



---

# HANDBOOK FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

---

Doctoral Program in Educational Psychology and Educational Technology

**MICHIGAN STATE**  

---

**U N I V E R S I T Y**



**AUGUST 2025**

The faculty, staff, and students at Michigan State University welcome you to the PhD program in Educational Psychology and Educational Technology (EPET). The expertise you will develop in our program will position you to be a leader in this changing educational landscape. We look forward to supporting your development and are confident that you will have much to contribute to our vibrant community. In EPET we value diversity and strive to create an inclusive environment in which scholars with a variety of backgrounds, interests and worldviews can thrive.

This Handbook was designed to help guide and support you through the graduate education experience. It contains the policies and procedures pertaining to the EPET Program that will help you to navigate your studies. The Handbook is intended to: (a) guide you in setting, monitoring, and achieving your goals in your graduate education, (b) familiarize you with the faculty's general educational policies, expectations, and standards, and (c) assist faculty in their advising of students and in ensuring that the program's policies are applied systematically and fairly.

The Handbook includes important information regarding advising, program requirements, required forms, graduate assistantships, procedures for addressing conflict, time limits and dismissal policies. We want you to be successful in this program, and we want program policies and expectations to be clear to you. This Handbook is also designed to complement information from your advisor, guidance committee, and the program's orientation session. This Handbook has been written to be consistent with University, College of Education, and Department policies and is intended to clarify academic issues that are unique to the EPET Program. We invite suggestions for improving the usefulness of the Handbook as we revise and update it annually.

In joining our program, you are also becoming part of a College of Education that is nationally recognized for its research, teaching, and service. The strength of our college is the students, faculty, and staff, who have created an intellectual and social community where ideas, learning, and collaboration are valued. We look forward to your participation in and contribution to this community.

Again, welcome to EPET!

## Updates for 2025-26

Changed “hybrid” terminology to “online”.

Removed all references to “five-year” assistantships due to uncertain funding guarantees.

Updated policy on the length of time (i.e., always 4 weeks) for students’ first draft of the EPET comprehensive exam.

Updated course requirements to align with changes already listed with Registrar. This includes:

- Changed required courses from 14 to 15 three-credit courses
- Changing Educational Inquiry and Research from 15 to 18 credits and adding the requirement of CEP/TE 931 – Qualitative Methods in Educational Research.
- Added requirement for at least one course on culture, critical perspectives, or social justice as approved by the student's guidance committee.
- Changed required number of Emphasis Area credits from 9 to 6 credits, and also added the option for CEP 905 – Cultural Perspectives on Learning and Development.

## Table of Contents

Section	Title	Page
	Introduction	i
	Updates	ii
	Table of Contents	1
I	Program Overview	2
II	Program Components and Requirements	6
	A. Doctoral Course Requirements	
	B. Optional Additions to the Program	
	C. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research Training	
	D. Preliminary Examination	
	E. Annual Review	
	F. Research Practicum	
	G. Comprehensive Examination	
	H. Dissertation	
	I. University Residency Requirement	
	J. Dual Major Doctoral Degrees	
	K. Applying to Graduate	
III	Selection of Advisor	18
	A. Temporary Advisor	
	B. Permanent Advisor	
IV	Formation of the Guidance Committee	20
V	General Policies	22
	A. Academic Performance	
	B. Timeline and Extension	
	C. Leave of Absence	
	D. Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities	
	E. Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution	
	F. Academic Honesty and Ethical Principles and Practices	
	G. Disability and Reasonable Accommodation / Digital Accessibility	
	H. Use of Artificial Intelligence in Academic Work	
	I. Commitment to Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Belonging	
VI	Work Related Policies	29
VII	University Resources	30
VIII	Program Forms	31

## I. Program Overview

The doctoral program in Educational Psychology and Educational Technology (EPET) is designed for persons who show promise of becoming scholars and leaders in the study of educational psychology and/or the educational technology. The program emphasizes rigorous research, scholarship and analytic perspectives on learning, development, and technology embedded in culture and society. The program prepares graduates to pursue careers as faculty, educational researchers, and leaders in education.

There are two pathways to the EPET doctoral degree: on-campus and online. The on-campus mode of the PhD program is designed for people who are able to relocate to East Lansing and attend graduate school full-time. The online mode of the PhD program is designed for people who will keep their jobs associated with education, psychology, and/or technology while attending graduate school. One advantage of the on-campus program is the availability of assistantships that are generally awarded by the department to cover on-campus students' tuition expenses and provide a modest stipend. One advantage of the online program is the opportunity to integrate doctoral studies and research with an ongoing career in an educational field.

EPET students focus their program of study in either Educational Psychology or Educational Technology, although students often have interests spanning both.

**Educational Psychology.** Faculty and doctoral students in this emphasis area investigate human learning, development, and motivation in various settings such as schools, workplaces, communities, and homes. Through these investigations, faculty and students seek to understand and improve educational practice. Program participants often base their analyses in specific domains, for example mathematics, literacy, or science.

**Educational Technology.** Faculty and doctoral students in this emphasis area seek to understand and improve the use of powerful technologies to support learning and teaching. Students engage in research and development seeking to understand the pedagogy, policy, and design of media and technologies in support of learning, nationally and internationally, in formal environments such as on-campus and online classes as well as in informal environments such as homes and after-school programs.

Program faculty in both emphasis areas bring a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds, research experiences and traditions, and cultural and life experiences to their work. They actively seek to maintain and expand that diversity. The EPET doctoral program seeks and welcomes applicants from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds, educational and technological experiences, and social, economic, and cultural backgrounds.

The EPET program is one of several doctoral programs in the department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education (CEPSE). Faculty in other CEPSE doctoral program areas, especially School Psychology, Special Education, and Measurement and Quantitative Methods (MQM), share interests with EPET faculty and students and frequently serve on EPET students' guidance committees. Such connections are also common with faculty in the department of Teacher Education (TE) and the Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education program (HALE) in the department of Educational Administration (EAD).

The EPET program endeavors to provide each student with a wide variety of opportunities to develop their own areas of expertise and research. At a minimum, the formal program elements will include:

### Formal Program Elements

1. Program of coursework (GradPlan)
2. Preliminary examination
3. Research practicum
4. Comprehensive examination
5. Dissertation proposal
6. Dissertation
7. Annual university-required training in Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research (RECR)
8. Annual review

Study and experiences beyond these minimum requirements will result in a more successful and satisfying program. These other experiences include informal program elements completed in addition to the student's coursework or assistantship responsibilities. Informal program elements are largely initiated by students.

### Informal Program Elements (participation encouraged but not required)

1. Attending EPET Brown Bag sessions.
2. Interacting with groups of fellow students around academic and professional writing, readings, and other experiences.
3. Attending seminars, colloquy, dissertation defenses and other opportunities to learn from others outside the context of courses.
4. Attending professional conferences in your area(s) of primary interest.
5. Teaching or assisting with teaching courses for undergraduate and/or masters students.
6. Working on faculty-led research projects.
7. Apprentice-reviewing journal articles, conference presentations, proposals and/or other professional documents.
8. Authoring or co-authoring professional papers submitted for publication.
9. Serving as a student representative on program and departmental committees.
10. Community engagement and outreach.

From the time they enter the program, students are encouraged to engage with fellow students around professional readings and attend presentations outside of courses (informal elements 1 and 2 above). Often students form writing groups, for example, to support the development of each other's scholarly voice. Students are encouraged to seek research and/or teaching opportunities as their prior experience and interests allow (informal elements 4 and 5 above). Attendance at professional conferences is suggested from the beginning of the student's programs. Students should seek opportunities to present their research or work with faculty at conferences throughout their studies. Students need to prepare themselves to write professional papers for publication as soon as possible in their studies, beginning in many cases with co-authoring papers and chapters with faculty. Students can expect guidance from their advisor and guidance committee in finding and carrying out these informal elements.

### **General Guidelines About Timing**

***Program of Study.*** Students are required to complete at least 15 three-credit courses. On-campus students typically take three three-credit courses each fall and spring semester. Online students typically take one or two three-credit courses in fall, spring, and summer semesters. Coursework is generally completed by the end of the third year for on-campus students, or by the end of the fourth year for online students.

***Preliminary Examination and Guidance Committee.*** In addition to coursework, all students are required to complete the preliminary examination at the end of the first year in the program (see details in section II.D). Further, students are expected to form their guidance committee by the end of their first year. The student's program of study is developed in consultation with the guidance committee and recorded by the student in GradPlan. Students who have not convened their guidance committee and developed a program of study by the end of their 2nd year will typically be evaluated as making unsatisfactory progress in their annual review (section II.E) with some exceptions for unusual circumstances.

***Research Practicum.*** The research practicum is a pre-dissertation empirical research experience conducted toward the end of the second year. Practicum research is evaluated by a committee and is designed to prepare students to conduct independent research. Students who have not passed their practicum by the end of their third year will typically be evaluated as making unsatisfactory progress in their annual review, with some exceptions for unusual circumstances.

***Comprehensive Examination.*** When the research practicum and 80% of the coursework are complete, students may schedule the comprehensive examination. This exam is designed to demonstrate breadth of knowledge in the field. To remain on track for program completion in five years, students should take this exam in the fall or spring of their third year. Students who have not taken the comprehensive exam by the end of their third year may be evaluated as making unsatisfactory progress in their annual review. Individual circumstances will be considered in this evaluation.

***Dissertation Committee and Proposal.*** After passing the comprehensive examination, the student should review the membership of their current guidance committee to assess whether changes are necessary for the support of their dissertation, and record any committee changes in GradPlan. After the dissertation committee has been formed, the student may propose their dissertation. The dissertation is a culminating demonstration of the student's depth of knowledge

in the area of scholarly concentration. The dissertation proposal is typically completed during the fourth year.

Students who do not have an approved dissertation proposal by the end of their fifth year will typically be evaluated as making unsatisfactory progress in their annual review, with some exceptions for unusual circumstances.

### General Timeline

Formal Program Element	Expected Completion
Preliminary Exam	End of first year
Guidance Committee and GradPlan	End of first year
Research Practicum	End of second year
Comprehensive Exam	End of third year
Dissertation Proposal	Fourth year
Dissertation Defense	Fourth/fifth year



## II. Program Components and Degree Requirements

Although a doctoral program is more than a collection of doctoral courses, courses do play an important role in supporting students' learning about a range of perspectives and issues relevant to learning, development, and technology, to support the development of their own research focus, and to participate in intellectual communities. Course requirements are intended to provide students with a base of important knowledge and issues while providing maximum flexibility to build a program suited to the student's individual professional goals. Each student is expected to work closely with their guidance committee to select courses that provide sufficient exposure to other perspectives important for studying chosen educational issues. This selection of courses constitutes the student's program plan and is filed with the college through GradPlan. Any changes to a student's program must be approved by the guidance committee.

### A. Doctoral Course Requirements

Candidates for the Ph.D. degree in Educational Psychology and Educational Technology complete at least 15 three-credit courses and must register for a minimum of 24 credits of doctoral dissertation research (course number 999), meeting the requirements published in Academic Programs.

#### Proseminar (6 credits)

The two-semester proseminar is generally taken during the first year of the program. These two courses are designed to help build students' academic skills and professional learning community, introduce them to historically and currently important issues in technology, learning, development, and related fields, and provide a preliminary look at the scholarly themes that characterize the program.

CEP 900	Proseminar in Educational Psychology and Educational Technology I
CEP 901	Proseminar in Educational Psychology and Educational Technology II

#### Educational Inquiry and Research (18 credits)

The following six courses concerning educational inquiry and research are also required. These courses are designed to help build students' basic competence in conceptualizing and carrying out empirical research in the broad field of education.

CEP 930	Educational Inquiry
CEP/TE 931	Qualitative Methods in Educational Research
CEP 932	Quantitative Methods in Educational Research I
CEP 933	Quantitative Methods in Educational Research II
CEP 955	Research Design Educational Psychology and Educational Technology
CEP 995	Practicum in Research Design and Data Analysis

### Intellectual History (3 credits)

One of the following intellectual history courses is also required.

CEP 911	Intellectual History of Educational Psychology
CEP 916	Intellectual History of Educational Technology

### Culture, Critical Perspectives, or Social Justice (3 credits)

One course on culture, critical perspectives, or social justice as approved by the student's guidance committee.

### Emphasis Area Core Courses (6 credits)

Two required emphasis area courses provide breadth of understanding in educational issues and meet the College of Education basic knowledge requirements.

CEP 902	Psychology of Learning School Subjects
CEP 903	Cognitive Development
CEP 904	Social-Emotional Development
CEP 905	Cultural Perspectives on Learning and Development
CEP 909	Cognition and Technology
CEP 910	Motivation and Learning
CEP 953	Teachers and Technology
CEP 956	Mind, Media, and Learning

### Area of Concentration

Students must identify and complete at least three additional courses (courses that have not been used to complete other program requirements) in their own area of concentration within Educational Psychology or Educational Technology. Students are encouraged to include some coursework from outside the department of CEPSE. Emphasis area and concentration courses must provide a coherent program of study in the student's area of concentration and be approved, in advance, by the student's guidance committee. Research methodology courses beyond the required five courses listed above may count as concentration courses as well as courses listed above as Emphasis Area Courses, but a single course cannot be counted as completing two or more program requirements. Students may select suitable doctoral courses offered by other units' subject to approval of the guidance committee. At most, two master's-level courses (800 level courses) may be permitted as concentration courses, at the discretion of the guidance committee.

## B. Optional Additions to the Program

While working toward their degree, students may choose to pursue an additional graduate certificate or doctoral specialization in certain areas of interest like urban education, serious games, advanced qualitative methods, or language and literacy education. Information about these opportunities is available on [RO Academic Programs](#).

## C. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research Training

All EPET doctoral students are required to complete five hours of conduct of research training in the first year and three hours of annual refresher training in each subsequent year. Completed CITI modules can be counted as 45 minutes each.

	<i><b>First Year</b></i>	<i><b>Second Year</b></i>	<i><b>Third+ Year Annual Refresher Training</b></i>
Required Hours	5 Hours	3 Hours	3 Hours
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intro to the Responsible Conduct of Research</li> <li>• Authorship</li> <li>• Plagiarism</li> <li>• Research Misconduct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Research</li> <li>• Peer Review</li> <li>• A third CITI course from Graduate School list</li> <li>• HRPP (EPET second year requirement)</li> </ul>	Complete 3 hours of annual refresher training.

**Note:** All graduate students must complete a minimum of 6 hours of discussion-based training before they sit for comprehensive exams.

[The Graduate School Research and Scholarly Integrity Website](#) contains links to reading materials, as well as the syllabus and class materials used in the Conduct of Research workshop series, conflict of interest RECR workshop materials, authorship and data issues, record keeping, data management, and sharing of information.

## D. Preliminary Examination

The preliminary examination is a critical evaluation of student's academic progress during the first year in the EPET program. Procedures and policies for the completion of the preliminary examination requirement are determined by the EPET faculty.

**Timing.** The preliminary examination takes place near the end of the students' first year of doctoral studies in EPET. This applies to all students regardless of whether they are full-time or part-time, began the program in the fall, spring, or summer semesters, or are enrolled in the online or on-campus program.

**Materials reviewed.** Students submit a portfolio of their academic work. This portfolio should include the following materials:

- Copies of the major graded work from all first year courses including papers, tests, and projects. If the instructor has written comments on the work, a copy of that work including the comments should be submitted.
- A summary sheet listing instructor feedback and grades specific to the works in the portfolio and final grades for all courses taken in the first year. The feedback listed should be the major

comments on the papers (often written at the end), rather than the editorial comments written throughout. Other instructor feedback on the students' performance can also be listed. Feedback must be reported fully and verbatim.

- A critique of an empirical study. Students will be asked to critique empirical studies as part of their first-year courses. These critiques should be included in their portfolios.
- Students may include other material if it adds additional information about their academic progress.

**Due date for materials.** Preliminary examination materials are due near the end of the spring semester as part of the annual review.

**Reviewers.** The preliminary examination materials are reviewed by a group of three EPET faculty.

**Aspects of materials reviewed.** The following aspects of the portfolio materials will be evaluated:

- grades and other evidence of faculty evaluation,
- ability to express thoughts in writing,
- ability to critique an empirical research article, and
- ability to complete assignments fully and on time.

**Ratings.** The reviewers decide on an overall rating for each aspect of the student's work. The rating will be either "*satisfactory*" or "*unsatisfactory*." In determining ratings, extenuating circumstances affecting the student's performance will be considered. A "*satisfactory*" rating is based on the following criteria:

- Grades, judged as satisfactory if the average GPA in doctoral level courses is 3.5 or higher, with no more than one doctoral course with a grade lower than 3.0.
- Ability to express thoughts in writing, judged as satisfactory if the student's writing demonstrates an ability to convey ideas and arguments clearly, concisely, and coherently, and to use correct grammar, spelling, word usage, and academic conventions (e.g., citations).
- Ability to critique an empirical research article, judged as satisfactory if the student is able to write clearly about the strengths and weaknesses of a study's theoretical perspective, research design and analysis, and interpretation and implications of the results.
- Ability to complete assignments fully and on time, judged as satisfactory if the student has completed all course work fully and on time.

**Outcomes.** Faculty ratings lead to one of two outcomes for the preliminary examination, *pass* or *fail*.

- *Pass.* A satisfactory rating in *all* aspects of assessment results in a pass on the preliminary examination.
- *Fail.* An unsatisfactory rating in *any* aspect of the materials results in a fail on the preliminary examination.

The pass/fail outcome of the preliminary examination will be a major consideration in the overall outcome of the first annual review. Typically, students who pass the preliminary examination will pass the first annual review, and students who fail the preliminary examination will fail the first annual review. On rare occasions, additional information not included in the preliminary examination may alter the outcome.

Students receiving a "fail" rating on the first annual review will undergo a retention and dismissal review. Students who have failed the first annual review will have officially passed once the conditions specified in the retention and dismissal review have been met.

**Retention and dismissal review.** A retention and dismissal review may be prompted by a number of issues including poor academic performance, plagiarism, and ethical or legal violations. The review process consists of examining the problematic issue with the student. The outcome of the review may be, (a) to retain the student in good standing, (b) to allow the student to continue in the program on probationary status until specified conditions are met, or (c) to immediately dismiss the student from the program. If a student is undergoing a retention and dismissal review, the faculty reserves the right to restrict that student's participation in MSU coursework, and MSU teaching, research, and service activities.

### E. Annual Review

The EPET program will review at least once a year the graduate student's progress in their research and scholarly activity, as well as plans for work in the coming year (see the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities handbook, GSRR 2.4.8, <https://grad.msu.edu/gsrr>). Students will receive an email during the spring semester with a required annual review form that must be completed and submitted by the specified due date near the end of the semester, along with supporting materials, which include an updated CV, evidence of Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research training (RECR), and an example of completed course work. The faculty will review the submitted materials and meet to discuss student progress. Then, the program director will write a letter with feedback to the student, which is placed in the student's file. The annual review letter will state whether the student currently has "acceptable academic standing" (GSRR 2.3.2) with an average GPA in doctoral level courses of 3.5 or higher, with no more than one doctoral course with a grade lower than 3.0. "Satisfactory progress toward a degree" is defined as steady progress toward completing course, practicum, and comprehensive examination requirements within the first five years, and completion of the dissertation within eight years from beginning the program. Failure to maintain acceptable academic standing or to maintain satisfactory progress toward a degree may result in dismissal from the program.

Graduate students should meet with their advisors to discuss this feedback. Those who wish to appeal any part of the faculty's evaluation may do so in writing to the department chair. The permanent advisor or the graduate student may request a meeting of the guidance committee to address and attempt to resolve concerns raised by the evaluation of the annual review. A written report on such appeals will be filed together with the annual progress report in the student's file.

### F. Research Practicum

The College of Education requires completion of a research practicum by students in all doctoral programs in the college. The goal of the research practicum is for students to become experienced with the nature of empirical research prior to undertaking their dissertations. The research practicum also links course work and research experiences (in particular the dissertation) by introducing students to the process of conceptualizing, proposing, conducting, and defending research. To complete the research practicum, the student must write a research proposal, complete and write up the research, and give a presentation of the results. The process of conducting research involves activities associated with each of the components of the final product that inform one other: theory, research questions, data collection, analysis and

interpretation. Further, the practicum will help the student identify areas of research which are of particular interest to the student, and which the student can pursue through and after graduate school.

### **Procedures and Policies Regarding the Research Practicum**

**Timing.** Students typically complete the research practicum during the second year of study, after successfully completing the preliminary examination and before registering to take the comprehensive examination.

**Practicum chairperson and committee.** In the EPET program, the student's advisor serves as the Practicum chairperson. One additional faculty member and one doctoral student who has completed a research practicum constitute the practicum committee membership. The committee supports the student in planning and carrying out the research practicum, as well as approving the student's research practicum proposal and final practicum report.

**Proposal.** A written research practicum proposal is developed by the student in collaboration with the practicum committee. The two faculty members of the practicum committee must approve the proposal. This is typically done in a committee meeting in which the student presents their proposal to the faculty and student members of the committee.

**Course credit enrollment, and grades.** In accordance with college policy, students register for three credits in CEP 995 as part of the practicum process. Upon completion of the research practicum project, a grade is assigned for the CEP 995 course by the practicum chairperson. If the practicum project is not completed during the semester in which a student is registered for CEP 995, a grade of DF (deferred) will be awarded. This grade will be changed to a standard numeric grade upon completion of the practicum. It is the advisor's responsibility to record and change CEP 995 grades as necessary. A second form—the *EPET Research Practicum Completion Form*—is used to record completion of the research practicum and the grade that was assigned (see Forms).

**Institutional Review Board.** To conduct research involving human subjects students must submit and receive approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The advisor usually helps with the preparation of the IRB application. Students may not serve as Primary Investigators (PIs) of their practicum research. Typically, the advisor serves as the PI and the student is designated as a Secondary Investigator.

**Written practicum report.** The final product produced by the student and approved by the faculty committee is a written research report. This paper should include components of a typical empirical research article, including:

*Theoretical perspective.* The student must establish a conceptual framework for the study to which each part of the paper should be linked. The student should describe the basis for the conceptual framework in the existing literature as well as establish the need and importance of the study given the existing literature. The student must develop research questions linked to the conceptual framework.

*Research design.* The student should describe the relevant components of the design of the study. This description might include sources of information, how participants were chosen, instrumentation, and methods of data collection. The student should provide a rationale for

their choice of data sources and comment on the extent to which the choices are consistent with theoretical arguments.

*Analysis.* The student should describe the way in which the data were analyzed. This includes the procedures used to obtain simplifications, reductions, and representations of the data. The student should describe the findings of the research, and the assumptions on which the findings are based.

*Interpretation and implications of results.* The student should interpret the results relative to the state of current knowledge as defined in the existing literature and within the scope of the study's limitations. In addition, the student should develop the relevant implications of the findings with recognition of the limitations of the study and indicate directions for further research.

Research practicum studies often take place in the context of a broader research project. In recognition of the collaborative nature of many research projects, some components of the research report may be based on work of other members of a research team. For example, if a student is part of a research team, the student may base the theoretical perspective section of the paper on the work of other members of the team. The student must indicate the components which were based on original work and which components were based on the work of others, and the components must be integrated coherently.

***Oral presentation of the research practicum.*** The practicum must be presented orally to the practicum committee with invitations extended to interested faculty members and students as appropriate. In keeping with the concept of participation in a community of scholars, students are encouraged to present their practicum research to open forums such as professional conferences, EPET Brown Bags, and/or other organized events within the College of Education. This practice is intended to help students develop their presentation skills as well as to provide others an opportunity to learn about the student's research.

## G. Comprehensive Examination

University regulations require that all doctoral candidates satisfactorily complete a comprehensive examination. The CEPSE faculty believe that it is essential that students receiving PhD degrees from the department have an understanding of their field beyond that gained in separate courses. The comprehensive exams give students the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to integrate and use information acquired from various readings or courses, as well as to demonstrate their ability to clearly communicate ideas in an acceptable writing style that reflects good grammar, organization, and composition.

The exams are not meant to measure all of the many qualities that are important requisites of an educator, researcher, or educational psychologist. The exam is an assessment of each candidate's understanding of areas of knowledge thought to be important for doctoral level scholarship.

The university requires that doctoral students complete the written comprehensive examination after completing 80% of their coursework (typically during the third year of doctoral study). The EPET faculty believe that the experience of preparing for and taking the comprehensive examination should:

- Provide the student with an integrative learning experience--an opportunity to engage in

reading, thinking, and writing that is unlikely to occur in other settings (e.g., individual courses, conducting a research project, teaching).

- Encourage learning activities (individual and collaborative) prior to the examination that are unlikely to take place otherwise (i.e., preparing for the examination should be an occasion for targeted reading and thinking with others).
- Provide an opportunity for faculty to ensure that the student is adequately conversant with or knowledgeable about issues deemed essential for the profession.

### **Comprehensive Exam General Policies**

Comprehensive examinations are required of all doctoral students after 80% of the prescribed coursework has been completed, but within five years from the date the student was admitted to the program. The examinations may not be taken until the candidate's academic plan of study has been approved through GradPlan. Examinees must have completed the research practicum and filed the *EPET Research Practicum Completion Form* before taking the comprehensive examination. Candidates may count courses taken during the term immediately preceding the examination as meeting the requirements that 80% of coursework be completed before taking the exam(s). Students must be registered for classes the semester of the exam.

The comprehensive exam is administered in September or October of the Fall semester and March or April of the Spring semester. Students planning to take the comprehensive exam must submit the *Application for Doctoral Comprehensive Examination* form before the end of the registration period. Both new candidates and those re-taking part or all of the examination must file the application for comprehensive examination. Examinees are required to answer all designated exam questions on the first attempt.

### **Procedures for Comprehensive Exam**

**Questions.** Students write responses to three questions. Two of these are selected by the student from a set of four common questions written by EPET faculty. The third question, focusing on the student's area of specialization, is written by the student's guidance committee and approved by the program faculty.

**Common questions.** Each of the four common questions focuses on one or more of the central themes of the EPET program, around which students have constructed reading lists. The questions should encourage the student to draw upon their more specialized knowledge in their response. Thus, in responding to a question focusing on issues of transfer or the *situatedness* of learning, one student might draw on more specific research literature on literacy learning and teaching whereas another student might draw on issues of learning through technology in schools, and another might deal with issues of connections between learning in school and in the workplace. The intent is for the student to deal with the broader issue by drawing on their more specialized knowledge.

**Specialization question.** The question written for the individual student by their guidance committee focuses on the student's area of specialization, but with the expectation that the student will draw on various general themes or issues relevant to EPET in answering the question. Thus, whereas the common questions begin with the general theme and have the student draw on their specialization, the specialization question begins with the student's research focus and has the student draw on general issues or themes.



**Format of responses.** All responses must be typed, double-spaced, with margins of at least one inch and at least 11-point Arial font. The response to each common question is limited to 3000 words, each specialization question to 3600 words.

**Setting for the examination.** The examination is administered as a take-home examination. Students obtain questions from the examination administrator and return their responses to the examination administrator by the specified deadline. Students may use whatever resources they wish (e.g., books, journal articles, notes from classes, libraries, personal journals and notes). Students are not, however, permitted to discuss questions or their responses with anyone during the examination. Students may work in the setting of their choice. Some students may wish to arrange to work in a private room on campus to minimize distractions. The student and their advisor are responsible for making such arrangements.

**Exam Period.** The length of time for students' first draft of EPET comprehensive exams will be 4 weeks. Students will be provided expectations about the comps period, including broad guidelines about how much time should be devoted to comps (TBD) and the expectation that students will maintain their employment commitments (TA, RA) during the four-week period.

**Scoring.** Students' exams will be scored in the week following the four week comps period. Rating categories for students' initial responses will be either Pass or Revise. Students may choose to not revise, in which case their response will be scored as a No Pass. Rating categories for students' revised responses will be either Pass or No Pass. Each response will be scored by two faculty raters on a 5-point scale, using assessment criteria specified in the rubric. Average scores above 3.66 receive a Pass. To receive a score of Pass, a response must have an average score above 3.66 and no more than 1 rating of "underdeveloped" (0.5) across all raters on the rubric.

Example 1. If a response receives faculty rating scores of 4 and 3, it will be scored a Revise, because the average is below 3.66.

Example 2. If a response receives faculty ratings of 4 and 3.5, with 2 ratings of "underdeveloped" in any rubric category, it will be scored a revise. Even though the average score is above the 3.66 Pass threshold, the assessment of "underdeveloped" response areas exceeds the allowable amount.

Example 3. If a revised response receives scores that suggest a "No Pass; using the criteria described above, it will be assessed by a third faculty rater. The response will then receive a Pass if the average of the scores are 3.66 or above (for example, if the scores are 4,4,3) and a No Pass if the average of the scores are below 3.66.

**Revisions.** Students receiving a Revise score will be required to revise and resubmit their response within a given time-period (typically 1 week). The revised response is read by the faculty who originally scored them. The outcome of the revised response will be either Pass or No Pass, with a passing score having an average above 3.66 and no more than 1 rating of "underdeveloped".

**Academic Integrity.** Plagiarism is a violation of University policy on Academic Integrity. Evidence of plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity is the expected or potential basis for failing a Comps question and the Comps exam. In these cases, students will not be given the chance to revise. Students taking comps should check with the comps coordinator about current policy related to the use of generative AI.

**Faculty Raters.** Two faculty raters will score each initial response. A third rater will score initial responses if a scoring difference of 2 or more points cannot be resolved in discussion between the two initial raters. A third rater will also score any revised response that does not receive a Pass (above 3.66) with no more than 1 rating of “underdeveloped”.

**Feedback.** In addition to substantive feedback, faculty readers must provide specific directions to the student when assigning a *Revise* score on any question. These directions would typically suggest that the student read or review specific readings and/or rewrite specific sections of their text to address issues raised in the substantive comments. When a *no pass* score is given, the reader must identify a list of central issues that the student has failed to master and, whenever possible, identify a more extensive body of literature addressing those issues.

**Exam retake.** Students receiving a *no pass* on either common question must retake that part of their comprehensive examination at the next administration (i.e., they must answer two new common questions in the same format). Students receiving a *no pass* on their specialization question must retake that part of their comprehensive examination also at the next administration (i.e., they must answer a new specialization question in the same format). In both cases, it is the responsibility of the advisor to develop a plan of study with the student that addresses the weaknesses identified by the readers. Students have a total of three opportunities (two retakes) to pass the Comprehensive exam.

## H. Dissertation

Students must satisfactorily complete and defend a doctoral dissertation. The doctoral dissertation is the culmination of a student’s graduate education and training and reflects not only on the accomplishments of the graduate student but also on the quality of the graduate program.

A dissertation in our program is original research that makes a significant contribution to knowledge in the fields of educational psychology, educational technology, or both. Previously published, multi-author work is not acceptable content for a dissertation. All writing must be original and the student’s own. An approved dissertation accepted by the Graduate School becomes a single-author publication and contributes to the body of knowledge of the discipline.

Students are encouraged to examine dissertations by recent graduates of the EPET program to better understand the kinds of scholarship and writing expected in a dissertation. Copies of dissertations are available through the MSU library and faculty have copies of dissertations by their students.

### Dissertation General Policies and Procedures

After successfully completing the comprehensive examination, the student must successfully defend a formal dissertation proposal to the guidance committee (now informally called the dissertation committee), carry out the proposed research, and defend their dissertation. Dissertation defenses include both oral presentations to the committee and the written dissertation itself, conforming to guidelines provided by the Graduate School.

**Dissertation director.** The permanent advisor may also serve as the director of the dissertation, but this is not mandatory. Sometimes, faculty in other departments or colleges serve as dissertation directors. Students should seek out directors whose interests and competencies meet their needs.

**Dissertation proposal.** After the student has passed the comprehensive examinations, the student draws upon prior and ongoing work to formulate a dissertation proposal. Students customarily work with their advisors and other appropriate faculty in drafting and revising their proposals before submitting a formal version to their guidance committee for review and recommendations.

The guidance committee meets formally to discuss the proposal, ask questions, and evaluate the proposed project in terms of its quality, originality, scope, and appropriateness. The guidance committee may accept the proposal, ask for revisions, or, in rare cases, turn the proposal back to the student for considerable rethinking and rewriting (and another proposal meeting). Three committee members must be present for the proposal meeting to be valid. When they approve the proposal, the dissertation director will sign the *Dissertation Proposal Approval Form* to be submitted to the program coordinator.

**Dissertation course credits.** Before completing the dissertation, students must register for and successfully complete a minimum of 24 credits, and no more than 30 credits, of doctoral dissertation research (CEP 999). Once the dissertation is complete, the student and committee schedule a final oral examination (often called the dissertation defense) at a mutually acceptable time. The [university calendar](#) specifies a series of dates each semester that should be consulted

when scheduling the examination, completing revisions, and submitting the final copies of the dissertation.

**Dissertation defense.** The defense takes place in two parts, as described in the Graduate School Handbook. The first part is a formal presentation that is open to the public. The second part is an oral examination that is attended only by the student's dissertation committee members. Students should confer with their advisors regarding the typical length of dissertation defense presentations. After the formal presentation by the student, everyone except members of the committee leave the room and the guidance committee continues to discuss the work with the student.

Not every member of the committee has to attend a defense in person. A committee member on sabbatical, for example, may participate remotely. Even if one member is unable to participate in person or by phone, the defense can still take place, as long as that committee member has given comments and a vote to the chair in advance. Students should submit final versions of their dissertations to their committee members at least two weeks prior to the final oral examination date. Note that, as with all other benchmarks in the program, students must be enrolled in the term in which they expect to defend their dissertations.

Upon completion of the oral defense, the committee votes on whether to approve the dissertation or call for major revisions. The student is required to complete all requested revisions and submit the *Dissertation Oral Defense* form to the program coordinator before submitting the dissertation to The Graduate School for publication in ProQuest.

To ensure fairness in the examination procedure and maintenance of academic standards, the dean of the college or the chair of the department may appoint an outside member to the examining committee. The outside committee member will read and critique the dissertation, participate in the oral part of the exam, and submit a report to the dean and the department chair.

**Dissertation final revisions & formatting.** After the final revisions are complete, the student should follow university guidelines regarding the production and submission of the dissertation.

The Graduate School provides forms and guidelines pertinent to producing the dissertation, copywriting the thesis, submitting the final product, and other technical matters. Any supplementary materials need the approval of the thesis/dissertation committee chair on the ETD approval form. See *The Graduate School [Formatting Tutorial](#)*.

The Graduate School will certify the acceptance of the dissertation's final format.

### **I. University Residency Requirement**

Students in the on-campus program must satisfy the University's residency requirement of six credits of coursework in two consecutive semesters. This requirement has been waived for students in the online mode offering of the program.

### **J. Dual Major Doctoral Degrees**

All dual major doctoral degree requests must be approved by the Dean of The Graduate School and reflect the required courses and standards for both departments with a single dissertation. Details are included in [Academic Programs](#).

### **K. Applying to Graduate**

Students are eligible to apply for graduation after completing all of the degree requirements and should submit the application to graduate in the first two weeks of the semester in which they plan to hold their oral defense. The Graduation Application is now available at [student.msu.edu](http://student.msu.edu). After clicking on the Academic Progress tile, you will see a link to Apply for Graduation in the left-hand navigation under the Graduation heading.

### III. SELECTION OF ADVISOR

#### A. Temporary Advisor

Incoming doctoral students are assigned a temporary advisor upon admission to the program based on (a) the research interests and expertise of program faculty and (b) the research interests of the student as expressed in the application materials. The temporary advisor plays an important role during the first year in helping the new student become familiar with the EPET program and answers questions about preparation for doctoral studies, opportunities for assistantships, program requirements, expected timelines, the procedures and timing for selecting a permanent advisor and guidance committee, and other details about the doctoral experience. During the first year, the temporary advisor is also an important resource for the student in making connections with other faculty and shaping the student's program and research interests.

#### B. Permanent Advisor (Chairperson of the Guidance Committee)

Unless a change of advisor is requested, a student's temporary advisor becomes their permanent advisor at the beginning of the second year, and serves as the chairperson of the guidance committee. The permanent advisor and guidance committee (further described below) are responsible for working with the student to develop a program of study and to make timely progress through the program.

To help maximize the student's academic and professional growth, the permanent advisor (chairperson of the guidance committee) is at minimum responsible for the following:

- Assisting the student in selecting appropriate faculty members for the guidance committee.
- Validating the student's annual Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research training.
- Helping the student to understand and fulfill all of the requirements and policies of the program, department, college, and university, including the completion of forms required by those requirements and policies.
- Helping the student identify, pursue, and secure academic, professional, research, and teaching opportunities that would appropriately contribute to their career aspirations.
- Assisting the student in scheduling and preparing for three required official meetings of the guidance committee: (a) To approve the program coursework (b) to evaluate the dissertation proposal and (c) to evaluate the dissertation. At least three committee members must be present to constitute an official meeting. The guidance committee may also meet additionally as needed.
- Aiding the student in planning for and conducting the research practicum, including the selection of an appropriate committee.
- Assisting the student in finding and selecting appropriate research and teaching assistantships, finding and reading key pieces of research, and preparing for the comprehensive examination.
- Supporting the student's preparation of a dissertation proposal, selection of a dissertation director (if different from the permanent advisor), and changes in guidance committee members as appropriate during the dissertation phase of study.
- Resolving any conflicts or problems that may arise between guidance committee members and the student.

### **Who May Serve as a Permanent Advisor**

Every tenure system EPET program faculty member is eligible to serve as temporary or permanent advisor for EPET students, and every EPET student must have an EPET program faculty member serving as permanent advisor. EPET students may seek co-advisors if appropriate to their scholarly goals. The permanent advisor may also serve as the dissertation director during the dissertation phase of the student's study. In some cases, another faculty member – from EPET or elsewhere in the department or College – may be the best choice to serve as dissertation. In all cases, the permanent advisor/chair of guidance committee must be an EPET faculty member.

### **Advisor Changes**

As students gain experience in their programs, their interests and/or professional objectives may (and frequently do) shift. The temporary advisor may remain the best candidate for permanent advisor for a particular student, but that is a matter for the student and their temporary advisor to address together during the first year of the student's program with attention paid to the student's needs based on their academic background, lived experiences, research activities, and short- and long- term professional goals. Students should feel free to discuss alternative choices with their temporary advisor and to ask other faculty about their interest and willingness to serve as permanent advisor. Ultimately, a student's transition from working with a temporary advisor to working with a permanent advisor is successfully achieved only when the student finds that relationship is satisfactorily supporting their growth and development as a scholar.

Because students' interests and objectives often do change, a request for a change in the permanent advisor can be made at any point in their program. Students considering changing their permanent advisor should understand that building a good working relationship with a new advisor may take time.

### **Program Monitoring of the Advisor-Advisee Relationship**

The EPET program director is responsible for monitoring the performance of temporary advisors, permanent advisors, and guidance committees to ensure that graduate students are receiving appropriate mentoring. The program director facilitates any changes of advisor and/or guidance committee should this become necessary. Students, too, should make every effort to sustain fruitful and productive interactions with their advisors.

Should students experience any difficulty meeting or communicating with their advisor, temporary or permanent, they should consult with the program director about the nature of the difficulty. It is the responsibility of the program director to help the student resolve those problems. If, for any reason, there is a conflict of interest with discussing advisor difficulties with the program director (i.e., if the program director is also the advisor in question), the student may consult with the CEPSE chairperson.

## IV. FORMATION OF THE GUIDANCE COMMITTEE

### Purpose

The purpose of the guidance committee is to ensure that each student in the program makes timely progress towards their professional and scholarly goals. The guidance committee helps the student articulate their scholarly goals and research objectives, and then helps them to meet those goals, first by constructing and completing an appropriate program of study (GradPlan), and then by conceptualizing, proposing, and completing an appropriate dissertation study.

### Composition

All EPET guidance committees will be composed of *at least four* tenure system faculty, *at least two* of whom are members of the EPET program faculty, and *at least one* of whom is outside of EPET. Additional members of guidance committees are permitted (as needed) but not required. All other general university regulations for [guidance committee membership](#) must be observed. Approved, non-tenure stream faculty can also serve on guidance committees as appropriate. The guidance committee is variously referred to in different documents throughout the university, sometimes as a program committee or dissertation committee. Essentially, it is the same supportive committee with its composition and role changing throughout doctoral study.

### Formation

The student and their permanent advisor should meet, discuss, and compose the guidance committee before the end of the student's first year in the program. The objective of the first meeting of the guidance committee is to work with the student to plan a program of study.

### Role During the Coursework Phase of Students' Program

The guidance committee should meet as frequently as needed in face-to-face or virtual meetings. One major focus for discussion and deliberation in the guidance committee should be the selection of appropriate coursework that meets the student's goals and satisfies the coursework requirements for completing the degree. The committee should also consider and discuss (a) research and teaching assistantship opportunities and needs appropriate to the student's goals, and (b) possibilities for the student's research practicum and comprehensive examination.

### Role During the Dissertation Phase of Students' Programs

The role of the guidance committee shifts in the dissertation phase of the student's program. After the student has completed the comprehensive examination requirements, the student should re-evaluate their committee members and make any necessary changes in membership to best support their dissertation. The dissertation committee's role is to assist the student in conceptualizing and carrying out a dissertation study that is sensibly related to the student's scholarly and professional goals, intellectually rigorous and holds potential for making a significant contribution to the field and is feasible and appropriate for dissertation research. More specifically, the committee should assist the dissertation director in reading and critiquing drafts of the student's dissertation proposal and the segments of the dissertation that follow.

**Changes to Guidance Committee Membership**

Changes to the membership of the guidance or dissertation committee can be made whenever the student and the permanent advisor agree that such changes are necessary. Legitimate reasons for change include but are not restricted to: (a) departure of a committee member from the university, and (b) changes in the student's research interests or scholarly goals that would justify new faculty expertise and/or experience on the committee.

**Participation of Non-Regular Faculty Members**

It is understood that the student's pursuit of their research interests may generate topics for dissertation research for which adequate expertise is not available in the EPET program, CEPSE department, or College of Education. In those cases, the student and the permanent advisor should seek expertise from elsewhere in the university's tenure-stream faculty, non-tenured faculty and, if necessary, from other research universities. University approval of individuals for service on a committee is required before they joining the committee and assume any committee duties. View the [Graduate School policy and procedure details](#) for submitting such a request for approval and submit the documents to your academic program assistant who will assemble and submit the required information.



## V. GENERAL POLICIES

### A. Academic Performance

#### Policy on Academic Standards

The university policy on academic standards and evaluation states:

A 3.00 cumulative grade–point average in the degree program is the minimum university standard, but colleges, departments, or schools may establish a higher minimum standard. However, attainment of the minimum grade–point average is in itself an insufficient indicator of potential for success in other aspects of the program and in the field. The guidance committee and academic unit are jointly responsible for evaluating the student's competency (as indicated by, e.g., grades in core and other courses, research performance, and development of professional skills) and rate of progress (as indicated by the number of courses for which grades have been assigned or deferred). Written evaluations shall be communicated to the graduate student at least once a year, and a copy of such evaluations shall be placed in the graduate student's file. A student whose performance does not meet the standards of quality will not be permitted to continue to enroll in the degree program, and appropriate action will be taken by the college, department, or school.

Source: [MSU Office of the Registrar, Academic Programs, Graduate Education](#).

#### Policy on Academic Progress

The EPET program faculty will meet once a year and review the progress of all students in the program. The review of first year students is carried out by the program faculty as a whole at a meeting after the first year of study. At this meeting faculty discuss each student, identify strengths and weaknesses, and make recommendations. The temporary advisor summarizes this feedback in writing and discusses the feedback with the student. The advisor and student sign the written feedback, and a copy is given to the student and placed in the student's file. After the first annual review, subsequent reviews are the responsibility of the permanent advisor working with the guidance committee.

Students have a right to access their educational records (GSRR 3.2.3).

Departmental policies for grading comprehensive examinations and the policy for any remediation in case the student fails the exam or part of the exam are explained in this handbook. The departmental policies provide explicit criteria for dismissal based on failed attempts to pass the comprehensive examination.

### B. Timing and Extension

#### Time Extension

If a student will be unable to meet final PhD requirements within eight years, an extension to meet degree requirements must be applied for and approved. Students seeking extension should complete this request in collaboration with the advisor and submit to the program staff for review and handling. Extension requests must be submitted well before the eight-year deadline has been reached.

### C. Leave of Absence

Students requiring extended time away from their studies should submit a formal request. The request should be initiated with the student's advisor and should specify the anticipated length of the leave. Once the student and advisor have reached agreement as to the terms of the leave, the request should be forwarded to the EPET Program Director.

### D. Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities

The Graduate School Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities states:

The MSU Graduate School has an extensive set of resources and information: <http://grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/> and we are linked to other national sources on these topics.

The conduct of research and creative activities by faculty, staff, and students is central to the mission <https://president.msu.edu/initiatives/index.html> of Michigan State University and is an institutional priority. Faculty, staff, and students work in a rich and competitive environment for the common purpose of learning, creating new knowledge, and disseminating information and ideas for the benefit of their peers and the general public. The stature and reputation of MSU as a research university are based on the commitment of its faculty, staff, and students to excellence in scholarly and creative activities and to the highest standards of professional integrity. As a partner in scholarly endeavors, MSU is committed to creating an environment that promotes ethical conduct and integrity in research and creative activities.

Innovative ideas and advances in research and creative activities have the potential to generate professional and public recognition and, in some instances, commercial interest and financial gain. In rare cases, such benefits may become motivating factors to violate professional ethics. Pressures to publish, to obtain research grants, or to complete academic requirements may also lead to an erosion of professional integrity.

Breaches in professional ethics range from questionable research practices to misconduct (<http://www.rio.msu.edu/>). The primary responsibility for adhering to professional standards lies with the individual scholar. It is, however, also the responsibility of advisors and of the disciplinary community at large. Passive acceptance of improper practices lowers inhibitions to violate professional ethics.

Integrity in research and creative activities is based not only on sound disciplinary practice but also on a commitment to basic personal values such as fairness, equity, honesty, and respect. These guidelines are intended to promote high professional standards by everyone— faculty, staff, and students alike.

#### Key Principles

Integrity in research and creative activities embodies a range of practices that includes:

- Honesty in proposing, performing, and reporting research
- Recognition of prior work
- Confidentiality in peer review
- Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest

- Compliance with institutional and sponsor requirements
- Protection of human subjects and humane care of animals in the conduct of research
- Collegiality in scholarly interactions and sharing of resources
- Adherence to fair and open relationships between senior scholars and their coworkers

Source and for more information: [Guidelines for Graduate Student](#).

Integrity in research and creative activities is based on sound disciplinary practices as well as on a commitment to basic values such as fairness, equity, honesty and respect. The EPET program expects all research and creative activities to be conducted with integrity. EPET faculty provide education in research integrity via the following:

- Faculty conduct their research with integrity and “thinking aloud” about this with students apprenticing that research.
- Research ethics content is included in CEP 930 and CEP 901.
- Students are provided, through this handbook, documents on research integrity, including:
  - ▲ [Policies and Procedures](#)
  - ▲ [MSU policy related to the use of humans for research via the University Institutional Review Board](#)
  - ▲ [The American Psychological Association’s Ethics Office](#)
  - ▲ [The Office of the Ombudsman’s guidelines on plagiarism](#)

EPET students are expected to:

- Consult the documents above as needed and abide by all guidelines in the documents.
- Complete the online tutorial at the IRB website before beginning their practicum research.
- Obtain approval from the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to conducting any research involving humans.
- Undertake at least the minimum of required hours of RECR training each year and review requirement completion in Campus Solutions.
- Abide by the [All University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades](#), including guidelines on plagiarism.

Conducting research without approval of the IRB may result in dismissal from the program. Any incidence of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the program.

## **E. Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution**

Conflicts, disagreements, and issues sometimes arise during the course of a graduate program. The EPET program desires to resolve conflicts in a manner agreeable to all parties whenever possible.

Should a conflict arise, the student should first attempt to resolve the conflict with the party or parties directly involved. Students should consider seeking the advice and support of their advisor in seeking to resolve conflicts. Should informal attempts fail to resolve the situation, the student may appeal to the department chair. In case of a conflict involving the faculty advisor, the student may request that the department provide a change of advisor (see section III).

If you find yourself in this situation and have exhausted the internal resources for resolving the issue, you may contact the Office of the University Ombudsperson. 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 the Ombudsperson at any point during an issue when a confidential conversation or source of information may be needed. The Ombudsperson will listen to your concerns, give you information about university policies, help you evaluate the situation, and assist you in making plans to resolve the conflict.

Contact information:

Office of the University Ombudsperson  
129 N. Kedzie Hall  
(517) 353-8830  
[ombud@msu.edu](mailto:ombud@msu.edu)  
<https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/>

## F. Academic Honesty and Ethical Principles and Practices

**Plagiarism.** According to the Office of the University Ombudsperson:

*“Plagiarism is copying another person’s text or ideas and passing the copied material as your own work. ...You must both delineate (i.e., separate and identify) the copied text from your text and give credit to (i.e., cite the source) the source of the copied text to avoid accusations of plagiarism. Plagiarism is considered fraud and has potentially harsh consequences including loss of job, loss of reputation, and the assignment of reduced or failing grade in a course.*

*This definition of plagiarism applies for copied text and ideas:*

- (i) regardless of the source of the copied text or idea;*
- (ii) regardless of whether the author(s) of the text or idea which you have copied actually copied that text or idea from another source;*
- (iii) regardless of whether or not the authorship of the text or idea which you copy is known;*
- (iv) regardless of the nature of your text (journal paper/article, webpage, book chapter, paper submitted for college course, etc.) into which you copy the text or idea;*
- (v) regardless of whether or not the author of the source of the copied material gives permission for the material to be copied; and*
- (vi) regardless of whether you are or are not the author of the source of the copied text or idea (self-plagiarism).*

*This definition also applies for figures and figure legends and for tables and table legends which you copy into your text.”*

(Quoted from “Plagiarism: What It Is and How to Avoid It”, Peter Cobbett, PhD, August 2016)

At MSU, [General Student Regulation 1.00](#) states in part that “no student shall claim or submit the academic work of another as one’s own.” (For the complete regulation, refer to Protection of Scholarship and Grades.)

Plagiarism may be accidental or blatant or self-plagiarism. However, students are held to the same standards whether or not they knew they were plagiarizing or whether or not they were plagiarizing themselves or someone else.

Source and for more on the University policy on plagiarism: <https://ombud.msu.edu/academic-integrity/plagiarism-policy.html>

**Examinations.** The comprehensive exams are based on an honor system. A completed exam represents the work, understandings, and knowledge of the student, without assistance from other individuals to complete the exam. Completion of an exam means that the student agrees to comply with these policies and represents the work solely as their own. To ensure the security and integrity of the examination process, it is expected that:

- No faculty or staff member shall give any student information about an exam that would give the student an unfair advantage over other students.
- Any faculty or staff member having knowledge of any student or students receiving information about the content of any exam that gives that student an unfair advantage over others, must report that knowledge to the department chairperson.
- No student shall accept exam information if it is suspected that the information is about the content of the exam.
- Students shall report to the department chairperson any knowledge they have of other students or faculty giving or receiving information about the content of any examination.

**Academic honesty at Michigan State University.** Academic honesty is central to the educational process and acts of academic dishonesty are serious offenses within the University community and can result in suspension or dismissal.

Protection of Scholarship and Grades		(Source: <a href="#">Academic Programs Catalog</a> )
1.00	The principles of truth and honesty are fundamental to the educational process and the academic integrity of the University; therefore, no student shall:	
1.01	Claim or submit the academic work of another as one's own.	
1.02	Procure, provide, accept or use any materials containing questions or answers to any examination or assignment without proper authorization.	
1.03	Complete or attempt to complete any assignment or examination for another individual without proper authorization.	
1.04	Allow any examination or assignment to be completed for oneself, in part or in total, by another without proper authorization.	
1.05	Alter, tamper with, appropriate, destroy or otherwise interfere with the research, resources, or other academic work of another person.	
1.06	Fabricate or falsify data or results.	

**Integrity of scholarship and grades.** The following statement of university policy addresses principles and procedures to be used in instances of academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards, and falsification of academic or admission records, herein after referred to as academic misconduct. [See General Student Regulation 1.00, Protection of Scholarship and Grades.]

1. The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars. The university expects both instructors and students to honor these principles and, in so doing, to protect the validity of university education and grades. Practices that maintain the integrity of scholarship and grades include providing accurate information for academic and admission records, adherence to unit-approved professional standards and honor codes, and completion of original academic work by the student to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. To encourage adherence to the principles of truth and honesty, instructors should exercise care in planning and supervising academic work, and implement proctoring standards appropriate to the design of the course.
2. If an instructor alleges a student has committed an act of academic misconduct, the instructor is responsible for taking appropriate action. Depending on the instructor's judgment of a specific instance, the instructor may give the student a penalty grade. A penalty grade may be a reduced score or grade for the assignment or a reduced grade for the course. [For a definition of "penalty grade", see Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR) 11 and Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR) 8.1.18.]
3. When an instructor gives an undergraduate or graduate student a penalty grade for academic misconduct, the instructor must complete and submit an Academic Dishonesty Report (available on the Registrar's Form Menu under Instructor Systems). The report will be sent to the student, the student's dean, the Dean of the Graduate School (for graduate students) or Dean of Undergraduate Studies (for undergraduate students) and be added to the student's academic record provisionally. It will remain in the student's record unless: a) the student successfully grieves the allegation; b) the instructor filing the report requests it be removed; or, for undergraduates only, c) upon conferral of their degree if only one report has been filed, the student has successfully completed the required course on academic integrity, and no additional sanctions were requested.
4. When completing the Academic Dishonesty Report, if the instructor gives a failing grade in the course, the instructor may request the student's academic dean to impose sanctions in addition to the failing grade.
5. When in the judgment of the student's academic dean, a sanction in addition to a penalty grade is warranted (e.g., dismissal from a unit or program), the dean may call for an academic disciplinary hearing. In calling for an academic disciplinary hearing, the student's academic dean may act independently or in response to a request by the instructor. [See SRR 7.V., GSRR 5.5., and Medical Student Rights and Responsibilities (MSRR) 5.3.]
6. A student accused of academic misconduct may request an academic grievance hearing to contest the allegation before the appropriate hearing board. In cases involving academic misconduct, no student may be dismissed from a course or program of study without an academic disciplinary hearing.
7. On the first offense of academic misconduct, the student must complete an educational program on academic integrity and academic misconduct provided by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies for undergraduate students or the Dean of the Graduate School for graduate students.
8. In cases involving undergraduate students in which the student's academic dean, or designee, calls for an academic disciplinary hearing, the student's academic dean will refer the case to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies will notify the student in writing of the call for a disciplinary hearing and will invite the student to a meeting to determine the appropriate judiciary for the hearing. [See SRR 7.V.]
9. In cases involving graduate students in which the student's academic dean, or designee, calls for an academic disciplinary hearing, the student's academic dean will inform the student and then refer the case to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School will notify the student in writing of the call for a disciplinary hearing and will invite the student to a meeting to discuss the hearing process. [See GSRR 5.5.]

10. Either party may appeal a decision of an administrative disciplinary hearing or a disciplinary hearing board to the appropriate appellate board. [See SRR 7.VII., GSRR 5.4.12., and MSRR 5.8.]

Source and for more information on [Integrity of Scholarship and Grades](#).

### **G. Disability and Reasonable Accommodation / Digital Accessibility**

The [Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities \(RCPD\)](#) assists RCPD assists current and prospective students by maximizing ability and opportunity for full participation at MSU. Students who request an accommodation from their instructor should receive a referral to the RCPD.

MSU facilitates access to university instruction, communication, research, and business processes with the Digital Content and Web Accessibility principles found in the [Web Accessibility Policy](#) and [Technical Guidelines](#).

### **H. Use of Artificial Intelligence in Academic Work**

As the capabilities and popularity of generative AI like ChatBots continue to grow, the usage policies in courses, programs, and universities will similarly evolve. As of the publication of this handbook, the EPET program has not adopted a uniform policy for their courses and program.

### **I. Commitment to Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Belonging**

As the EPET program continues to create a more equitable learning experience for students, faculty, staff, and specialist, that seeks to eradicate racism, discrimination, microaggressions, gender and sexuality violence, implicit and explicit bias, and other forms of harm from our space, we acknowledge that harm may occur while you are here. First, please know that our program understands these harms as acts of violence that will not be tolerated in our space. Second, we acknowledge that understanding and naming these types of harm is one part of the process towards actionable change, accountability, and progress within our community.

EPET acknowledges equity as the intentional effort that “goes beyond fair treatment, opportunity and access to information and resources to all...and actively redressing barriers, challenging discrimination and bias, and institutionalizing access and resources that address historical and contemporary social inequalities”<sup>1</sup>. It is for these and many other reasons that we offer a list of resources and community contacts that you can activate if you experience harm on campus or within our program. While we recognize that this list is not comprehensive, we offer these resources as a vital starting point for you or someone you know to take action against bias (implicit and explicit), discrimination, microaggressions, racism, gender and sexuality violence, and other forms of harm.

#### **Resources you can activate (as your comfort level permits) if you experience or witness harm:**

- Your advisor
- EPET program director
- University Ombudsperson-<https://ombud.msu.edu/>
- Office of Institutional Equity (OIE)-<https://civilrights.msu.edu/response-and-investigations/index.html>

---

<sup>1</sup> [Michigan State University Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Report and Plan, 2022](#)



## VI. WORK RELATED POLICIES

Graduate assistantships are an important part of on-campus students' programs, not only for the financial support they provide but also for the opportunities for professional development they offer. The EPET program tries to provide all on-campus EPET students with graduate assistantships (involving both research and teaching) and administers assistantships in a manner consistent with university policies. This section governs employment for graduate students administered within the CEPSE department and more generally within the College of Education. If students are employed in other university departments or units, the policies of that department or unit apply.

**Types of assistantships.** Graduate assistantships are of two basic types: teaching assistantships and research assistantships. Teaching assistantships involve teaching students, usually undergraduates but sometimes master's students, under the supervision of a faculty member or in a direct co-teaching role with a faculty member. Research assistantships involve the conduct of research, typically under the direction of a faculty member or members.

**Finding and applying for assistantships.** Students without guaranteed funding and hybrid mode students can pursue assistantship opportunities. First, they should make their interests and availability known to the program director and to their advisor. Second, they should ask faculty who might have or know of assistantships for which they might be appropriate. For teaching assistantships, inquiries should be made not only to the EPET Program Director, but also to directors of other relevant programs (e.g. Teacher Education). Third, students can increase their likelihood of being chosen for assistantships by performing well in courses, attending seminar talks and brown bag presentations and other sessions at which research and teaching projects may be discussed, by developing relationships with professors, and by volunteering their time for projects where funded work is not yet available.

**Limits on assistantships.** Graduate students are generally permitted to work a maximum of ½-time (20 hours per week) to ensure that they make sufficient progress in their program. Halftime positions may involve a single ½-time assistantship or a combination of two ¼-time assistantships.

In order to maximize the equitable distribution of available graduate assistantships and to accelerate academic progress, it is only in exceptional circumstances that a student is permitted to hold positions totaling more than ½-time or to hold positions beyond the fifth year. Students who seek assistantships that total more than ½-time or extend beyond the fifth year in their doctoral programs will require written assurances of adequate academic progress.

**Rules for conduct in teaching assistantships.** Teaching assistantships are subject to a contract between Michigan State University and the Graduate Employees Union (GEU). That contract, which is renegotiated periodically, can be accessed at <http://geuatmsu.org/> and contains information about the monthly stipend and tuition payment associated with teaching assistantships.

**Resources related to teaching assistantships.** Students should use every opportunity to improve their teaching. The university has many resources available, many of which are online, to help graduate students improve their teaching including the [Graduate Teaching Assistant Preparation Program](#).



## VII. UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

The University offers many resources to support graduate students in their studies. The EPET program encourages students to take advantage of the full range of resources available at MSU.

[Career Services Network](#)

[Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement](#)

[College of Education Resources for Students](#)

[Council of Graduate Students \(COGS\)](#)

[Counseling and Psychiatry Services \(CAPS\)](#)

[English Language Center](#)

[MSU Library](#)

[MSU Graduate School Resources](#)

- [Graduate Educator Advancement and Teaching \(GREAT\)](#)
- [Graduate School Office of Well-Being \(GROW\)](#)

[Office of Institutional Equity](#)

[Office of International Students and Scholars](#)

[Office of the University Ombudsperson](#)

[Spartan Life](#)

[Writing Center](#)

## VIII. PROGRAM FORMS

### Milestone

Preliminary Exam (\*), updated in Annual Review D2L website in spring.

Research Practicum: 995

Practicum (995) (\*)

Practicum Completion (\*)

Comprehensive Exam (\*)

Dissertation Proposal (\*)

Dissertation Oral Defense (\*)

### Other

Annual Review (\*), updated in Annual Review D2L website in spring.

Human Research Protection Program

Independent Study (Project Agreement)

Non-Regular Faculty Committee Service

Student Research Conference Funding

Time Extension

Documents (\*) will be made available in a shared folder. Requirements may change or forms updated over the course of a student's program. Please contact your Academic Program Coordinator with any questions.