate School policy, or while their submitted appeal is being reviewed.

Keycard access to University buildings may be revoked immediately, even if a student appeals the dismissal. Under some circumstances, students may be banned from the University campus. Students may request review of a campus ban through the Office of Public Safety and Police Services.

If the appeal results in a dismissal or a student does not file an appeal, the student must vacate their University offices and laboratories within eleven business days of the original dismissal notice (for students who do not file an appeal) or twenty-four hours of an appellate decision upholding dismissal (for students who file an appeal). Keycard access to University buildings will be revoked at that time if the student retains keycard access during the dismissal appeal process. Residing in campus housing is at the discretion of Housing and Residential Life per their contracts and policies.

The University reserves the right to require that dismissed students vacate their University offices, laboratories, and housing within 24 hours of a dismissal notice and return any keys to the University.

Appealing Academic Suspension or Dismissal

Graduate students who have been suspended or dismissed by the Graduate School may appeal this decision following the Graduate Appeals of Suspension or Dismissal policy.

Students may be dismissed from the RTC program if any one of the following occurs:

- A Student does not maintain good academic standing or does not make satisfactory progress in their work toward a degree
- A Student does not maintain or make adequate progress in developing and maintaining professional standards of behavior and teaching in the classroom
- A Student does not maintain continuous enrollment
- A Student fails the M.S. Thesis or Report defense
- A Student fails the Doctoral Qualifying Exam twice
- Student fails the Dissertation Defense

5.2d Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the use of others' ideas, words, or images without proper attribution or acknowledgment. Plagiarism is a serious matter and may result in a student's dismissal from Michigan Tech. Faculty suspecting that a student has committed plagiarism ought to first discuss the matter with the RTC Director of Graduate Studies. If the suspicion can be substantiated, the Director informs the RTC Steering Committee and the Department Chair. The Director also advises the faculty member to bring the matter to the attention of the Dean of Students for resolution according to Michigan Tech procedures. Academic misconduct cases will be handled in accordance with Michigan Tech's Academic Integrity Policy.

5.2e Graduate Learning Objectives

The RTC program has Graduate Learning Objectives (GLOs) to assess and evaluate student learning objectives relevant to our program. GLOs provide a means for collecting information for assessment and continuous improvement.

Through completion of the Master's program, students will learn and demonstrate:

1. Mastery of theories and theoretical approaches
2. Ability to make connections across disciplines
3. Facility in written communication
4. Ability to select and apply appropriate theories and methods

For the Ph.D. program, students will learn and demonstrate:

1. Mastery of theories and theoretical approaches
2. Ability to engage with and synthesize interdisciplinary content
3. Facility in written communication
4. Ability to formulate a research agenda

Assessment follows this schedule:

- At the end of each semester, RTC graduate faculty assess GLOs 1 and 3 for students taking their courses.
- Advisors and committee members assess GLOs 1 through 4 for proposals and defenses of theses, reports, and dissertations.
- Advisors and committee members assess GLOs 1 through 3 after QEs.
- Assessment is anonymous and is solely used as an opportunity for RTC program improvement.

MTU's Graduate School provides this [information page](#) regarding GLOs.

In consultation with the RTC Steering Committee, the RTC Director of Graduate Studies may suggest that an individual student on academic probation or making unsatisfactory progress withdraw from the RTC Program. If the student does not voluntarily withdraw from the program, the RTC Steering Committee may advise the RTC Director to begin dismissal proceedings.

5.3 Financial Support

There are three categories of funding for RTC graduate students: self-funding, MTU's employee education program, and HU department funding.

The RTC program supports Ph.D. students primarily through Teaching Assistantships. These assignments include support for fall, spring, and summer semesters, as well as Initial recommendations for support are made by the RTC Committee during the admission process. Funding decisions are competitive and always contingent upon budgetary decision-making at state and university levels. The RTC Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the RTC Steering Committee and Department Chair, makes all funding decisions as part of the admissions process.

In subsequent years, the RTC program in conjunction with the HU department make decisions on continuance of financial support for each student based on their satisfactory progress and their good academic standing. Contracts offering support and delineating the terms of that support are sent out during the summer months of each year.

All MS students are self-funded, unless they received a tuition benefit from MTU's employee education program.

Student support is primarily through teaching assistantships, beginning as Graduate Teaching Assistants and proceeding to Graduate Teaching Instructors (of Record) (GTIs), as defined by the Graduate School's Policies and Procedures for Assistantships. Appointments are reviewed each year by the RTC Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the RTC Steering Committee, the Director of First-Year Writing, Coordinators, and faculty mentors.

Students may apply for and be appointed as a RTC Program Graduate Assistant and/or an Assistant Director of First-Year Writing. At times, students may be appointed as graduate administrative assistants (GADIs), graduate research assistants to faculty (GRAs), or as assistants in the Michigan Tech Writing Center, HDMZ, or elsewhere. Applications for such positions are evaluated by the RTC Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the RTC Steering Committee and supervising faculty.

Our goal is to provide Ph.D. students who request support in their application for admission with four years of funding. An optional fifth year of funding may be available for students who are making satisfactory progress and remain in good academic standing.

5.3a Support Package

Tuition & Fee Waivers, Stipends

During the regular academic year (Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters), all supported students receive tuition waivers for up to 9 credits and computer-lab fee waivers. Students are expected to maintain appropriate enrollment, as governed by the Graduate School's Policies and Procedures for Assistantships.

Workload

The graduate student workload consists of assignments (courses or their equivalents) throughout the year. During the academic year (fall/spring), students typically have a course load of 1-2 or a 2-1. Each course (or an equivalent appointment) counts for approximately 10 hours per week. Thus, students are expected to average 10 to 20 hours per week, depending on the course load.

The teaching load is usually arranged so that new RTC graduate students teach one course in the fall term and two in the spring. Students teaching other courses for the department may have a different load distribution, depending on the availability and timing of particular courses or other administrative assignments.

Summer Teaching Appointments

Summer teaching appointments are limited and based on the student's experience and preparedness to teach a particular course.

Department and Student Contracts

Contracts for graduate assistants commit the Department of Humanities to offering training and fiscal support to students and likewise commit students to professional behavior with regard to their teaching and employment. In order to meet our teaching and administrative commitments, it is important that the RTC Program staff classes and administrative positions with qualified assistants.

Students who find they must resign their positions during the year should make every effort to inform the Director of Graduate Studies and the appropriate supervisor as soon as possible, but not less than two weeks prior to the beginning of the semester. Students who are scheduled to teach in summer sessions should inform the Director of Graduate Studies and the appropriate teaching supervisor no later than five weeks prior to summer semester.

Types of Support

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

RTC Ph.D. students may be assigned to teach lower division University (UN) or Humanities (HU) courses, or to assist faculty in teaching other Humanities or University courses.

The most common form of funding offered by the Department of Humanities is as Graduate Teaching Assistants/Instructors (GTAs/GTIs) for University courses, primarily UN1015: College Writing, Reading, and Research. RTC students assigned to teach first-year writing courses are required to enroll for HU5931 – Composition Pedagogy during the first term of their employment, as well as attend the intensive training session prior to the Fall term in which they begin their employment.

While GTAs assist faculty in their teaching, GTIs are instructors of record and therefore are required to:

- Design courses and prepare a syllabus for each class
- Meet their classes according to the Registrar's schedule
- Design and evaluate assignments
- Hold office hours

- Keep accurate records and report grades
- Conduct, receive, and review student evaluations

GTIs are also expected to attend staff meetings such as the First Year Writing Program meetings and to meet regularly with their faculty mentors.

Teaching assignments other than UN 1015 (College Writing, Reading, and Research) require students to have completed appropriate training through practicum courses as noted in section 2.3.

Other practica are available on a rotating basis. These practica are required for students who want to teach courses other than first-year writing.

The RTC program will work with faculty and students to schedule a regular rotation of the various practica for students. All practica are 3-credit courses and provide students with opportunities to further engage with the pedagogical practices and increase their disciplinary knowledge of specific disciplines.

Current practica include:

- HU 5932 Technical Communication Practicum
- HU 5934 Communication Practicum
- HU 5935 Writing Center Practicum
- HU 5937 Literature Practicum
- HU 6715 Advanced Composition
- HU 6740 Media Practicum
- HU 6741 Film Practicum
- HU 6760 Philosophy Practicum
- HU 6090 General Practicum

In the interest of program transparency and making practica available to all students, those interested in specific practica should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies prior to the faculty/instructor of record.

Note: Because a majority of RTC graduate funding comes via teaching, international students must show clear evidence of experience and excellence in spoken and written English. International students who are native speakers of languages other than English must follow the Graduate School admissions requirements and the Graduate School policies for Graduate Language Assessment and Support.

Graduate Administrative and Research Assistants

Graduate Administrative Assistants (GADIs) and Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) perform administrative support duties or research activities under the direction of RTC faculty or faculty from other departments. Such assignments are usually awarded only to advanced students, may require previous internships or training, and are frequently mixed with teaching assignments. GADIs and GRAs receive comparable financial support to GTIs.

Finishing Fellowships

The Graduate School offers a limited number of competitive Finishing Fellowships to PhD students who expect to complete their dissertation during the period of the finishing fellowship.

Other Funding

RTC students should consider any funding opportunities that will contribute to the completion of their degree. RTC students with assistantships are strongly discouraged from adding to their workload through additional employment (by accepting positions at other universities, for example). The following are some recommended sources for external funding.

The King-Chávez-Parks Future Faculty Fellowship

The King-Chávez-Parks Future Faculty Fellowship program provides grants to support graduate education for students who meet MTU's requirements for Michigan state residency and who are considered economically or academically disadvantaged.

The purpose of the King-Chávez-Parks Future Faculty Fellowship Program is to increase the pool of academically or economically disadvantaged candidates pursuing faculty teaching or administrative careers in postsecondary education.

Research Grants

Faculty in the Humanities Department, or from across campus, may secure research funding that contains employment opportunities for qualified graduate students (for instance, through the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Students are encouraged to seek outside support and funding, as long as the work or research entailed is consistent with and supportive of a student's progress towards completion of the MS or Ph.D. degree.

Fellowships (within MTU & National)

A number of competitively awarded fellowships are available for research and dissertation completion. Securing prestigious awards provides time for concentration on one's research and writing. A partial list of available awards is through Graduate School Financial Support.

Summer Funding (Outside the RTC Program)

Students may find employment as counselors or instructors in various outreach programs offered by the university, including Summer Youth Programs.

Travel Funds

Students presenting papers at conferences can request partial assistance for travel expenses from the Graduate Student Government (GSG) and from the RTC Graduate Program.

The Graduate Student Government offers travel grants to help with the cost of presenting at a conference. GSG Travel Grants lists requirements for eligibility and the types of travel grants available.

MTU's Institute of Computing and Cybersystems (ICC) has travel grants available for faculty and graduate students. Eligibility and requirements can be found at: <https://www.mtu.edu/icc/research/travel-grants/>

The Department of Humanities also sets aside travel funds to support graduate student traveling to conferences to present their work. Applications should be made through the [RTC Graduate Travel Funds Application](#).

Any additional questions about program policies or financial support? Please ask at the RTC Office.

5.4 RTC Faculty as Mentors: Advisors, Committee Members, Teaching Practica (other than Composition Pedagogy, HU 5931), and Job Placement Officer

RTC Graduate Faculty can take on several roles in terms of mentoring graduate students. All RTC Graduate Faculty can be student advisors, members of graduate student committees, and lead instructors of teaching practica.

5.4a Graduate Faculty as (Co-)Advisors and Committee Members

The Director of Graduate Studies encourages first and second year graduate students to discuss their coursework, research, and teaching interests with as many graduate faculty as possible. These conversations will help students identify potential advisors and committee members.

Students and the graduate faculty who has/have been chosen by a MS or a Ph.D. student as their (co-)advisor(s) should complete an [Advisor Recommendation Form](#). For Ph.D. students preparing for the QEs, this form should be submitted, along with a QE reading list to the RTC program assistant during the summer following the completion of their coursework. Advisor Recommendation Forms can be used at multiple points in the process of earning a Ph.D. It is for both appointing and changing advisors.

Ph.D. students and graduate faculty should consult [section 4.4 of the Handbook](#) for additional information regarding choosing an advisor and a committee, and early conversations with potential advisors.

MS students and graduate faculty should consult section 3.2 of the Handbook for more detailed information about choosing an advisor and committee, and early conversations with graduate faculty.

5.4b The responsibilities for the student's (co-)advisors and committee members at both the MS and the Ph.D. level include

- Offering advice about the relevant milestones: Proposals; Reports and Theses (MS), and QEs and Dissertation Prospectus and Defense (Ph.D.s)
- Meeting with students to discuss the formation of their committee(s)
- Helping students prepare for milestones through discussions of reading lists, ideas, relevant methods/methodologies
- Reading and approving chapter drafts
- Offering advice regarding the completion of their degree
- Advisors and committee members and when possible, a department-appointed graduate faculty job-market advisor, have a responsibility to assist their advisees to prepare for and navigate the job market and alternative career choices.
 - This includes providing feedback on drafts of Curriculum Vitae (CVs), cover letters, collecting teaching materials, and composing a teaching philosophy, amongst other materials which might be required prior to a job interview. It also includes organizing a mock interview.
 - Ideally, these materials should be prepared a semester prior to the student entering the job market.

5.4c Graduate Faculty of Practica

Graduate faculty should contact the Director of Graduate Studies or the Graduate Program Assistant if you have questions and/or if you are interested in teaching a practicum (see section 2.3b)

Students interested in taking a practicum should contact the Director of Graduate Studies or the Graduate Program Assistant to indicate their interest in enrolling in a particular practicum.

5.4d Graduate Faculty Job-Market Advising & Placement Officer

The department and the RTC program **may** appoint a Placement Officer to help students and graduate faculty prepare for and navigate the job search process. When this is done, the Placement Officer should work with (Co-)Advisors and Committees to further support their efforts: reading drafts of job materials and organizing mock interviews.

6. Graduate Student Resources

6.1 Within the Humanities Department

6.1a The RTC Program Assistant and Department Coordinator

The RTC Program Assistant manages records and paperwork pertaining to graduate students, faculty, and the RTC program. The RTC Program Office is also a source for information regarding the university, the department, and the local community. Questions about MS and PhD registration, forms, contracts, financial support, grades, student records, committees, and offices should be addressed to the RTC Program Assistant, Rachael Hathcoat (rehathco@mtu.edu) in Walker 319. Katy Ellenich (kmelleni@mtu.edu) in Walker 301 is the Department Coordinator.

6.1b RTC Research Forum

The RTC program schedules speakers for the RTC Research Forum during the fall and spring semesters. Graduate students, HU faculty, affiliated faculty associated with the Humanities Department, and visiting faculty are encouraged to share their research, scholarship, and creative expression with the department every month during the academic year. Please contact the RTC Program Assistant or the RTC Director of Graduate Studies to schedule a presentation during the fall or spring semesters.

6.1c Reading Groups

The RTC program's Director and Program Assistant encourage the organization of, and may occasionally facilitate, formal or informal reading groups amongst the department's faculty and graduate students.

Students can also organize their own reading groups around a special interest or topic. It can prove particularly useful for students in the final stages of their Ph.D. program to meet and read chapter drafts and to offer each other supportive feedback.

6.1d Professional Development Events

The RTC program's Director and Program Assistant will help faculty and graduate students organize events focused on professional development. These events may take the form of a roundtable discussion, a workshop, or inviting a speaker to campus to discuss topics such as academic freedom or career opportunities in academic and non-academic job markets.

If you have a particular topic you would like addressed, please contact the RTC Director of Graduate Studies or the RTC Program Assistant.

6.1e Writing Center

The Michigan Tech Writing Center (Walker 107) offers both undergraduate and graduate learning center support, as well as writing across the curriculum support for faculty and staff. It also hosts both the student newspaper, *The Lode* and the Creative Writing Club.

The Writing Center leadership can help graduate-student instructors with:

- Instructional support for writing projects in the classroom
- Supplemental presentations and writing in class (as available)
- Embedded content into Canvas
- Giving meaningful writing feedback
- Brainstorming writing assignments and implementation

The Michigan Tech Writing Center can help graduate students with:

- CVs/resumes, cover letters
- Personal, research, and scholarly statements
- Grant and fellowship proposals
- Creative writing
- Scientific and technical reports
- Start-up materials and elevator pitches
- Classroom and professional presentations
- Procrastination and writer's block
- Brainstorming, development, revision, and editing

- And more!

For more information about becoming a graduate student peer coach and opportunities to learn more about Writing Center Administration please contact Professor Matt Seigel or Claire Helakoski at writingcenter@mtu.edu

6.1f WLAH: Walker Lab for Arts and Humanities

The Walker Lab for Arts and Humanities (WLAH, formerly called the HDMZ) is a media-production, computing, and language-resource facility located on the first floor of the Walker Arts and Humanities Center. Digital media equipment and resources may be checked out by graduate students. Please consult the WLAH [website](#) for further information.

6.1g Committees

Graduate students may serve on a variety of Humanities Department committees, including the RTC Steering Committee. Committee positions are filled either voluntarily through an election process (initiated by the graduate students), invitation, or request. Students who are interested in serving on committees should talk to the RTC Director of Graduate Studies.

6.1h Graduate Student Mentors

If an incoming graduate student is interested in having a graduate student mentor, the RTC Director can help facilitate connections between students.

6.2 Graduate Student Resources outside the Department

6.2a Graduate Student Government

The Graduate Student Government (GSG) at Michigan Tech advocates for and serves graduate students by acting as a liaison between the university's administration and graduate students and providing opportunities for personal and professional growth. GSG sponsors social and academic events throughout the year, including the Lunch-n-Learn Lecture Series and the Graduate Research Colloquium: a Poster and Presentation Competition. GSG supplements conference travel costs through travel grants for graduate students presenting at national and international conferences. It also provides professional development grants to help graduate students cover the costs of a professional course, certification, training, or workshop. These funds can also help offset the publication costs, or a professional organization's membership fee, as long as it is aligned with the student's degree and/or coursework.

Each department is allotted a particular number of graduate student representatives, based on enrollment numbers. RTC graduate students elect representatives yearly to serve as the program's representatives. These students participate in student government by advocating for their fellow graduate students and attending GSG meetings.

6.2b The J. Robert Van Pelt and John and Ruanne Opie Library

The J. Robert Van Pelt and John and Ruanne Opie Library maintains a collection of print and online resources, including databases, links to professional journals, and coordinates with Michigan Libraries and Interlibrary Loan to borrow and deliver materials for MTU student and faculty use.

The Library offers students and faculty a range of services including a range of instruction materials and services including course-integrated information literacy sessions, physical tours of the building and services, online library guides and video tutorials, workshops, and assistance with selecting supplemental course materials. RTC students are expected to consult their collections and databases, as well as engage with their other research resources.

Additionally, the library provides instructional support for graduate teaching assistants/instructors, which can take the form of course reserve, library instruction, or other services. Finally, the library building has several study rooms, computers, printing and photocopying areas, a café, University Archives and Historical Collections, and other amenities.

6.2c Studying Abroad

Michigan Tech graduate students may participate in foreign exchange programs. The RTC program has had a graduate student exchange program with the English Dept of Jean Jaurès University, Toulouse. Please contact the RTC Graduate Director and the RTC Program Assistant for more information.

6.2d Center for Student Mental Health and Well-being

The Center for Student Mental Health and Well-being (Administration Building, Rm 301) MTU supports student mental health and wellness through individual and group counseling, well-being education and programming, and peer support.

Students can arrange for an appointment

- Over the phone by calling 906-487-2538
- By email at counseling@mtu.edu

7. University Policies

7.1 Access and Disability

Michigan Tech's Equal Opportunity and Notice of Non-Discrimination statement

Michigan Tech complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Michigan Technological University is committed to the full inclusion of individuals with disabilities and to the continuous improvement of the accessibility of our campus, programs, and activities. Michigan Tech provides reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity and access to all programs, activities, and services of the University.

Student Disability Services at Michigan Tech provides support and resources for students with or without a documented disability and administers the procedures for requesting academic and university housing accommodations. Student employees who wish to request accommodations related to their on-campus employment may contact the ADA Coordinator in EOC for assistance.

If you have a disability that could affect your performance in any class or that requires an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact Disability Services at sds@mtu.edu or 487-3558 as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

7.1a Other Accommodations

Veterans and active duty military personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, disabilities) are welcomed and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to their instructor(s).

7.2 Grievance Procedures

For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, Chair/Dean of your academic unit, Dean of Students Office at 487-2212 or Equal Opportunity Compliance and Title IX at 487-3310.

The RTC Office can advocate for you in communicating with any of these offices or other university units.

Faculty or students with concerns or complaints about the behavior of other faculty or students in professional situations or in interpersonal relationships should follow the grievance procedures described below. Note that questions of plagiarism should be taken to the Dean of Students, and gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual assault/violence should be reported using Title IX Reporting Options.

These procedures are designed to protect the rights and privacy of both faculty and students and to equitably adjudicate conflicts among faculty and students.

7.2a General Guidelines for Grievances

Generally, faculty and students should avoid discussing their complaints with colleagues. Faculty or students who believe they have been subjected to discrimination based on sex or sexual harassment, suspect that an unfounded discrimination complaint may be filed against them, or have been threatened with the filing of such a complaint should Report a Concern as soon as possible.

7.2b Student-Initiated Grievances

Students have the right to fair and equal treatment by administrators and to expect professional behavior from other faculty and students. Professional behavior includes such matters as a respect for expertise, individual beliefs, and personal privacy.

Students should be aware that the campus provides an Ombuds Office, a resource for problem-solving and conflict resolution. Students who have complaints about administrators, faculty, or other students should first discuss their complaints with the person concerned, if possible. If the complaint cannot be resolved in this way, they should discuss the complaint with the RTC Director of Graduate Studies. The RTC Director then consults with the RTC Steering Committee (unless inappropriate) and discusses the complaint with the administrator, faculty member, or student in question.

After exploring and attempting to resolve the problem, the RTC Director should report to the Humanities Department Chair and the RTC Steering Committee. If resolution is not possible at this level, the complaint will be referred to the Humanities Department Chair. If the complaint concerns the RTC Director of Graduate Studies, it should be referred to the Chair directly. If the complaint concerns the Chair and resolution is not possible within the department, the complaint should be referred to the Dean of the College of Sciences and Arts.

7.2c Faculty-Initiated Grievances

Faculty members have the right to fair and equal treatment by administrators and to expect professional behavior from other faculty and students. Professional behavior includes such matters as a respect for expertise, individual beliefs, and personal privacy.

Faculty with complaints about graduate students should first discuss their complaints with the person concerned, if possible. If the complaint cannot be resolved in this way, they should discuss the complaint with the RTC Director of Graduate Studies, who will consult with the RTC Steering Committee, discuss the complaint with the student, attempt to resolve the problem, and report to the Chair. If resolution is not possible at this level, the complaint will be referred to the Chair.

Faculty members should be aware that the campus provides an Ombuds Office, a resource for problem-solving and conflict resolution.

7.2d Title IX

As the Title IX Office explains:

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a Federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities that receive Federal funds. It states:

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

Michigan Technological University does not discriminate in its employment practices or in its educational programs or activities on the basis of sex and gender. Michigan Tech also prohibits retaliation against any person opposing discrimination or participating in any discrimination investigation or complaint process internally or externally. Reports of misconduct, questions regarding Title IX, and concerns about noncompliance should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator. Please contact the Title IX Coordinator or the Assistant Secretary of Education within the Office of Civil Rights (OCR).

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a Federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities that receive Federal funds. It states:

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

To officially report an incident of gender discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual assault/violence, consult the [Title IX Reporting Options](#), which includes private resources and confidential assistance.

Humanities Department

Walker Arts and Humanities Center
1400 Townsend Drive, Houghton, MI 49931-1295
PH: 906-487-2540
mtu.edu/humanities

Michigan Technological University is an Equal Opportunity Educational Institution/Equal Opportunity Employer that provides equal opportunity for all, including protected veterans and individuals with disabilities.



**Michigan
Technological**
University