BUSINESS INFORMATION SYSTEMS
PhD PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
AND DOCTORAL STUDENT MANUAL

MSU Major Code: 6024

Michigan State University
Eli Broad College of Business
Updated AUG 2014

Note: Program applicants desiring further information should contact:
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I. INTRODUCTION

The Information Systems PhD Program at Michigan State University provides its students the opportunity to explore the complete breadth and depth of the general field of business information systems. The IS Program is located within the Department of Accounting and Information Systems (AIS), but our students often engage with faculty in other departments around the University. IS is a rapidly changing domain, and our goal is to provide our students with access to the best and broadest range of scholarship and research opportunities.

Our doctoral program places primary emphasis on the development of scholars who intend to pursue academic careers in research universities. We expect our students to develop competence in the general field of information systems as well as in a chosen field of concentrated specialization. Such scholars should be capable of generating, communicating to others, and applying knowledge in their disciplines.

Doctoral students in our program are encouraged to design individually meaningful curricula within the larger context of our field. Combined with our dedication to organizational research, the variety of doctoral courses available in our program offer opportunities to our students that are not available elsewhere. Our strong working relationships with other university programs, for example Telecommunications (TC) and Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), broaden the variety of courses of study our doctoral students can pursue.

Students in the doctoral program are required to commit full-time attention to our program. Part-time enrollment is not allowed.

II. ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

Application to our program is based on the following materials:

1. A completed on-line application for admission to graduate studies at MSU with fees paid. The application can be completed at: http://grad.msu.edu/apply/

2. College transcripts showing grades received while pursuing all prior undergraduate degrees as well as graduate degrees, if any. Official copies should be sent directly to the Department of Accounting and Information Systems (see above for address and contact information).

3. Three letters of reference from individuals who are able to appraise your personal interests, abilities, and the likelihood that you will successfully complete our Ph.D. program. Letters should discuss evidence of research experience, if possible.

4. Standardized Test Scores: The Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) is preferred, but Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores will also be con-
sidered. Applicants whose first language is not English must fulfill proficiency requirements as defined by the University (for details, see http://grad.msu.edu/apply/docs/EnglishLanguageRequirements.pdf). English language requirements for our program are the same as those for the University, but our program does not allow provisional admission; applicants must demonstrate proficiency before admission.

6. A written statement of personal goals. This statement should address (a) the area(s) of information systems in which you are interested, (b) why you believe the program and faculty at Michigan State University fit your interests, and (c) your career objectives upon completion of your degree. This statement should be no longer than two pages (double-spaced).

7. A pre-admission interview. Before making final decisions on admission, applicants are expected to talk with at least two faculty members. Ideally, we would bring candidates to MSU for an on-campus visit. In cases where a campus visit is not possible, we plan to conduct interviews via telephone.

An admissions committee will screen the applications. We also examine the fit between our program and the applicant’s interests based on the applicant’s goal statement, letters of recommendation, and previous work and/or academic experience. Applicants passing this initial screening are then considered for acceptance by the complete IS faculty.

Students begin our program in the Fall. We currently plan to admit students every other year, in order to preserve an appropriately low faculty-student ratio. Admissions standards and procedures conform to the equal opportunity and affirmative action policies of MSU.

**Fellowships and funding.** Since we expect full-time participation in doctoral studies, we only admit students that we have funding to support. PhD students are funded with a combination of graduate assistantships and fellowships. Depending on availability and student interest, the graduate assistantships include both teaching and research opportunities. The details of financial support vary from year to year, and are spelled out in writing for each candidate when they are offered admission to the program.

### III. BASIC DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

#### A. Overview of Requirements.

The Ph.D. curriculum prepares competent research professionals through concentration on the following related areas of study (which will be more fully described later):

1. The IS major field
2. An appropriate minor field
3. Research methods
4. Economics and/or Behavioral Analysis
5. Other business fields (as required by the college of business)

Thus, students must complete the following course requirements:

1. The major (four courses: ITM911, ITM912 or ACC950, ITM914 and ITM915)
2. The minor (course requirements will vary)
3. The research component (four courses, including MGT 906 and MKT907 or equivalent)
4. Competency in economics and behavioral analysis (as required by the college of business)
5. Business concepts coursework (as required by the college of business)

B. Development of Competence in the Major Area.

Several elements of the IS program are directed toward developing knowledge in the general field of organizational behavior. First, all students take a series of four core seminars that cover basic topics in the field of information systems. Second, each student completes a minor in a related field, e.g., microeconomics, computer science, etc. Third, the student completes a research component that includes the program’s seminar on information systems research methods. The culmination of this preparation is the written comprehensive examination in Information Systems.

1. The core courses:

**ITM911**: Seminar in management information systems for new doctoral students and researchers new to the field. Provides a “macro” perspective on information systems research.

**ITM912 or ACC950**: These courses introduces and explores economic theories that are used to study information technology and the economic effects of information technology.

**ITM914**: Information Systems theory from a behavioral and social science perspective. Topics covered include the individual acceptance of technology, individual decision making, group collaboration and decision making, training, knowledge management, and human computer interaction.

**ITM915**: Research in network theory and methods, as applied to information systems, business and organizations.
2. The minor:

One relevant field of study outside of IS is selected by each student and the guidance committee (see Section IV C) as a minor. Examples include related disciplines, such as economics, psychology, sociology or computer science, or related fields of business such as accounting or supply chain management. Ideally, the minor field provides a foundation for dissertation research.

Depending upon each student's background and previous course work, he or she can request that some or all course work in the minor be waived. The decision on what is most appropriate for each student will be made in consultation with his or her guidance committee.

Typically, however, students complete three courses (9 credit hours) to satisfy the minor requirement. Regardless of whether some or all course work is waived, all students must pass competency requirements as specified by the department certifying the minor, if so required. Students must gain approval of the certifying department and the IS guidance committee prior to beginning minor coursework.

C. Development of Research Competence.

Pursuant to the IS Program’s dedication to research, students must develop and display competence in research methods and the ability to pursue independent research. At least three interrelated activities contribute to the development of research competence.

1. Coursework - One of these activities is the completion of Management 906, the Management group's Seminar in Organizational Research Methods. In this course, social and behavioral research methods are presented at a level appropriate for doctoral students. Another required course is MKT 907, Statistical Models in Marketing, which covers a range of advanced statistic models and methods. These courses serve students in several PhD programs within the college of business.

In addition to MGT906 and MKT907, students must complete two more courses in research-methodology. To fulfill this requirement, students normally take other statistics courses such as MGT914 (“Advanced Organizational Research Methods”), or courses in Econometrics. Courses that fulfill this requirement can be taken from (but are not limited to) the departments of Psychology, Communications, Educational Psychology, Political Science, or Sociology.
D. Competence in Economics and/or Behavioral Analysis.

Students are required by the Eli Broad Graduate School of Management to achieve competence in economic and/or behavioral analysis by completing graduate level course work in these areas. The IS Guidance Committee establishes specific requirements. In general, this requirement can be satisfied by taking two 800 or 900 level courses in Economics, Sociology, Psychology, or another core discipline.


Students are required by the Eli Broad Graduate School of Management to know and be able to apply certain concepts, tools and techniques of business practice. This requirement is automatically fulfilled by students who enter the doctoral program with an MBA or undergraduate degree from an institution accredited by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Students without such background should identify appropriate coursework in discussion with their Guidance Committee.

F. Second Year Research Paper.

Students are required to complete an empirical research project before they sit for their comprehensive examination. Thus, the paper is normally completed by the end of the second summer in the program. The paper should be written under the supervision of an IS faculty member, who will judge the quality of the work and notify the Director of the IS PhD program of its successful completion.

This paper provides an opportunity for students to work on a research project in collaboration with faculty. It also provides the basis for what may eventually become a dissertation project. Thus, students are encouraged (but not required) to enroll in ITM999 (Dissertation research) during the summer while they are working on this paper.

A typical second year paper should involve data collection and analysis, or the creation and evaluation of an innovative IT artifact. We encourage students to “aim high” and plan projects that could, in principle, be presentable at a conference or publishable in a journal, but external presentation or publication is not a requirement for successful completion and faculty approval.

If the project involves collecting data from human research subjects, students are responsible for obtaining prior approval from the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS). Guidelines are available at http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/.

G. Course Requirement Summary.

Major: ITM911, ITM912 or ACC950, ITM914, ITM915
Minor: A minimum of 3 courses (9 credit hours) in a field related to Information Systems.

Research: MGT906 and MKT907 plus two additional courses including an approved statistics sequence, such as MGT914 and MKT907. (12 hours total)

Economics and/or Behavioral Analysis: 2 courses (6 credit hours) in economics and/or behavioral analysis (i.e., in core disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, etc.).

Business (if required): To be determined by the student Guidance Committee.

Note: Per college requirements, to be in good standing each student must attain at least a 3.25 (out of 4.0) cumulative grade point average by the end of the second full semester of enrollment and thereafter.

H. Example timetable for completion.

The following timetable shows an example of course order and times taken. It is not a blueprint or even “typical”. Students should consult university course timetables to determine when courses will be offered.

Current students and the Faculty Advisor are an excellent source of information regarding scheduling of classes. IS department seminars (900-level courses) should be taken the first time they are offered. The exact schedule will vary depending on faculty availability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ITM911</td>
<td>ITM 915 (MGT914)</td>
<td>Start Research Paper (ITM999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MGT906</td>
<td>Minor field</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Econ/Behav</td>
<td>Minor field</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>ITM914</td>
<td>ITM912 or ACC950</td>
<td>Finish Research Paper (ITM999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MKT907</td>
<td>Econ/Behav Statistics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minor field</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Comp Exam</td>
<td>Research (ITM999)</td>
<td>Proposal defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minor field</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Research (ITM999)</td>
<td>Research (ITM999)</td>
<td>Dissertation Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>Research (ITM999)</td>
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I. Checklist and Deadlines.
The following table outlines the normal completion dates and deadlines for key milestones in the IS PhD program.

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<tr>
<th>Program Element</th>
<th>Normal Completion</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tr>
<td>Select guidance committee</td>
<td>On arrival (guidance committee for all students is the IS PhD committee)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course of Study approved</td>
<td>End of first year</td>
<td>End of first year, but can be revised at any time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coursework</td>
<td>End of second year</td>
<td>8th year (as required by University)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second year paper</td>
<td>End of second year</td>
<td>Before comprehensive exams can be taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Exams</td>
<td>Fall of 3rd year</td>
<td>Fall of 4th year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select dissertation chair &amp; committee</td>
<td>Fall of 3rd year</td>
<td>Fall of 3rd year (can change if necessary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation proposal</td>
<td>Summer of 3rd year</td>
<td>Summer of 5th year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation defense</td>
<td>Summer of 4th year</td>
<td>8th year (as required by University)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. EXPECTATIONS, ADVICE, AND FEEDBACK

Coursework is only part of the process of completing Ph.D. requirements in the IS program. This section contains information about additional aspects of our curriculum, our expectations, and our guidance process. Where appropriate, we refer to policies and documents prepared by the MSU Graduate School.

A. Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Scholarship

Michigan State University and the Eli Broad College of Business uphold the highest standards of ethics in research and scholarship. Students are expected to conform to the University’s Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities: [http://www.grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/docs/guidelines.pdf](http://www.grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/docs/guidelines.pdf). Additional materials are available here: [http://www.grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/](http://www.grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/).

Michigan State University requires that all students involved in research must complete training in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR). This includes all PhD students, as well as any other student working on a research project. This training is mandatory. RCR training is an on-going, annual requirement. Each student must complete the initial certification, plus a 1-hour annual refresh session every year while enrolled at MSU. This includes training in the use of Human Subjects: [http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/requiredtraining.html](http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/requiredtraining.html). The details of RCR training are described in more detail below.
B. Faculty Expectations for Doctoral Students

1. The IS group invites speakers to MSU for faculty/student colloquia or job interviews. We expect that students will attend these guest presentations and related events. Our expectation concerning student attendance is based on our belief that we should take advantage of every opportunity to learn about what other researchers are currently doing in the field.

2. Students are expected to attend other informal (i.e. brownbag) meetings for IS faculty and students. These meetings provide students the opportunity to sharpen presentation skills and practice critical inquiry in a supportive atmosphere.

3. Students are strongly encouraged to attend IS dissertation defense presentations. In this way, students become familiar with the nature of dissertations as well as the process through which dissertations are completed.

4. Publications are highly desirable for all of our students. They enhance the visibility of our group, help to insure that students will be placed in first-rate academic jobs, and involve all of our members in the same central research process. Therefore, we encourage them vigorously. Often, class papers and projects can form the basis for starting the publication process. The second year research paper is also an excellent opportunity for generating a potential publication. Professors are happy to guide students who wish to pursue such opportunities.

5. Students are encouraged to obtain funds intended specifically for graduate students (e.g., publishers' awards; NSF grants) for their dissertation research. Learning how to identify sources of support and write proposals is encouraged.

6. Students doing field research are expected to coordinate and/or collaborate with faculty members. Typically, faculty members provide contacts that students pursue. Sometimes, however, students make initial contacts and visit organizations alone or together with a faculty member.

7. Students with assistantships (either teaching or research) must be registered for a minimum of six credit hours per semester during the regular academic year (minimum of three credits during summer semester). These credits must be consistent with making progress toward the attainment of the degree, and approval to take these courses must be attained from the student’s advisor.

8. The student’s assistantship and degree program is expected to be a full-time commitment. Outside work for pay is considered an impediment to ac-
ademic progress and must be approved by the Doctoral Program Director.

9. Students are encouraged to attend national and professional conventions. National meetings of professional organizations (e.g., ICIS, Academy of Management, AMCIS) enable students to meet noted scholars, and provide job placement opportunities that can be especially useful to students when they enter the academic job market. Subject to the availability of funds, the program will attempt to support travel for these activities.

10. We expect that students will have successfully defended their dissertation proposal before beginning the search for an academic job.

11. We expect that students will take Comprehensive Examinations in the fall of their third year.

C. Faculty Responsibilities in Mentoring and Guidance

Faculty are responsible for providing guidance and mentoring to graduate students. In the IS PhD Program, our goal is to keep the program small so that faculty can work closely with each student we admit. The role of the faculty advisor is described in MSU's Guidelines for Graduate Student Advising and Mentoring Relationships: http://grad.msu.edu/publications/docs/studentadvising.pdf.

D. Guidance Committee for New Graduate Students

During the first year, each new doctoral student works with his or her guidance committee to develop a curriculum plan using the standard “course of study” form (Appendix A). For new students, the Guidance committee is simply the current IS PhD Program committee. By starting with an advisory committee (rather than a specific advisor), we hope to encourage students to get to know more of the faculty and to feel comfortable selecting an appropriate advisor as their research interests and working relationships with other faculty evolve. With regard to general University Guidelines, the PhD Program Director serves as the student's Guidance Committee chair.

The role of the guidance committee is to work with the student to formulate a plan of study that meets the student's unique interests within the constraints imposed by department, college, and university requirements. The membership of this committee will probably be different than the student's dissertation committee, which is formed during the latter part of the student's graduate program (after completion of the Comprehensive Exams).

The guidance committee is also responsible for advising and approving: (a) the students course of study; (b) the choice of dissertation advisor; and (c) the dissertation committee. Students may add or remove members from their guidance committee by notifying the Chair of the guidance committee in writing.
By the end of the first year, a planned course of study must be completed by the student in consultation with the guidance committee. The plan must be entered into the on-line system, GradPlan: http://grad.msu.edu/gradplan/Default.aspx. This is the official website for all doctoral student program planning, guidance committee reports and changes, comprehensive and final defense reports, submission of the dissertation to the Graduate School, and the final University degree certification. It provides electronic circulation for checking/approvals and generates automatic emails when needed. Once entered, the plan will be approved by the faculty advisor, the Department Chairperson, and the College Dean (or their representatives). The course of study can be changed, but it must be completed, since it identifies the specific courses that must be taken to complete the degree.

Once the dissertation committee is formed, the members can be entered into GradInfo (also accessible at http://grad.msu.edu/gradplan/Default.aspx). This application allows the Graduate School to track the formation and completion of dissertations across the University. Members can be added or changed as necessary.

E. Feedback to Graduate Students

We strongly believe that it is important for graduate students to receive periodic feedback about their progress in our program. The purpose of this feedback is to help each student develop to his or her greatest potential.

1. For first year students, there will be a scheduled informal session held at the beginning of the Spring semester with the guidance committee, and a second, formal evaluation and feedback session held near the end of the Spring semester. Thereafter, there will be one formal session near the end of the Spring semester with the understanding that there will be unscheduled informal contact throughout the year.

2. For formal evaluation and feedback sessions, each student will prepare a working document of 1-2 typed pages describing past accomplishments as a graduate student and future goals. The student will distribute an updated copy of this document to all Guidance Committee members prior to each spring semester evaluation session. Starting with the second year, students are required to begin writing professional vitae and submit them as part of their evaluation documents. These sessions are intended to provide developmental as well as evaluative feedback.

a. Listed below are the questions students should address when preparing their working document:

1. List the accomplishments, activities, special projects, etc. completed since your last feedback review that you feel are pertinent to upcom-
ing feedback sessions.

2. What current activities are you engaged in? (Research, coursework, teaching, other)

3. What future goals have you established as a student? (Research, coursework, teaching, other)

4. Do you have any particular weaknesses that the faculty could help you remedy? What strengths do you have that you could share with other graduate students and faculty?

b. Our goal in these sessions is to make sure that students stay on track for successful completion of the program, in accordance with their career objectives. Thus, feedback will be developmental as well as evaluative. The faculty members will:

1. Review the student's rate and qualities of progress in our program in specific detail, by evaluating the student's research performance, class work, teaching performance, and preparedness for research opportunities. Per Graduate School of Management requirements, a written progress evaluation document (see Appendix B) will be provided to summarize this review. A copy of this document will be provided to the student and the College Dean; one will also be placed in the student's departmental file. Optionally, the student may also place a written response to this progress evaluation in the departmental file.

2. Interactively set behavioral goals with the student for the coming evaluation period. The student may record and place a copy of these goals in his or her departmental file.

F. Review of Documents in Academic Files

Students can access their academic records by making a request from the Program Director. If there is an error, the program director will assist the student in researching and resolving the problem. While unusual, typical errors include grades that have been recorded incorrectly; credits that have been transferred or assigned incorrectly, and so on. The program director will work with the student to ensure the speedy resolution of such problems.

G. Departmental Funding and Awards Policies

1. Graduate Assistant Funding

Graduate Assistant funding is generally provided for five years, contingent on the student receiving satisfactory annual evaluations. Funding beyond five years is contingent on resource availability and Departmental needs.
In general, external scholarships, fellowships or research grants should not reduce internal funding. **Note:** There are, however, University and contractual limitations on total funding, which may apply in a given circumstance. As well, funding level is contingent upon general agreement of the faculty and the department chairperson.

2. Other Departmental Funding

Funding to support doctoral students is provided for all approved research, travel, tuition, copying/printing, and mailing expenditures for up to a period of five years that students are in the doctoral program; no funding support under this category is normally provided to students after their fifth year in the doctoral program. Approval for funding must occur before the expenditure is incurred. Students should contact the Doctoral Program Director for approval, including providing a proposal for any major expenditure. While the department does not have a pre-set per-student funding limit, the availability of funds for the above expenditures depends on the current level of university and department resources, the importance of the expenditure for the student’s academic success, the student’s past history in terms of academic productivity and the use of approved resources, etc. Students will not be denied funding merely based on the amount of resources they have consumed in the past. Students are expected to apply for external funding whenever possible and prior applications for external funding will be viewed favorably when considering requests for Departmental funding.

Although the department has no pre-set funding limits, the department staff in charge of the doctoral program will keep track of student expenditures including the following items:

- **Data Purchase:** Funding to pay for access to data for research (e.g., buying data, paying participation fees in experiments, costs of mail surveys).
- **Research:** Funding is available for qualified research-related expenditures for dissertation and non-dissertation research.
- **Travel:** Funding for travel, hotel, and registration fees is available to present a paper in which the student is the author or a coauthor at a scholarly meeting. Students should contact the Doctoral Program Director or their advisors regarding the suitability of the conference they are planning to attend.

In addition, the Department will pay students' travel and hotel costs (two students per room, if possible) to attend one or more approved doctoral consortia/colloquia for students who are making satisfactory progress toward completion of their degree. Selection criteria for doctoral consortia include: academic performance, workshop performance, and progress in developing research projects.
In addition, funding may be available from the Graduate School for travel to conferences. See [http://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/travel.aspx](http://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/travel.aspx).

- **Tuition**: Reimbursement for tuition not covered by a GA appointment is limited to paying for tuition for courses in a student’s program of study or for courses approved by the Director of Doctoral Program. To be eligible for tuition reimbursement, a student must: (1) have a cumulative GPA not less than 3.75 at the start of the semester in which he or she wants the tuition covered (except when the request is made for the first semester in the program); and (2) provide the Doctoral Program Director with a semester-by-semester listing of courses taken and proposed to be taken to show why additional courses beyond that covered by GA tuition waivers need to be taken.

- **Copying/Printing**: Student budgets will be charged (current charge is five cents per page) for all of their copying and printing.

- **Mailing**: Students can use their funding support for the cost of mailing their dissertation-related materials to other institutions for the purpose of securing job interviews.

### Teaching Eligibility and Requirements

The Graduate Employees Union has entered into a collective bargaining agreement with Michigan State University. This agreement provides a broad range of rights and responsibilities, and is renegotiated periodically. The terms of the current contract agreement are available at: [http://grad.msu.edu/](http://grad.msu.edu/) (follow the link for GEU Contract).

Before students can serve in any teaching capacity, they must complete MSU’s TA Orientation program. Students whose first language is not English must also pass the SPEAK test and attend MSU’s International Teaching Assistant program. Guidelines for demonstrating English language competence are available here: [http://www.tap.msu.edu/ita/englishtesting.aspx](http://www.tap.msu.edu/ita/englishtesting.aspx)

Before students can teach a course on their own, they must have been a TA for a discussion section of that course and been evaluated by the professor responsible for the course as ready to teach a section on their own. MSU’s Teaching Assistant Program (TAP) “provides a wide variety of resources and services in support of the teaching and learning development of all MSU teaching assistants.” See [http://tap.msu.edu/](http://tap.msu.edu/) for more information.

When assigned as a discussion section TA, students’ teaching performance will be evaluated each semester by the professor responsible for the course. When assigned to teach a course on their own, the relevant Department Chairperson will be responsible for evaluating students’ teaching performance for each course taught. In addition, it is important that Teaching Assistants be aware of the Code of Teaching Responsibility adopted by MSU. This Code enumerates the teach-
ing responsibilities of instructional staff, as well as procedures that students may use to register complaints about instructional staff. The text of the Code is available at:

Renewal of a graduate teaching assistantship is conditional on receiving a satisfactory evaluation with respect to current and prior graduate teaching assistantship assignments. Students must also be making satisfactory progress in their degree program, as determined by the annual evaluation. Students have the right to appeal evaluation outcomes through the process outlined in Appendix G.

Exceptions to the above teaching policies can be made at discretion of the Department Chairperson responsible for staffing the course.

H. Criteria for Dismissal

We expect that all of our students have the skills and motivation to successfully earn a PhD, and the program is structured to help them do so. We meet with students every term to review progress, so that we can identify potential problems and help students stay on track. We have identified key “check-points” on student progress that must be met or students may be dismissed from the program, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Any action for dismissal requires unanimous written approval by the IS PhD Committee.

1) Failure to remain in good standing can result in dismissal. Students are expected to maintain an adequate grade point average, as described elsewhere in this document.

2) Failure to pass comprehensive exams will result in dismissal. If students have not passed comprehensive examination by the end of the 4th year, they may be asked to leave the program. Rules for passing and retaking the exam are described in the section of this document that describes the exam process.

3) Failure to make progress towards a dissertation may result in dismissal. If students have not formed a committee and defended a dissertation proposal by the end of the 4th year, they may be asked to leave the program.

4) Violations of academic integrity or other university policies can be grounds for dismissal. Throughout all stages of their career at MSU, we expect the highest level of academic integrity in scholarship and research. The Research Integrity Office is an additional source of information (http://www.rio.msu.edu), as well as The Graduate School research and scholarly integrity webpage: http://grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/. All Ph.D. students are expected to complete the “Responsible Conduct of Research Training” offered by the College.
Procedures for adjudicating and appealing violations in accordance with College and University policies are outlined in Appendix G.

V. THE IS COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

The IS comprehensive examination is taken by each student upon completion of coursework in the IS major. The Second Year Research Paper must be successfully completed before taking the exam. Final grades must be received in all core courses prior to taking the examination, but other college requirements (such as Competence in Business Concepts) can be completed after the exam, if necessary.

It is expected that students will take the exam during the fall semester of their 3rd year. The exam must be completed by the end of the 4th year.

The exam will be scheduled during the first eight weeks of the Fall semester. It consists of two written parts, usually scheduled on two consecutive days, plus an oral exam to be scheduled after grading of the written parts is completed. Each written part will be six hours in length, split into two 3-hour blocks to provide a break. The date(s) and times of the exam must be arranged in advance with the IS program director. Other specifics pertaining to the comprehensive exam are as follows:

A. STRUCTURE OF THE EXAMINATION

1. In the first six-hour session, students will answer four questions. Students will choose to answer one of two questions from each of the following areas:

   a. Behavioral science
   b. Network Science
   c. Macro perspectives on IT

2. In the second six-hour session, students will answer one of two questions in the Economics of Information Systems. For the research methodology and critique questions, there will be a single question (no choices):

   a. Economics of information systems
   b. Research methodology (design a study)
   c. Critique of a published article

3. The oral examination provides an opportunity for faculty to discuss the results of the written exam, ask additional questions of clarification, and provide feedback to the student. It will be scheduled after the written exam is graded.

B. PROCEDURES REGARDING THE EXAMINATION
1. In the semester of the examination, a student wishing to sit for the exam must declare his or her intent to do so, in writing, to the IS Guidance Committee.

2. Grading

   a. Students must achieve an averaged score of 3.5 to achieve a passing grade on each section of the exam. Each question is weighted the same in computing the average on each section.

   b. If a student fails to achieve a passing grade on a section, he or she will be required to retake that section. In other words, if a student fails one part, they retake that part. If a student fails both parts, they retake both parts.

   c. Faculty will grade, individually, the examination items without student names attached to them using the scale shown in Appendix C. The absence of names associated with responses makes students’ identities less salient in grading, although, given the small numbers of persons taking the exam, this obviously does not mean that anonymity is assured. Each faculty grades those items which he or she feels competent to grade and then forwards his or her grades to the faculty member selected to act as coordinator for the exam.

   d. When individual grading is complete, the faculty will meet to discuss evaluations of responses to items and reach a consensus grade for each item completed by a student.

   e. The oral examination provides an opportunity for students to discuss their written exam. In cases where the student failed to achieve a passing score, the grade may be revised upward or it may be allowed to stand.

The examination will be coordinated by the IS Guidance Committee. However, all regular IS faculty members have the option of contributing potential exam questions and grading the exam.

Students are urged to consult prior exam questions, available in the IS Department office, before taking the exam. Students should also consult with IS faculty members; especially those who have taught the core courses, prior to the time the students begin preparing for the exam.

Students should not overlook other students who have passed comps as a source of valuable information, since the norm in our program is that students will help each other. Strategies for studying and writing answers, especially helpful papers and books, and so on, are available if students pursue them.

We emphasize that the comprehensive exam is not a "big final" that covers only material encountered in core classes. Students who take comps are assumed
to be quite knowledgeable with respect to the history and traditions, controversies and accomplishments, theories and applications, methods and principles, as well as significant books and papers in the fields of the exam.

Students normally take the exam in the fall of the 3rd year, and the exam must be passed within four years of beginning the Ph.D. program. If a student fails the exam on the first try, he or she may retake the exam once, the next time it is offered. A student has 12 months to retake and pass the exam.

If a student does not pass the exam and does not or cannot take the exam again, he or she will be unable to complete the requirements for a Ph.D. Generally, the student will be terminated from the program at the end of the semester in which the exam was last taken. Exceptions to this may be considered with the approval of the IS faculty and IS program director.

VI. THE DISSERTATION

The Ph.D. dissertation is the capstone of our doctoral education program. When completed it signifies individual competence as a researcher, and, as a public document, it represents the researcher to his or her professional peers.

Dissertation projects take many different forms. Some are based on a single large study, while others consist of a group of smaller, related projects. The dissertation must be original, empirical research that makes a significant contribution to theory. Our goal is to generate publishable results that will help launch the student on a successful academic career. The design of the dissertation project must be approved by the Dissertation Committee.

A. The Dissertation Committee

The dissertation process is supervised by a dissertation committee composed of at least four members, one of whom is designated chairperson. The student’s guidance committee must approve the Dissertation committee. The dissertation committee chairperson and a majority of the committee members must be from the Department of Accounting and Information Systems. We expect students to form a dissertation committee by the end of their 3rd year. Changes to the dissertation committee (including changing or replacing the chairperson) can be made with the approval of the Guidance Committee.

Selection of a chairperson is based on mutual research interests between the student and the faculty member. Thus, it is important for each student to develop concise awareness of faculty research interests so that the choice of the dissertation chairperson is appropriate for both the student and the chairperson. The selection of faculty members for the remainder of the student's committee should be based on the potential contributions they might make to the final product.
Faculty members' decisions to chair or join a dissertation committee are based on respect for the student's ideas and competence, as demonstrated by the student's prior performance in the IS program. We look at the formation of a dissertation committee as being a recognition of merit; in no sense is a faculty member obligated to sit on a particular student's dissertation committee.

The decision to pass a student's dissertation is our final certification of that student's professional competence. We take this certification seriously since the quality of the dissertation reflects back upon the personal credibility of individual committee members as well as the quality of our program as a whole.

B. Dissertation proposal defense

The first step in the dissertation process involves the development of a proposal indicating the research topic that a student desires to examine, and the method that he or she will use to examine it. The development of this proposal typically involves intensive interaction between the student and his or her dissertation committee. When committee members are generally satisfied with a student's proposal, the committee meets with the student to decide whether to proceed to the next step. This next step, the oral defense of the Dissertation Proposal, requires the student to defend the dissertation proposal in an open meeting. Because the purpose of this requirement is to provide faculty input for the dissertation research, it should be satisfied before the majority of the research effort is undertaken. A successful defense of the dissertation proposal is achieved when three-fourths of the student's dissertation committee, including the chairperson, approves the defense. The guidance committee will report to the Doctoral Programs Office the successful completion of this requirement.

All of the members of the students' guidance committee should be in attendance at the defense of the dissertation proposal. The date, time, and place for the defense of the dissertation proposal will be announced to the Broad School faculty ten days in advance of the event.

With the exception of doctoral dissertation research credits, all course work listed on the student's approved guidance committee report must be completed with grades reported before the student will be permitted to defend the dissertation proposal.

In a closed session following the defense, the committee formally votes to determine whether the student will be allowed to proceed to the next step, Ph.D. candidacy and dissertation research.

C. Institutional Review Board Approval for Human Subjects Research

Students are responsible for obtaining prior approval for their dissertation research from the University Human Subjects Protection Program. Research in the College of Business is reviewed by the Social Science Institutional Review
Board (SIRB): http://humanresearch.msu.edu/sirb.html. Guidelines and procedures are available and it is the responsibility of the student to get approval. When in doubt about the need for IRB approval, it is best to file for IRB approval and be given an exemption. This approval is generally required any time human research subjects are involved in data collection (including surveys, interviews, experiments, etc.) and must be obtained before data collection begins.

D. Final dissertation presentation

1. The final oral presentation of the dissertation occurs in an open meeting when the Ph.D. candidate's dissertation committee agrees that the candidate has completed an acceptable independent research project and written it up satisfactorily. Specific policies for the conduct of the oral defense of dissertations, the format of the dissertation, dates for submissions of the document and other procedures must conform to the Graduate School's specifications.

MSU only accepts electronic theses and dissertations submitted via ProQuest. When preparing the final dissertation document, students should consult a current copy of the Graduate School's requirements for preparation and submission of the final dissertation document: http://grad.msu.edu/etd/.

The dissertation presentation must be successfully completed within three years of passing the IS comprehensive examination and within eight years of matriculation. Candidates who fail to meet these guidelines must revert to student status, and are required, by University policy, to re-enter and pass the entire doctoral comprehensive examination process before proceeding further.

E. Dissertation project: A word of caution

We have found that students often underestimate the time that is needed to form an idea for a dissertation, prepare a proposal, conduct the research and defend it. The modal time is two years. For example, the dissertation proposal may require three to six months to draft, then another three to six months to refine and acquire committee acceptance. Two weeks to one month advanced notice is required to schedule a proposal defense. Dissertation research and writing usually takes about a year, although additional time is sometimes needed. Another month or two should be allowed for revisions required by final committee recommendations made prior to the defense. Scheduling the defense requires advanced notice of about two weeks. Final editorial revisions required after a successful presentation may take another month or two. In sum, it is unrealistic to expect to complete the entire dissertation process, from proposal draft to accepted dissertation, in less than about a year and a half. Consequently, a draft of the proposal should be under initial committee review no later than six to ten months after passing the comprehensive examination.
VII. CRITERIA FOR NOMINATION TO CONSORTIA

Special sessions are conducted for outstanding graduate students at national conventions. The purpose of these sessions is to acquaint doctoral students, on a first-hand basis, with newly emerging ideas being developed by recognized experts in our field. Criteria for our selection of a student include:

A. Performance as a Student.

1. Doing well in course work.
2. Making steady progress toward degree.
3. Active involvement in research.

B. Career Stage and Interest.

1. Being nearly done with coursework (i.e., after 2-3 years).
2. Evidence of advanced student interest in consortium topic.

It is not always the case that one or more students will be sent to consortia by the Department each year. The final decision is made by the IS faculty and is based upon whether one or more students have met the criteria for attendance. For example, many doctoral consortia require a viable research proposal. An individual may be invited to participate in one consortium one year and another in another year. However, no one will be sent to the same consortium twice.

All of these criteria are subject to budgetary constraints.

VIII. THE FACULTY

The faculty of the IS program have diverse interests which, when supplemented by the interests of other faculty on campus, provide students with an unusually broad educational opportunity. The core faculty consist of those individuals whose teaching and research responsibilities are primarily in one of the IS programs. Please visit their web sites at http://broad.msu.edu/facultystaff/ for more a complete list of faculty at the college of business.

IX. Policies on Integrity and Safety in Research and Creative Activities

1. Departmental Policy
The principles of truth and honesty are fundamental to the educational process and the academic integrity of the University. Therefore, no student shall:

a. Claim or submit the academic work of another, as one’s own.
b. Procure, provide, accept or use any materials containing questions or answers to any examination or assignment without proper authorization.
c. Complete or attempt to complete any assignment or examination for another individual without proper authorization.
d. Allow any examination or assignment to be completed for oneself, in part or in total, by another without proper authorization.
e. Alter, tamper with, appropriate, destroy or otherwise interfere with the research resources or other academic work of another person.
f. Fabricate or falsify data or results.

2. Statement on Use of Human Subjects in Research

Students whose research relates to the use of human subjects are responsible for obtaining prior approval for their research from the University Institutional Review Board (SIRB). Guidelines are available at http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/. This approval is generally required any time human research subjects are involved in data collection (including surveys, interviews, experiments, etc.) and must be obtained before data collection begins.

3. MSU Guidelines for Responsible Conduct of Research

*Michigan State University and the Eli Broad College of Business uphold the highest standards of ethics in research and scholarship.* Michigan State University requires that all students involved in research must complete training in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) (see: http://www.grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity). This includes all PhD students, as well as any other student working on a research project. This training is mandatory.

RCR training is an on-going, annual requirement. Each student must complete the initial certification, plus a 1-hour annual refresher session every year while enrolled at MSU. Doctoral students are expected to complete the initial training during their first year.

Students who fail to comply with the RCR training requirement will be considered ineligible for TA, RA or Fellowship funding until training is completed, subject to the discretion of the PhD program director.

To satisfy the RCR training requirement, PhD students in the College of Business must complete the training offered by the College of Business. For your convenience, the
College will offer two sets of training sessions each year, once during fall semester and once during spring semester. If students cannot attend the College of Business sessions, they can satisfy the RCR requirements by attending RCR training sessions offered by the MSU Graduate School (subject to the written approval of their PhD program director).

In addition to these sessions, RCR training includes certification through the MSU IRB (see http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/requiredtraining.html). Participants are expected to complete IRB training before attending the RCR training sessions. IRB training is on-line and can be completed at any time.

X. Conflict Resolution

In accordance with the provisions of Michigan State University’s Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR), The Eli Broad College of Business and Graduate School of Management has established a procedure for the receipt and consideration of student academic complaints. Your doctoral program director or coordinator can provide you with the current version of the procedure. The procedure from January 2005 is included in Appendix B, and includes the procedure for adjudication of grievances at the department level.

XI. Work-Related Policies

Most doctoral students in the College receive a graduate assistantship, with duties that may include teaching or research performed under the supervision of a faculty member. Graduate assistants are expected to fulfill their assigned responsibilities at a high level of performance. For more information regarding the rights and responsibilities of graduate students at MSU, refer to “Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities” [http://www.splife.studentlife.msu.edu/graduate-student-rights-and-responsibilities]. The performance of graduate assistants involved in teaching is formally evaluated at least once per year. Teaching assistants also are governed by the agreement between the University and the Graduate Employees Union. Information on health insurance options for MSU students is available from Human Resources [http://www.hr.msu.edu]. International students are required to take an English-language proficiency test administered by the English Language Center [elc.msu.edu], which also offers language instruction to teaching assistants and others seeking to improve their fluency.

XII. University Resources

Student Rights and Responsibilities

For information about your academic rights and responsibilities as a graduate student, refer to the Graduate Student Handbook [http://www.splife.studentlife.msu.edu/graduate-student-rights-and-responsibilities].

Library Resources
The MSU Libraries have a growing collection of over three million volumes and access to a large collection of electronic resources including full text databases and indexes to journal articles. The William C. Gast Business library provides services for the MSU College of Business. Students may call Gast Business Library reference librarians to help plan research strategies. They will consult via telephone or e-mail. If you go to the Business Library, call beforehand to make an appointment with a librarian, so they can better assist you.

**Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination & Affirmative Action**

Michigan State University is committed to the principles of equal opportunity, non-discrimination, and affirmative action. University programs, activities, and facilities are available to all without regard to race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, political persuasion, sexual preference, marital status, handicap, or age. The University is an affirmative action, equal-opportunity employer. For information on MSU’s anti-discrimination policy, refer to [http://www.hr.msu.edu/HRsite/Documents/Faculty/Handbooks/Faculty/UnivPolicies/UnivPol+-+Anti-Discrimination+Policy.htm](http://www.hr.msu.edu/HRsite/Documents/Faculty/Handbooks/Faculty/UnivPolicies/UnivPol+-+Anti-Discrimination+Policy.htm). See also the website of the Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives (http://www.inclusion.msu.edu/home).
IX. LIST OF APPENDICES

A. IS Student Progress Evaluation Form
B. Comprehensive Examination Performance Criteria
C. Academic Policies
D. University Resources
E. College of Business Grievance Procedure
APPENDIX A

ITM Student Progress Evaluation Form
Information Technology Management Program
Student Progress Evaluation Form

Student's Name ___________________________ Evaluation for the Year __________ -

Student's Signature and Date of Receipt ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Marginal</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Dimension and Comments

**COURSEWORK**
1. Performance in IS core courses (Years 1-2)
2. Performance in other courses (Years 2-3)
3. Progress toward coursework and examination completion (including minors and business competencies; Years 1-4)

**TEACHING**
1. 300-level teaching performance (Years 1-4)
2. Ability to teach independently (Years 3-4)

**RESEARCH**
1. Level of participation in ongoing research (Years 1-4)
2. Performance in IS Second Year Research Paper (Years 1-3)
3. Ability to perform independent research (Years 2-4)

**OTHER**
1. Proposal/dissertation progress (Years 3-5)
2. Attendance at IS group meetings (brownbags, dissertation proposals and defenses, colloquia; Years 1-4)
3. Timely progress toward degree completion (Years 1-4)

Other comments (performance compared to previous evaluations, professional presentations, preparation for job market, etc.)
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Other comments (performance compared to previous evaluations, professional presentations, preparation for job market, etc.)
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX C

Comprehensive Examination Performance Criteria
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Passing</th>
<th>Passing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Just plain B.S.</td>
<td>Shows some attempt at organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would be better</td>
<td>Answered the question or problem posed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank.</td>
<td>Sticks to the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response painfully padded with details.</td>
<td>Answer to be expected from someone with a general exposure to the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence clearly presented but not the most germane to the point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shows a grasp of the problem areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Originality in bringing research data from various sources to bear problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A well organized answer that covers all major points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organized before writing and supplemented with cited research.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obviously unfamiliar with area content.</td>
<td>Omitted several important references.</td>
<td>Shows some attempt at organization.</td>
<td>The included material was well expressed.</td>
<td>Originality in bringing research data from various sources to bear problem.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student does not adequately know the material.</td>
<td>No evidence of integration of material.</td>
<td>Answered the question or problem posed.</td>
<td>Cites supporting research to back up points.</td>
<td>A well organized answer that covers all major points.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misses most important points.</td>
<td>Shows considerable tendency to stray from the point.</td>
<td>Sticks to the topic.</td>
<td>Most of the research cited.</td>
<td>Organized before writing and supplemented with cited research.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not understand the question or the topic.</td>
<td>Organization is weak.</td>
<td>Answer to be expected from someone with a general exposure to the material.</td>
<td>Relevant information with minimum of redundancy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of acquaintance with the literature.</td>
<td>Poorly integrated in terms of overall structure.</td>
<td>Evidence clearly presented but not the most germane to the point.</td>
<td>Organization around some theoretical orientation that gives internal and logical cohesion.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misses many important points.</td>
<td>Answer is full of the obvious.</td>
<td>Shows a sketchy acquaintance with the up-to-date studies</td>
<td>Shows a grasp of the problem areas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not attempt to plan or organize.</td>
<td>Shows a sketchy acquaintance with the up-to-date studies</td>
<td>Answered from a parochial point of view.</td>
<td>Meaningful interpretation of research results.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little or no comprehension of what constitutes relevant information.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Appendix D
Academic Policies

A. Admission to the Doctoral Program [Academic Programs Catalog http://www.reg.msu.edu]

Applicants for admission must possess a bachelor’s degree from a recognized educational institution, a superior academic record, and very strong scores on either the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) or the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Persons admitted must have the qualifications of perseverance and intellectual curiosity, and an interest in scholarly research. Evidence of these qualities is obtained from an appraisal of a statement of purpose submitted by the applicant and letters of recommendation. Admissions decisions are made by a faculty committee in the department of the student's major field of concentration and are reviewed by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

B. Policy on Academic Standards [Academic Programs Catalog http://www.reg.msu.edu]

A record of performance and action consistent with high professional standards is required of every degree candidate. To be in good standing, a doctoral student must attain at least a 3.25 cumulative grade-point average by the end of the second semester of full-time enrollment and thereafter or, on the initiative of the department of the student’s major field of concentration and with the approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the student will be dismissed from the doctoral program. A comprehensive appraisal of each doctoral student’s performance is made annually by a review committee composed of faculty members in the department of the student’s major field of concentration. The formal review includes the following areas: performance in course work and on comprehensive examinations, performance in teaching or other duties that might be required of a graduate assistant, participation in department colloquia, and progress toward the completion of degree requirements. As a result of the review and based upon college and department standards, one of the following actions will be taken: (1) the student will remain on regular status in the doctoral program, (2) the student will be placed on probationary status that is conditioned on specific improvements in performance, or (3) the student will be dismissed from the doctoral program. Copies of the results of the yearly appraisal are provided to the student, the student’s Doctoral Program Director, the Departmental Chairperson, and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Appendix E
University Resources

A. Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination & Affirmative Action

Michigan State University is committed to the principles of equal opportunity, non-discrimination, and affirmative action. University programs, activities, and facilities are available to all without regard to race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, political persuasion, sexual preference, martial status, handicap, or age. The University is an affirmative action, equal-opportunity employer.

B. Student Rights and Responsibilities

For information about your academic rights and responsibilities as a graduate student, refer to the Graduate Student Handbook [www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/index.htm].

C. Library Resources

The MSU Libraries have a growing collection of over three million volumes and access to a large collection of electronic resources including full text databases and indexes to journal articles. The William C. Gast Business library provides services for the MSU College of Business. Students may call Gast Business Library reference librarians to help plan research strategies. They will consult via telephone or e-mail. If you go to the Business Library, call beforehand to make an appointment with a librarian, so they can better assist you.
Appendix G
The Eli Broad College of Business – Grievance Procedure
(adopted April 26, 2002)

In accordance with the provisions of the Academic Freedom Report (AFR) and the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR) document for students at Michigan State University, The Eli Broad College of Business and The Eli Broad Graduate School of Management has established the following procedure for the receipt and consideration of student academic complaints:

1. COMPLAINT TO UNIT ADMINISTRATOR
   1.1 If problems arise in the relationship between instructor and student, both should attempt to resolve them in informal, direct discussions (AFR 2.4.2 and GSRR 5.3.1). If the problem remains unresolved, then the student should consult the unit administrator (the Departmental Chairperson or School Director) of the instructional staff member concerned. The University Ombudsman may be consulted as well. If the unit administrator is unable to resolve the dispute, the student may then submit a formal written grievance for consideration by an appropriate unit hearing board. The formal grievance alleging violations of academic rights must include a proposed remedy that could be implemented by the unit administrator (AFR 2.4.2 and GSRR 5.3.2).
   1.2 Grievances must normally be initiated no later than mid-semester of the semester following the one wherein the alleged violation of academic rights occurred (exclusive of summer semester). If the involved instructor or student is absent from the University during that semester, or if other appropriate reasons exist, an exception to this provision may be granted by the appropriate hearing board. If, before the formal grievance procedures are completed, the involved instructor is no longer employed by the University, the grievance process may nevertheless proceed. (AFR 2.4.2.1 and GSRR 5.3.6.1)
   1.3 A student who receives a penalty grade based upon a charge of academic dishonesty and who is not referred for judicial action may seek a hearing from an academic unit hearing board. In such a hearing, the burden of proof shall rest upon the instructor whose prior assignment of the penalty grade will constitute a charge of academic dishonesty. (GSRR 5.5.2)
   1.4 Individual units of the College may have their own unit grievance procedures so long as they are consistent with the AFR and the GSRR. If an individual unit does not formally adopt its own procedure, then the procedure in this document shall be followed.

2. REFERRAL TO ACADEMIC UNIT COMMITTEE
   2.1 Upon receipt of a request for a grievance hearing, the unit administrator shall promptly refer the matter, including a copy of the original complaint, to the chairperson of the

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1 The Office of the University Ombudsperson provides assistance to students, faculty, and staff in resolving University-related concerns. Such concerns include: student-faculty conflicts; communication problems; concerns about the university climate; and questions about what options are available for handling a problem according to Michigan State University policy. The University Ombudsperson also provides information about available resources and student/faculty rights and responsibilities. The office operates as a confidential, independent, and neutral resource. It does not provide notice to the University - that is, it does not speak or hear for the University. Contact information: ombud@msu.edu.
appropriate unit hearing board. Upon receipt of a formal grievance, the chairperson of the
hearing board shall transmit a copy of the grievance within ten (10) class days to the hearing
board members and to the person or persons party to the matter. (AFR 2.4.2.3 and GSRR
5.4.3)

2.2 The unit hearing board shall be composed of three faculty and three students se-
lected by their respective (undergraduate or graduate) groups, and in accordance with Uni-
versity, College and unit bylaws. (AFR 2.4.3 and GSRR 5.1) The unit administrator shall
designate one of the faculty members to serve as chairperson of the hearing board. The
chairperson of the hearing board shall record and administer the proceedings and organize
the preparation of the report summarizing the findings of the board. The unit administrator
may serve as an ex officio member of the hearing board without vote. No one involved in the
case may serve on the hearing board. (GSRR 5.1.2 and 5.1.7)

2.3 The unit hearing board shall review each student complaint and forward a copy
of the request for a hearing to the appropriate individual(s) and invite a written response
(GSRR 5.4.12.4). After considering all submitted information, the hearing board may:
a) Decide that sufficient reasons for a hearing do not exist and dismiss the griev-
ance;
b) Decide that sufficient reasons for a hearing exist and accept the request, in full or
in part, and proceed to schedule a hearing.

2.4 Hearings shall be scheduled within ten (10) class days of the decision of the unit
hearing board to hear a grievance. At least three (3) class days prior to a formal hearing, the
respondent and the complainant shall be notified by the chairperson of the hearing board of
the time and place of the hearing and the names of the parties to the grievance, hearing
panel members, witnesses, and counsels. (AFR 2.4.4 and GSRR 5.4.7)

2.5 Attendance at the hearing shall be limited to the hearing panel, the student com-
plainant, the instructional staff member concerned (the respondent), and any witnesses
called by the student or instructor. Each party to the grievance may be accompanied by a
counsel of their choice who may assist in the preparation of their case. Involvement of coun-
sel should normally not be required. When present, counsel shall be limited to a member of
the student body, faculty, or staff of the University. (AFR 2.4.4.2 and GSRR 5.4.10) The unit
administrator, the Dean, or the Dean’s designee also may attend as observers.

2.6 Following the hearing, the chairperson of the unit hearing board shall prepare a
written report of findings and rationale for the decision and shall forward copies to the par-
ties involved, the responsible administrator(s), the Ombudsman, and the Dean of the Col-
lege within ten (10) class days. If the student is in a graduate program, the report shall also
be sent to the Dean of The Graduate School. The report shall indicate the major elements of
evidence, or lack thereof, that support the hearing board’s decision. All recipients are ex-
pected to respect the confidentiality of this report. When a hearing board finds that a viola-
tion of academic rights has occurred and that redress is possible, it shall direct the unit ad-
ministrator to provide redress. The unit administrator, in consultation with the hearing board,
shall implement an appropriate remedy. (AFR 2.4.5 and GSRR 5.4.11)

3. APPEALS

3.1 Either party to a grievance may appeal a decision of the departmental/school
hearing board to the College hearing board. Undergraduate students whose initial hearing
took place at the college level may appeal to the Academic Integrity Review Board, which is
housed in the Provost’s Office. Graduate students whose initial hearing took place at the
college level may appeal to the University Graduate Judiciary, which is housed in the Grad-
uate School. Appeals must be filed within ten (10) class days following notice of a decision. The original decision shall be held in abeyance while under appeal. (AFR 2.4.7.3 and GSRR 5.4.12 and 5.4.12.3)

3.2 Appeals must allege either that applicable procedures for adjudicating the case were not followed in the previous hearing or that the findings of the unit hearing board were not supported by the preponderance of the evidence. Presentation of new evidence will normally be inappropriate at an appeal hearing. (AFR 2.4.7 though 2.4.7.3 and GSRR 5.4.12 through 5.4.12.4.1).

3.3 All appeals must be written and signed and must specify the alleged defects in the previous adjudication(s) in sufficient particularity to justify further proceedings. The appeal must also specify the redress that is sought. (GSRR 5.4.12.2)

3.4 The College hearing board shall be composed of three faculty and three students. One of the faculty members shall serve as chairperson of the College hearing board and shall record and administer the proceedings and organize the preparation of the report summarizing the findings of the board. No one involved in the case may serve on the hearing board.

a) Faculty representatives to undergraduate hearings shall include the Chairperson of the Undergraduate Programs Committee or designee, who also shall serve as chair. Student representatives to undergraduate hearings shall be selected by the Undergraduate Student Senate of the College.

b) Faculty representatives to graduate hearings shall include the Chairperson of the appropriate College graduate committee (either the Masters Programs Committee or the Doctoral Programs Committee) or designee, who also shall serve as chair. Student representatives to graduate hearings shall be selected by the Graduate Student Advisory Council of the College. (GSRR 5.1.3)

3.5 The College hearing board shall review each appeal request and forward a copy of the request to the appropriate individual(s) and invite a written response (GSRR 5.4.12.4). After considering all submitted information and within ten (10) class days of the appeal request, the College hearing board may:

a) Decide that sufficient reasons for an appeal do not exist and that the decision of the lower hearing body shall stand;

b) Direct the lower hearing body to rehear the case or to reconsider or clarify its decision; or

c) Decide that sufficient reasons exist for an appeal and accept the request, in full or in part, and proceed to schedule an appeal hearing.

3.6 Appeal hearings shall be scheduled within ten (10) class days of the decision of the College hearing board to hear an appeal. At least three (3) class days prior to a formal hearing, the respondent and the complainant shall be notified by the chairperson of the hearing board of the time and place of the hearing and the names of the parties to the grievance, hearing panel members, witnesses, and counsels. (AFR 2.4.4 and GSRR 5.4.7)

3.7 Attendance at the hearing is limited to the committee, the student complainant, the instructional staff member concerned, and any witnesses called by the student or instructor. Each party to the grievance may be accompanied by a counsel of their choice who may assist in the preparation of their case. Involvement of counsel should normally not be required. When present, counsel shall be limited to a member of the student body, faculty, or staff of the University. (AFR 2.4.4.2 and GSRR 4.4.8) The Dean or the Dean’s designee also may attend as observers.
3.8 Following an appeal hearing, the College hearing board may affirm, reverse, or modify the decision of the unit hearing body. (GSRR 5.4.12.4.1) The chairperson of the College hearing board shall prepare a written report of findings and rationale for the decision and shall forward copies to the parties involved, to the responsible administrator(s), and to the Ombudsman within ten (10) class days of the resolution of the appeal. If the student is in a graduate program, the report shall also be sent to the Dean of The Graduate School. The report shall indicate the major elements of evidence, or lack thereof, that support the College hearing board’s decision. All recipients are expected to respect the confidentiality of this report. (AFR 2.4.5 and GSRR 5.4.11)

3.9 When a College hearing board finds that a violation of academic rights has occurred and that redress is possible, it shall direct the Dean of the College or the Dean’s designate to provide redress. The administrator, in consultation with the hearing board, shall implement an appropriate remedy. (AFR 2.2.4 and 2.4.5; GSRR 5.4.11).

4. PROCEDURE FOR HEARINGS WITHIN THE COLLEGE

4.1 Hearing boards shall ensure that a collegial atmosphere prevails in grievance hearings.

4.2 At the appointed time and place the chairperson of the hearing board shall convene the hearing. The chairperson of the hearing board will establish time limits for the presentation of arguments and make a record of the proceedings. The procedure that will be followed in the hearing proper is as follows:

- Introduction of the hearing panel and statement of the issue by the chairperson of panel
- Presentation by the complainant or complainant’s counsel
- Questions of complainant by respondent or his/her counsel
- Questions of complainant by members of the hearing panel
- Presentation by each of complainant’s witnesses
- Questions of each of complainant’s witnesses by respondent
- Questions of each of complainant’s witnesses by members of the hearing panel
- Presentation by respondent
- Questions of respondent by complainant
- Questions of respondent by members of the hearing panel
- Presentation by each of respondent’s witnesses
- Questions of each of respondent’s witnesses by complainant’s
- Questions of each of respondent’s witnesses by members of the hearing panel
- Questions of complainant, respondent, or witnesses by hearing board members
- Final summary by complainant
- Final summary by respondent and/or his/her counsel
- Final questions of complainant, respondent, or witnesses by hearing board members
- Summary of the issue as clarified in the hearing by chairperson of panel
- Panel members meet in Executive Session. Agreement of a majority of those voting is necessary to sustain the grievance, and, if applicable, to recommend a remedy. If it appears necessary, the committee may, prior to reaching a decision, recess and then continue the hearing at a later date so that appropriate witnesses may be called to help determine matters of fact.