

# **DEPARTMENT OF LAND RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES**

*Montana State University*



## **GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**Information for graduate students enrolled in the Department of Land  
Resources & Environmental Sciences at Montana State University**

**<http://landresources.montana.edu>**

**December 2025**

**NOTE: THE MSU CATALOG, GRADUATE CATALOG, AND THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
HAVE PRECEDENCE OVER THIS PUBLICATION RELATIVE TO *OFFICIAL*  
PROCEDURES AND DEADLINES.**

**The Graduate School website may be found at**  
**<http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/>**

## INTRODUCTION

The Department of Land Resources & Environmental Sciences (LRES) at Montana State University offers graduate programs leading to the following degrees:

- M.S. in Land Resources and Environmental Sciences (Accelerated and Online Options available)
- M.S. in Land Rehabilitation
- Ph.D. in Ecology and Environmental Sciences

Specialization within each area depends on the student's interest and availability of financial support for interested students. LRES also participates in the cross-departmental M.S. in Entomology Program. LRES graduate students enrolled in the Entomology M.S. degree program will be expected to follow the guidelines in this booklet unless those guidelines are superseded by the Entomology guidelines.

The purpose of the graduate program is to provide students with the opportunity to focus and extend their knowledge in a subject matter field as well as to develop their capability for critical thinking, originality in research, and depth of academic training. The information contained in this handbook has been assembled for the convenience of graduate students and advisors in LRES. This booklet should be used in concert with the MSU Course Catalog and information on The Graduate School website.

**Graduate students and advisors are expected to become thoroughly familiar with the regulations of this handbook and those of The Graduate School.** Failure to follow these regulations and observe the degree requirements invariably results in complications and often delays progress in completing the chosen degree. [The Graduate School Official Policies](#)

**It is the student's responsibility to meet all deadlines regarding their graduate program.** Deadlines may change from time to time. Check with The Graduate School and the LRES Student Success Coordinator for updated information. [The Graduate School Dates and Deadlines](#)

Graduate students on a formal appointment and receiving an assistantship stipend are considered full-time research assistants (GRA) or teaching assistants (GTA) in the department. These appointments represent an agreement between the student and department, with each party having responsibility in the arrangement. GRA's generally devote about one-half time to class studies and one-half time to a research project under the guidance of a faculty Major Advisor over the course of the appointment. GTA's generally devote about one-half time to teaching responsibilities and about one-half time to class studies during the academic year. Research responsibilities occur throughout the year but are the predominant activities during the summer months. The time devoted to these activities will vary between student programs, but students will devote their full and concerted efforts toward completion of their program. The appointment period is intended to be one of academic growth and professional development. Students are expected to work on a regular basis each working day except for university holidays or approved leave periods. Inherent in the graduate student training program is an expectation that students will devote long hours, often substantially more than a typical work week, toward degree completion. Indebtedness to the research project and the department is not satisfied until the thesis and graduation are accomplished and appropriate publications are completed.

Students seeking admission to graduate status in LRES must hold a bachelor's or master's degree, have a record of high scholarship in areas closely related to land resources and environmental sciences, and show significant promise for success in a graduate program. They are expected to present evidence of college-level training and mastery in biology, chemistry, and mathematics sufficient to provide a good background for further study at the advanced level. Students with deficiencies may be required to take background courses to make up for these deficiencies before or after being approved for acceptance. All applications are evaluated by a departmental review committee and the Department Head for final recommendations to The Graduate School. Successful applicants are accepted into both

the Department and The Graduate School. The minimum requirements for acceptance to the LRES graduate program include: transcripts showing a GPA of 3.0 for the last two years of college, a resume/CV, three letters of recommendation, and a personal statement describing the applicant's research interests and career goals in pursuing graduate training. For the three letters of recommendation, the identity of the recommenders is at the discretion of the student. If the prospective major advisor writes one of the letters, the student may be requested to provide an additional letter.

For international applicants, minimum test scores from acceptable testing agencies are TOEFL: 4.2 (new scale of 1-6; previous scaled scores of 80-internet-based [iBT] are still accepted at this time), IELTS: 6.5, or 120 Duolingo (MSU is not accepting Pearson's PTE at this time). English proficiency exam scores are not required if English is the first official language of the applicant's country of citizenship or if the applicant has received an undergraduate or graduate degree from an institution in the United States. These scores must be submitted directly from the testing agency to MSU. For transcripts that do not show grades and GPA on a 4.00 scale, it is helpful to provide a document with grade translations.

**An appropriate LRES faculty mentor must agree to serve as the student's major adviser as a condition of admission.**

Students in the Land Rehabilitation M.S. program are eligible for the WICHE (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education) tuition waiver. Students who have accepted WICHE support **MAY NOT** change to the M.S. program in LRES unless and until they repay the entirety of their previous WICHE support. All policies listed in the MSU Catalog, Graduate Catalog and in this handbook apply to all graduate degree candidates in LRES. [WICHE Information](#)

[The Graduate School Admissions Policy](#)

**ALL FORMS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO AND REVIEWED BY THE LRES STUDENT SUCCESS COORDINATOR BEFORE BEING SUBMITTED TO DOCSIGN FOR SIGNATURES AND BEFORE GOING TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL.**

**If something is unclear about a form or process, please ask questions first!**

## APPOINTMENTS AND GENERAL GUIDELINES

All new graduate students are **required** to attend a departmental orientation with the Department Head and LRES staff which will be held at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters.

### Assistantships

When students are appointed to an assistantship, this implies that the assistantship will continue contingent on **satisfactory student performance** and availability of funds for the time periods stated in the paragraph below. Exceptions to appointments are included in the hire letter offering the assistantship.

Assistantships are awarded as a means of providing financial assistance so students can make steady progress toward completion of a degree. Students on assistantship do not qualify for additional remuneration. They are expected to complete degree requirements within a reasonable time frame depending upon the nature of their programs. Students on assistantships are expected to complete an M.S. degree in 2 to 2½ years and the Ph.D. degree in 3 to 4 years. The Electronic Graduate Assistant Agreement Form (e-GAAF) must be completed and approved before a student can be placed on an assistantship. Graduate Students may work (through any combination of payroll types) at Residence Life, University Food Services, ASMSU Tutoring, or apply for classified, professional or adjunct positions with no restrictions. For this type of employment, a Graduate Student Authorization Form must be submitted with approval from the student's advisor and The Graduate School.

**Graduate students appointed as Graduate Teaching or Research Assistants may not be employed for more than 19 hours per week cumulatively for all forms of employment on campus. All campus employment of graduate students must be approved through The Graduate School.**

Currently, the Department Head allocates university-funded in-state and/or out-of-state tuition waivers to GTA's and GRA's. In general, GTA's have priority in these assignments. The majority of GRA programs are funded by research grants and contracts awarded to individual LRES faculty. Fees and/or tuition may be paid by a research grant or contract, if approved by the major advisor and granting agency.

Domestic students are encouraged to obtain residency status as soon as possible. Contact the Registrar's Office in Montana Hall for full details on policies regarding residency.

### The Graduate School Appointment Policy

### Major Advisor/Graduate Committee Chairperson

The major advisor is the primary contact for each graduate student and assists the student in all matters related to graduate study.

The major advisor has responsibility to be familiar with and to uphold LRES and MSU standards for the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees and to provide excellent mentorship to graduate students under their supervision, consistent with departmental goals and expectations.

**Only tenurable LRES faculty may serve as the major advisor/graduate committee chairperson for LRES graduate students.** Non-tenurable LRES faculty on courtesy appointments (e.g., Research and

Affiliate faculty), or tenurable faculty from other MSU departments, may co-chair LRES graduate committees with a tenurable LRES faculty member upon approval of the LRES Department Head.

Duties of the major advisor:

- Assigns graduate students to their research/teaching programs.
- Assists in selecting the student's graduate advisory committee.
- Initiates the thesis proposal and initial meeting with the graduate advisory committee.
- Helps determine the student's program of study (required courses) in consultation with the student and the graduate committee.
- Monitors student progress and conducts annual reviews.
- Administers comprehensive, defense-of-thesis and final examinations.
- Reviews program change requests.
- Ensures program rigor.
- Helps arrange for the student to gain teaching experience.
- Monitors student progress toward degree completion and adherence to the time schedule for meeting Department and The Graduate School requirements.

#### Graduate Committee

The major advisor and graduate advisory committee share responsibility for overseeing the student's needs and progress. The graduate committee members are selected by the student and major advisor based on their qualifications to directly assist in the student's thesis research program. Appropriate disciplinary representation should be present on the committee, consistent with the specific research project.

A master's committee is composed of a minimum of three (3) members. A doctoral committee is composed of a minimum of four (4) members. **At least three members of a Ph.D. committee and at least two members of an M.S. committee are required to be full-time tenurable faculty at MSU (as opposed to emeritus/research/adjunct/affiliate faculty or non-academic experts).** The majority of the committee should be made up of faculty from the degree-granting department but due to the interdisciplinary nature of many degrees, it is not limited to the degree-granting department. The Graduate Committee Chair and the Department Head recommends the committee composition, and final approval rests with The Graduate School.

Committee members not holding faculty status at MSU must submit documentation of their qualifications, including curriculum vitae (CV), to the LRES Student Success Coordinator before approval. The proposed committee membership is submitted and approved by the Department Head then submitted to The Graduate School as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the second semester for M.S. students or by the end of the third semester for Ph.D. students. Committee composition may subsequently be modified as needed but must remain within the guidelines above.

The Graduate Committee Form is electronically submitted in MyMSU before the Program of Study can be completed. [Committee Instructions for Students \(PDF\)](#) ; [Committee Instruction for Faculty-Depts \(PDF\)](#)

#### Graduate Program of Study

The program of study acts as a contract between the student, the department, the college, The Graduate School, and the University. The program of study, jointly developed by the graduate committee and the student, defines the minimum requirements for the degree. Other requirements as determined by the student's graduate committee may also be listed. Once a course is graded, it cannot be removed from a program of study. Courses applied toward one degree may not be used for another. Students may take classes beyond those listed on their program of study.

All master's and doctoral students are expected to be familiar with both The Graduate School and their specific academic college and department degree requirements.

Completion of the thesis research requirement will be verified by the graduate committee and the major advisor following the outcome of the final defense-of thesis examination. With exception for Professional M.S. in LRES students, all M.S. degree students in the department are expected to pursue a "Plan A" option (thesis). If a "Plan B" option (professional paper) is desired, this must be communicated to the major advisor **before** the initiation of the graduate program. Students are not allowed to change from Plan A to Plan B except in the event of **remarkable** circumstances beyond the control of the student. **Such a change must be approved in writing by the student's graduate committee and the Department Head.** A Change in Graduate Status form will then be submitted to the Graduate School, through the LRES Student Success Coordinator.

The minimum credit requirement for master's degrees is thirty (30) credits; individual degree programs may require more. Nine (9) or ten (10) thesis credits must be completed successfully for thesis plan programs. Students need to follow the credit combination and total that has been approved for their degree program. An unlimited number of 590 credits may be taken. However, only a maximum of ten (10) 590 credits count toward degree requirements along with a minimum of twenty (20) content coursework credits.

All students earning a doctoral degree from MSU must complete a minimum of sixty (60) credit hours post-baccalaureate, of which eighteen (18) to thirty (30) must be dissertation credits. The satisfactory completion of certain courses is stipulated by the department. An unlimited number of dissertation credits may be taken; however, a maximum of thirty (30) dissertation credits count toward degree requirements. The satisfactory completion of certain courses is stipulated by the department.

A maximum of thirty (30) credits from a previously earned master's degree (from MSU or another accredited University) may be applied toward the sixty (60) credit minimum required for the doctoral degree.

A minimum of thirty (30) credits applicable to the degree must be taken from MSU. The combined total of credits considered from an external master's degree and any transfer credits may not exceed thirty (30) credits.

**Only those courses listed on an approved Graduate Program of Study are applicable toward graduate degree credit requirements. Once a Program of Study is approved by The Graduate School, it will be uploaded into the student's DegreeWorks Worksheet as the approved program towards degree completion.**

The program of study is planned by students in close collaboration with the major advisor and graduate committee. The program must be submitted via the [Graduate Program of Study](#) process in MyMSU to The Graduate School by the end of the student's second (2nd) term of attendance for master's students and the end of the third (3rd) term for doctoral students. A one-time fee is associated with the filing and approval of this form. See [Fees & Holds](#). See [Degree Requirements/General/Other Credits](#). A student must have an approved, not just submitted, Program of Study and Committee on file with The Graduate School prior to sitting for any portion of the

### **comprehensive exam or defense.**

A deficiency identification exam may be given at the discretion of the major advisor and graduate committee. The goal of the exam is to help identify areas of course work or disciplinary deficiency to assist in designing an appropriate plan of study.

The program of study may later be revised as needed, subject to department and The Graduate School approval. Any changes may be submitted before or during the term affected through MyMSU-Graduate Student Resources. Final changes must be made at least one month before the end of the term in which degree requirements will be completed. Changes to a student's program of study must be made through the [Program of Study](#) process in MyMSU and recommended by the graduate committee chair and the Department Head. Final approval rests with The Graduate School. No fee is associated with revisions.

[Program of Study Instructions for Students \(PDF\)](#); [Program of Study Instructions for Faculty \(PDF\)](#)

Students receiving a GRA/GTA tuition waiver or having tuition/fees paid from a grant will typically register for six (6) to nine (9) credits per semester. **EXCEPTION:** Those students working toward residency status must register for no more than six (6) credits per term for the first 12 months in attendance. It is the student's responsibility to enroll in the appropriate number of credits to satisfy all department, college, Graduate School, and university criteria.

Students must be enrolled:

- On or before the tenth (10th) class day of instruction as set forth by the Office of the Registrar's [Schedule of Classes](#). The Graduate School reserves the right to deny class registration to any student after tenth (10th) day of classes.
- Each term (fall, spring, summer) they wish to use faculty time or university facilities (e.g., meeting with graduate committee chair, using the library, laboratory, and so forth). Students must be enrolled in both prior Spring and upcoming Fall terms to be considered a continuing student during the summer semester if not enrolled in credits.
- For a minimum of three (3) credits during the term (fall, spring, summer) they sit for comprehensive examinations or defend their thesis or dissertation.
- For a minimum of three (3) credits during the term (fall, spring, summer) of graduation.

[The Graduate School Enrollment & Residency Policy](#)

### Graduation Application Process

A Graduation Application must be submitted by the student through MyMSU-Graduate Student Resources. If the student does not complete the requirements during the term specified, the previous application must be withdrawn ([Complete Online](#)), and a new application form must be submitted to the LRES Student Success Coordinator to forward to The Graduate School by the applicable deadline. Thus, the student and major advisor should carefully plan the timing of program completion and filing the application for advanced degree. If the thesis/dissertation is submitted *after* the published deadline and the student is currently registered for three credits, the student may choose to make all corrections/changes **before the first day of the following academic term** and be eligible for a one-credit registration the following term (instead of the mandatory three credit registration the term of graduation). Students who choose and are eligible for this option will be *certified to graduate the following term. If more time is needed beyond the first day of the following term, the student will be required to register for at least three credits to be eligible for graduation that term.*

#### **1. Meet with the Advisor/Committee Chair/Program Leader:**

- Meet with the Advisor/Committee Chair/Program Leader to review your DegreeWorks to ensure your worksheet is accurate and that you are on track to graduate.
- If changes are needed for the program of study, please submit a Program Revision in MyMSU to update the approved program of study on file with The Graduate School.
- If the advisor agrees that you are ready to apply to graduate, they will put a specific note in DegreeWorks that they approve your application for graduation: "Grad Committee Chair/Program Leader Approves GR Graduation Application"

\*If you are applying to graduate with multiple credentials (for example, a master's degree and a certificate), you will need a Committee Chair/Program Leader note for each program in DegreeWorks.

\*\*It is the specific note text in DegreeWorks from your Committee Chair/Program Leader which will allow you access to the online graduation application.

## 2. Submit Your Graduation Application in MyMSU:

- Once you have an Advisor/Committee Chair/Program Leader enter the note in DegreeWorks for each credential you are applying to graduate with, submit your graduation application(s) via MyMSU- Apply to Graduate in Registration & Records

[Link to MyMSU](#)

\*The MyMSU online application currently cannot process one-credit extension or enroute graduation applications. If you are applying for a one-credit extension or a master's enroute degree, you will need to use the [PDF](#) graduation application instead. The PDF form will be completed by the student and submitted for approval through the LRES Student Success Coordinator.

\*\*You can only submit the MyMSU graduation application once per degree. If you previously submitted a graduation application and then withdrew, you will need to submit a [PDF](#) graduation application when you reapply to graduate.

[The Graduate School Graduation and Commencement Policy](#)

[Graduation Application Directions for Students \(PDF\)](#); [Graduation Application Directions for Faculty-Depts \(PDF\)](#)

[Thesis Proposal](#)

Thesis topics are to be chosen so they are in harmony with the research project with which the student is associated. Students should develop, as soon as possible, with their major advisor for consideration by the graduate advisory committee, a complete, comprehensive, and workable thesis research proposal. This proposal should provide an appropriate title, a synopsis of the current literature or lack of it, a statement of what is to be researched, why the research is important relative to that already done, proposed research methods, and a proposed timeline for completion.

Recommended guidelines:

- Title - Journal title style
- Objectives - one-half page
- Justification - one paragraph
- Literature Review - about three pages
- Materials/Methods - one to two pages
- Expected contribution to existing knowledge - one-half page
- Timeline and metrics

Greater detail and/or length may be required by the major advisor and/or graduate advisory committee. Proposals should be completed by the end of the student's second semester.

### Thesis/Dissertation

General guidelines for Electronic Theses and Dissertations may be found on The Graduate School website and are to be followed by the student and major advisor/committee chair during the preparation of the thesis/dissertation and its approval by The Graduate School.

#### The Graduate School Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) and Submission Portal

Thesis/Dissertation grading is Pass/Fail. Full-time students who are doing thesis work should register for an average course load of 9 credits per semester, unless they have a current GRA/GTA appointment. This can be accomplished by adding thesis credits each semester around course credits to bring the total up to near the average figure.

Thesis preparation must follow The Graduate School guidelines. Make certain that all names and titles in the acknowledgments are accurate and spelled correctly. A graduate student can expect the draft of the thesis to be returned from the major advisor and graduate committee reviews within two weeks of the time submitted. A draft version of the thesis must be reviewed and given tentative approval by all members of the graduate committee before an examination copy is prepared and the final exam scheduled.

Completion of the thesis research requirement will be verified by the graduate committee and the major advisor following the outcome of the final examination.

### Examinations and Defense of Thesis/Dissertation

Refer to The Graduate School's [Dates and Deadlines](#) regarding all dates to meet graduation and thesis submission deadlines. After the thesis has been read by the full committee, the final examination can be scheduled. Adhering to The Graduate School's Policies, the examination copy for the thesis defense is to be made available to LRES at least one week before the examination.

The M.S. final examination will be both comprehensive, to test breadth and depth of knowledge, and a defense-of-thesis. Students should discuss with the major advisor how this exam will be handled, so they may appropriately prepare for it.

#### The Graduate School Master's Degree Requirements Policy

Comprehensive examinations for the Ph.D. degree are both written and oral. The written phase precedes the oral exam by no more than one month and is scheduled when the student and major advisor agree that the student is ready. **The comprehensive examination should be taken by the end of the second year of the student's program.** The graduate committee will discuss with the student the format, scope, and location of the written and oral comprehensive exam at least one month before the exams are taken. The written exam must be completed within a period of one week. Questions are prepared by the candidate's graduate committee, with additional questions solicited from other staff members if the major advisor desires. Grading is on a Pass/Fail basis. The committee has final authority, and two dissenting votes constitute failure of the comprehensive examination.

The final examination for the Ph.D. degree, which should occur at least six months (preferably nine months) after passing the written and oral comprehensive examinations, is primarily a dissertation defense, but may also include additional questions within the broad scope of the student's discipline.

### [The Graduate School Doctoral Degree Requirements Policy](#)

**A Public Thesis/Dissertation Defense seminar is required for all M.S. and Ph.D. degrees.** The defense seminar shall present results included in the draft thesis submitted to the graduate advisory committee for review and may not take place until the draft thesis has been presented to the student's graduate committee for approval.

***Once the date has been set, contact the LRES Student Success Coordinator at least two weeks before the date for the thesis/dissertation defense.***

A notice to all departmental faculty and graduate students announcing the final exam and its location will be circulated by the LRES Front Desk **one week before the final exam date**. (Again, contact the LRES Student Success Coordinator – students are NOT to prepare notices on their own). The Graduate School will be notified of the defense seminar by the LRES Student Success Coordinator so it can be posted on the website. LRES faculty are encouraged to attend all final exams, but action relative to the candidate's achievement rests solely with the graduate advisory committee and the Department Head. An open seminar (30-45 minutes) covering the results of the thesis research is presented to attendees before the beginning of the thesis defense. The thesis in final form will be approved by the major advisor, graduate committee, the LRES Department Head, and the Dean of The Graduate School. Reports on Comprehensive Exam/Thesis will be completed by the LRES Student Success Coordinator and sent to Committee members in DocuSign before the Exam/Thesis date.

### Expectation for Publication

Publication of the thesis research results in a research journal **IS EXPECTED**; thus, the thesis research should be conducted with publication beyond the thesis in mind. Authors are encouraged to write in a manner that requires the least rewriting for a publication format and still meets the requirements of The Graduate School's guidelines. The student will prepare the journal manuscript(s) and submit to their major advisor. Publication guidelines are available from each major society or journal which describe correct format and requirements. If publication is not accomplished within one year after graduation, the advisor will be expected to publish the work as senior author.

### [The Graduate School Electronic Thesis/Dissertation Policy](#)

### Duties and Expectations

All graduate appointments are awarded with the understanding that the student will be involved in departmental research activities as an integral part of their academic program and training. They are to become familiar with and obtain a complete working knowledge of their chosen major area of study. Graduate students learn by assisting their major advisor in undertaking and completing research. An important part of the research process involves publishing results in a format that is readily accessible to others and thereby adds to the body of scientific knowledge. Funded graduate students are explicitly expected to publish their research in scientific journals if the work is deemed appropriate for publication by the major advisor. This is true even if funding has ended before the work has been converted to manuscript form and submitted.

All students, regardless of funding source, are expected to gain instructional experience through

assisting with teaching in an LRES or other approved lecture or laboratory course. This activity may or may not provide added financial compensation. Students completing the teaching assistance requirement will typically be involved about 15 hours per week in teaching activities in addition to their own research and course work. This time requirement will vary with specific courses and activities, number of graduate assistants participating, etc. Students should explore potential opportunities with their advisor and with other LRES faculty well in advance of their anticipated service.

#### Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities

##### Evaluation

Evaluation is a continuous process and is constantly being done by the major advisor, graduate committee, department head, and LRES faculty. Unsatisfactory student progress may lead to termination of the assistantship or graduate program. In some cases, a special meeting may be called to interview the committee and/or student relative to progress.

##### Vacation and Personal Interest Courses

Allowances for vacation and for special interest or recreational physical education classes must be arranged with the major advisor in advance. Tuition waivers allocated by the Department Head will NOT cover these courses. Graduate students do not automatically receive time off when classes are not in session unless it is a recognized university holiday.

##### LRES 594 Graduate Seminar

M.S. and Ph.D. students are required to complete one credit of LRES 594 Graduate Seminar. LRES 594 guidelines and instructor protocols must be followed. The seminar will be about the students' proposed thesis or dissertation research. This seminar should be timed so that it is presented early in the student's program (i.e., first or second semester). Students may take additional LRES 594 credits, but these are not required, and a seminar presentation will be required each time LRES 594 is taken.

**ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ALL LRES SEMINARS,  
WHETHER ENROLLED IN LRES 594 THAT SEMESTER OR NOT.**

##### Travel

Graduate students are encouraged to attend regional and national professional meetings and to present their work. Financial assistance may be provided from project funds, if available, and if the project leader and the administration are convinced that benefits to the project justify expenditure. Students may receive different amounts of financial assistance from different project sources. Certain funds that may occasionally become available to the department will be distributed to graduate students with priority given to those scheduled to present professional papers. If transportation to meetings is available in official vehicles, expenses incurred for other forms of transportation will normally not be paid by the department.

**An Out-of-State Travel Authorization form must be completed at least 2 weeks before departure date, and before encumbering any funds for travel arrangements. See the Accountant in the LRES Main Office for a complete explanation of all travel requirements well ahead of any planned travel.**

##### Commencement

MSU allows only those candidates who have completed all requirements for the degree (coursework, examinations, and final papers, including approval of the thesis or dissertation by the Graduate Dean) and who have applied to graduate by the deadline to participate in commencement exercises. Candidates listed in MSU's commencement booklet are those who have identified themselves as eligible to graduate. Being listed in the commencement booklet does not imply completion of the degree. Candidates who participate in commencement must wear appropriate academic caps and gowns. These may be purchased from the MSU Bookstore.

All candidates should log into MyMSU and update their mailing address and legal name for their diploma. Diplomas are dated the last day of the term in which the requirements for the degree are completed. Transcripts may be ordered online through the Registrar's Office.

Candidates utilizing the one-credit extension, and who have documentation from their committee chair that assures completion of degree requirements by the one-credit extension deadline, may participate in the current term's ceremony.

Candidates who have applied to graduate and are unable to meet the requirements for the term of intended graduation must withdraw their Graduation Application. Withdrawal requires completing and submitting the [Withdraw Graduation Application](#) form. The deadline to withdraw is the last day of the term of intended graduation.

In addition, if a student plans to use the [One-credit Extension](#) they also must 1) withdraw their Graduation Application and 2) submit a new Graduation Application by the end of the original intended term of graduation. Otherwise, students have until the normal posted term deadlines to apply for graduation.

#### Grievances

If such cases arise, these are referred to the major advisor and/or the Department Head.

#### Graduate Program Overview Committee

Many aspects of the LRES Graduate Program fall under the authority of the LRES Graduate Program Committee.

#### Department Head

The Department Head serves multiple functions relative to graduate students and programs. Among these are oversight and approval of proposed graduate programs and associated forms and ensuring that the quality and standards of the departmental M.S. and Ph.D. programs are upheld and maintained.

The Department Head also serves as an advocate for LRES graduate students, and as a mediator of any disputes or difficulties encountered by graduate students that cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the student's major advisor or graduate advisory committee. Students are encouraged to contact the Department Head before any such difficulties become exacerbated and/or prolonged.

## Helpful Links for Graduate Students

- [LRES Department](#)
- [LRES Seminar Series](#)
- [The Graduate School](#)
- [The Graduate School Dates & Deadlines](#)
- [The Graduate School Forms](#)
- [The Graduate School Policy & Procedures](#)
- [Funding & Fellowships](#)
- [Graduate Student Support Services](#)
- [Grad Cat Wellness](#)
- [MSU Course Catalog](#)