School of Environment and Sustainability
University of Michigan

PhD Student Handbook

(Updated July 2023)

1. Introduction to the PhD Program

History and mission of the School for Environment and Sustainability
Building on more than a century of leadership in environmental science, management, policy, and design the former School of Natural Resources and Environment was transformed into a new school to address the Earth's most pressing environmental challenges. To accomplish this challenge, the School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS) was established on July 1, 2017. From its inception as a forestry department over a century ago to the interdisciplinary institution it is today, SEAS prepares leaders who understand and solve the major environmental challenges of the era. During this evolution, SEAS has educated thousands of students who are leaders in almost every field of environmental science.

The mission of SEAS is *to transform higher education and its impact through research, teaching, and engagement in society. It focuses on solving the climate crisis and creating a world that is economically robust, environmentally sound, sustainable, and just, from the scale of watersheds and communities in Michigan, to the entire planet*.

The Doctor of Philosophy is the highest degree conferred by the University of Michigan. It is not conferred for completion of a prescribed set of courses and study, but for evidence of proficiency in an advanced area of knowledge and for distinctive attainment of scholarship and research in a specialized field chosen by the candidate. The doctoral programs of the Rackham Graduate School, of which the PhD in Environment and Sustainability is one, are cornerstones of the university's long-established reputation for the highest levels of academic excellence.

The doctoral program is central to the School for Environment and Sustainability, as it prepares researchers and scholars who will advance knowledge in ecological and social science and integrate this knowledge with advocacy and design to foster a more sustainable planet. As a doctoral student, you will be a member of a vibrant and intellectually stimulating community of faculty and doctoral students engaged in advanced study and research in a variety of fields. Your progress will be supported and guided by graduate faculty who are committed to your scholarly development. This handbook describes the leadership and administration of the doctoral program and the general policies, requirements, procedures, and expectations at each stage of the degree program.

Administration of the doctoral degree program

The PhD is granted upon evidence of general advanced proficiency and distinctive attainment in scholarship and research in a specialized field of study. The SEAS faculty who teach, advise, and mentor SEAS doctoral students are responsible for establishing and administering the curriculum, structure, policies, and requirements.

The program is administered by the Program Director, a member of the faculty who is appointed by the SEAS Dean. The Program Director works in consultation with faculty and has the authority to set, apply, and interpret policies and requirements of the program and, when circumstances warrant, to grant exceptional accommodations upon formal appeal. The Program Director consults with, and reports to, the SEAS Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (ADAA) and coordinates with Rackham to ensure that the program's policies are aligned with those of the Rackham Graduate School ([available here](#)) and to secure resources and support for the program and its students. The Doctoral Admissions Committee, which consists of members of the program graduate faculty, recommends applicants for admission to the Rackham Graduate School.

The Program Director is assisted by the Assistant Director of Curriculum and Student Support (ADCSS), who advises students on program requirements, tracks milestone progress, and assists students with questions about SEAS, Rackham, and university guidelines, policies, and processes. They serve as the staff liaison with the Rackham Graduate School.
In addition, other SEAS Student Center staff provide support services and resources for students.

SEAS Administration (2023/2024 Academic Year)

Dean
Jonathan T. Overpeck
Samuel A. Graham Dean
William B. Stapp Collegiate Professor of Environmental Education

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (ADAA)
Michaela T. Zint
Professor of Environmental Education & Communication
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor
School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS),
School of Education, & College of Literature, Science & the Arts

PhD/Postdoc Program Director (Also referred to as Graduate Chair in University wide context)
Pamela Jagger
Professor of Sustainability and Development
School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS)

Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy
Program in the Environment, College of Literature, Science & the Arts

Assistant Director of Curriculum and Student Support for the PhD Program (ADCSS) (Also referred to as Graduate Coordinator in University wide context)
Jennifer Taylor
Guides PhD students through their SEAS and Rackham milestones and monitors progress towards their degree. She helps students navigate SEAS/Rackham/UM policies and procedures. She serves as the staff liaison with the Rackham Graduate School.

Other SEAS Student Center staff
Kim Elliot, Assistant Dean
Leads, supports, and manages all aspects of the SEAS Student Center team.

TBD, Director of Student Development and Support Services
Leads the team responsible for academic advising, student leadership, curriculum planning, and financial aid. Their primary role with PhD students is to provide support on concerns related to student mental and physical wellbeing including navigation of campus resources and clarification of school and university policies.

Jaime Langdon, Assistant Director of Advising and Student Life
Assists student organizations with leadership development and semester programming/events. Plans, with our student community's input, social, wellness, and academic/professional events.

Mark Romanowski, Fellowships and Grants Advisor
Responsible for ensuring PhD funding is processed in accordance with the student's PhD funding plan, including that all balances are paid, insurance benefits are active, and stipends are disbursed. Additionally, coordinates the Rackham One Term and Pre-Doctoral fellowship allocations, Travel grants, and SEAS Emergency funding.

Jake Davidson, Assistant Director of Enrollment Management
Manages the communication between prospective, admitted, and incoming PhD students and the SEAS Student Center. They ensure that all potential PhD students receive the information and support they need as they navigate the application and admissions processes.

Lisa (Yee) Yee-Litzenberg, Career Services Coordinator (Temp)
Provides individualized career counseling and workshops/events to help PhD students prepare for their chosen career paths. Collaborates with the Employer Relations team to provide opportunities for students to engage directly with alumni and employers.

2. SEAS PhD Program Structure and Requirements

Doctoral education has two stages:

- *Pre-candidacy*. Under guidance of an advisor, students plan and complete preliminary coursework that prepares them for undertaking doctoral dissertation research and writing. Students transition to candidacy by successfully completing pre-candidacy requirements and passing a pre-candidacy exam.
- *Candidacy*. Under the guidance of a faculty advisor, students undertake research and prepare the dissertation for presentation to a Dissertation Committee, which conducts an oral defense.

The SEAS PhD Program does not confer a Master's degree in progress. Students who wish to exit the program, or are dismissed from the program for failing to meet academic milestones, may be eligible to receive a terminal Master's degree if they have fulfilled all requirements for the Master's degree, and if they do not already have a Master's degree considered by Rackham as equivalent to a SEAS Master's Degree.

Model timeline for the PhD program

The median time for students to complete the SEAS PhD is 5 years, but the timetable for progress of individual students toward the degree may differ depending on study, research fields, and individual circumstances. SEAS places a high priority on supporting students to complete the PhD within a 5-year timeframe. It is possible for students to complete the degree in fewer than 5 years if course requirements and milestones are met. Students who exceed 5-years will need to work with the SEAS PhD Program Director and their advisor to determine a funding plan and milestones for any time in the program exceeding 5 years.

The following general model outlines the structure and milestones of the PhD degree program over five years. Milestones may be met ahead of this schedule allowing students with appropriate preparation to complete their degree in fewer than 5 years.

Year 1
Prior to Fall term
- Faculty advisor assigned
- Identification of two University of Michigan faculty to work with the student on pre-candidacy academic preparation - the Guidance Committee (GC)

Fall term
- Pre-candidacy coursework
- Begin discussing and drafting mentoring plan
- Start developing research ideas/working with advisor on research
- Responsible conduct of research and scholarship training

Winter term
- Pre-candidacy coursework
- Developing research ideas/working with advisor on research
- By end of term, complete in consultation with faculty advisor:
  - Mentoring plan

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- Course of study form

Summer 1: Pre-dissertation research preparation

Year 2

Fall term
- Pre-candidacy coursework
- Developing research ideas/working with advisor on research
- By end of term:
  - Preliminary Examination Committee selected in consultation with faculty advisor and approval by the Program Director

Winter term
- Pre-candidacy coursework
- Developing research ideas/working with advisor on research
- By end of term (paperwork submitted by end of May):
  - Submit short dissertation prospectus
  - Schedule and pass preliminary exam for advancing to candidacy

Summer 2: Pre-dissertation research preparation

Year 3

Fall term
- Dissertation research planning and preparation
- By end of term:
  - Dissertation Committee formed
  - Dissertation proposal approved by Dissertation Committee and by the Program Director

Winter term
- Dissertation research
- By end of term:
  - Dissertation Committee evaluates student progress and prepares Annual Student Progress Report

Summer 3: Dissertation research

Year 4

Fall term
- Dissertation research

Winter term
- Dissertation research
- By end of term
  - Dissertation Committee evaluates student progress and prepares Annual Student Progress Report

Summer 4: Dissertation research

Year 5

Fall term
- Dissertation research

Winter term
- Dissertation submission preparation
- Pre-Defense meeting with Dissertation Committee (8 weeks prior to defense)
- Pre-Defense review with Office of Academic Records and Dissertations (OARD) at least 10 days prior to defense
- Dissertation defense, final completion, and submission of dissertation

The SEAS PhD Program is a continuous enrollment residential program, as specified by the Rackham Graduate School. Students are expected to be physically present on the Ann Arbor campus for the duration of the program. Students who have reached candidacy and are receiving funding through fellowships or GSRA appointments may, at the discretion of their advisor, reside elsewhere in the United States. Students with GSI appointments must be in residence regardless of candidacy status. Students may not live outside of the United States and receive funding from the University of Michigan unless they are undertaking international fieldwork related to their dissertation research or a faculty led research project.

Student Initiated Doctoral Programs (SIDP)

PhD students intending to pursue a Student Initiated Doctoral Program (SIDP) between SEAS and another PhD program must gain approval from their faculty advisor and the SEAS PhD Program Director. Student Initiated Doctoral Programs provide students with the opportunity to combine studies from two PhD programs, which will lead to a single PhD Students are expected to complete all requirements and courses described in the following sections. Any petitions to waive requirements or adjust expected timelines must be approved by the PhD Program Director. Pre-candidates have the option to either take one combined preliminary exam or two separate preliminary exams—one for each unit involved (e.g., SEAS and the second unit). The student work with advisors in both departments to determine the structure of the exam. If the preliminary exam is combined, it must contain both written and oral components. If the SIDP student is already a candidate in a single unit when they petition to undertake a SIDP, then they move back to pre-candidate status and must retake their preliminary exam again. Funding plans for SIDP should be discussed with advisors in both units and a funding plan put in place.

3. Pre-candidacy

The Advisor and Guidance Committee. Upon admission to the program, each student is assigned a **faculty advisor** whose research area aligns with the prospective interests of the student. Prospective students typically contact potential advisors well in advance of applying to the PhD program to establish fit between the student and advisor. In the pre-candidacy period, the student and advisor should meet at least monthly, to discuss course selection, prospective research plans and goals, and to share information and guidance that will help the student integrate into the PhD program and the SEAS community.

In the first year of the program the advisor works with the student to identify at least two other faculty from the University of Michigan whose interests align with the student, and who can advise on pre-candidacy coursework and professional development - they comprise the **Guidance Committee**. This structure facilitates dialogue between the student and multiple faculty members about the student's research interests, coursework, and other aspects of the PhD program well in advance of preparing a research proposal. It is common, but not necessary, that these faculty will become members of the Preliminary Examination Committee. When the Preliminary Examination Committee is formalized, the Guidance Committee is dissolved.

Required courses. As the PhD is a research-based degree, emphasis is placed on developing the skills to plan, implement, evaluate, and communicate research. Acquiring these skills requires several approaches; some approaches are common to all doctoral students, whereas others are necessary to conduct specific kinds of research. Accordingly, students are required to take the following courses:

- Three credits of Research Paradigms (EAS 741) taken within the first three terms of study. This course offers a conceptual and critical treatment of issues relevant to doing research in environment/sustainability areas. Topics addressed include the nature of science and criteria for "quality research"; characteristics of the scientific community; research value systems and ethics; and considerations of interdisciplinary research. The course is intended to broaden the students' perspective of the diversity of research frameworks through class discussions stimulated by assigned readings, as well as workshop problem-solving sessions and occasional guest lectures.
- Two analytic courses. Doctoral students are required to take (or have taken previously) at least two courses (400-level or above) that focus on tools of analysis, research design, research evaluation, and/or data collection methods. The areas of analytics appropriate to each student will vary and should be determined in consultation with the advisor.
- Doctoral education at the University of Michigan recognizes the importance of intellectual breadth beyond the student's field of specialization. Accordingly, Rackham requires doctoral students to complete 3 hours of graduate-level coursework with a grade of B- or better in a field other than their own. Students with a prior master's or other graduate-level coursework usually have met this requirement. Otherwise, students select courses outside of SEAS to meet this requirement.

After the first year, pre-candidates can elect EAS 990 (pre-candidate dissertation research) in addition to remaining required coursework, the number of hours taken for credit may range from one to 8 per term as approved by the advisor. After candidacy, students will enroll in 8 credit hours of EAS 995 (candidate research) each Fall and Winter term until completion of the program. The number of EAS 995 credits cannot be modified, it is fixed at 8 per term. Students enrolled in candidate credits will be assessed the standard candidacy tuition rate for the SEAS. After achieving candidacy, a candidate may register for up to 4 credits per term in addition to EAS 995 without incurring additional tuition.

In addition to regular coursework, students are required to complete training in the responsible conduct of research and scholarship (RCRS) during the first year which includes 8 hours of faculty-led training and an online module administered by PEERRS. Completion of the RCRS training is required to advance to candidacy.

Course of Study plan. The Course of Study is a plan that delineates how the student proposes to accomplish their pre-candidacy goals in a timely fashion. While an important document, it is intended to be flexible and should be revisited at least once a semester with the advisor. The

Course of Study should list a comprehensive set of courses that align with the student's academic goals in each of three areas: theory, methodology and analytics, and application. These may include upper-level undergraduate or master's courses that pertain to the student's intended direction, but at least one course in each area must be a graduate-level course at the University of Michigan, including at least 9 credit hours of coursework in Environment and Sustainability. The plan should indicate which courses have been, or will be, taken as part of the SEAS doctoral program. The Course of Study should include a statement that explains how the identified courses will help the student prepare for achieving their goals. Students are required to complete at least 18 credit hours of coursework in residence to advance to candidacy. Courses elected as visit (audit) do not meet this requirement, or courses designated as 990, or with "preliminary" in the title.

During pre-candidacy, students not only complete coursework in preparation for dissertation research, and engage in faculty research programs, they work with their advisor and GC to develop a dissertation topic. Before the end of the winter term of the first year, the advisor should review and approve the student's plan of study. This should include courses already completed and those to be taken, how these courses support the student's anticipated research goals, a description of preliminary research to be undertaken prior to candidacy, and preliminary discussions about establishing a Preliminary Exam Committee for achieving candidacy.

Mentoring plan. In support of the Course of Study, the advisor should meet with the student to establish a formal mentoring plan. The Program Director will review and approve the Course of Study and mentoring plan for each student. The Rackham Graduate School offers clinics for advisors and doctoral students to discuss and develop a formal mentoring plan, the schedule for these training opportunities is available on the Rackham website.

4. Preliminary exam
The purpose of the preliminary exam is to assess the student's fundamental knowledge about questions, methods, and significant research problems in both general and specialized fields appropriate to the student's interests, and to assess the student's ability to synthesize material across the topics of their coursework and apply it to research questions.

Preliminary Exam Committee
No later than the fall term of the second year (or third academic semester), and at least one full term before the exam is held, the advisor and student will propose a Preliminary Examination Committee for review by the ADCSS who confirms that all members are eligible to serve on Preliminary Exam Committees per Rackham Graduate School rules. The Committee will conduct and evaluate the preliminary exam. The advisor will chair the Committee. The Preliminary Examination Committee will consist of at least four faculty of which:
- at least three are members of the Rackham graduate faculty;
- at least two are graduate faculty of the SEAS doctoral program;
- one is in a cognate field related to the student's interests who holds at least a .50 appointment in a Rackham program other than SEAS and is familiar with the standards

for doctoral research (a cognate member with a courtesy appointment in SEAS may fill this role).

The Committee may have a co-chair who must be a member of the Rackham graduate faculty. A student may also petition to include an adjunct faculty member or external member who has expertise relevant to the student's primary field of study and prospective research interests.

Schedule and structure of the preliminary exam
The exam must be taken no later than the end of the second term of the second full academic year (or four academic semesters), typically the end of the winter term of the second year with all work required by the Preliminary Exam Committee successfully completed and passed no later than the end of the fourth academic semester. The scheduling of the exam will be determined by the Committee in consultation with the student. All elements of the preliminary exam need to be successfully completed and passed no later than the term following the fourth semester (with paperwork filed by 31 May for students who started their programs in September of their matriculating year).

All exams include both a written and oral component. The format and content of the exam varies for each student and is determined by the Advisor/Committee Chair in consultation with other members of the Committee. The exam should be a constructive experience that challenges and stimulates the student to integrate and synthesize knowledge and apply it to areas of research in their general and specific fields of interest. The exam may be centered around the student's Pre-candidacy Research Prospectus (*see below*), and/or may be structured to examine core knowledge of the field of study. The successful outcome will confirm for the Committee that the student has acquired the academic preparation to advance to candidacy and undertake the preparation of the doctoral dissertation.

Preparing for the preliminary exam
Preparation for the exam should begin at least 2-3 months before the examination date.
Pre-candidacy research prospectus. The first step is for the student to submit a pre-candidacy research prospectus to the Preliminary Exam Committee 2 to 3 months prior to the scheduled written exam date. This is intended to help Committee members prepare written and oral exam questions that are more relevant to the theoretical and conceptual focus and design of the student's prospective research interests. The format of the prospectus is flexible and should be in the 2–5-page range; it is not expected to be a detailed dissertation proposal that delves into practical aspects of conducting the research. The student should discuss the format with their Advisor/Committee Chair.

Meeting with preliminary exam committee chair to discuss exam content and format. Prior to the preliminary exam the student must meet with the Advisor/Committee Chair, who will outline the structure of both the written and oral components of the exam and provide a clear understanding of how the exam will be evaluated and the expectations for what will be considered success in passing the exam. The Committee Chair should state whether the written exam will be evaluated prior to the oral exam, and whether the student needs to pass or

conditionally pass the written exam prior to taking the oral examination. The student is responsible for arranging this meeting.

It is highly recommended that the student also meets individually with the members of the Committee to develop an understanding of the expectations of the Preliminary Exam Committee.

Written documentation of content and format. Following the meeting with the Advisor/Committee Chair, the student will provide the Advisor/Committee Chair with a 1-page written summary confirming their understanding of how the exam is to be scheduled, structured, and evaluated. The Advisor, as Chair, ensures that all members of the Committee understand and adhere to the structure for the exam and its evaluation. The written documentation should state whether the written exam will be evaluated prior to the oral exam, and whether the student needs a grade of pass or conditionally pass on the written exam to advance to the oral examination.

Written examination
The Advisor/Chair of the Preliminary Exam Committee has flexibility in determining the format of the written exam. The written exam may be open- or closed-book, or a combination of the two. The structure, rules, and procedures for the written component should be clearly understood by all parties well before the exam date (*see above*). Common formats include:

> ● *Open-book exam*. Each Committee member provides the Advisor/Chair with up to two questions that the chair collates and gives to the student at a prescribed time. The student normally is allocated one day (whose length is determined by the Advisor/Chair) to answer questions from each member in accordance with guidelines for length and format as specified to the student by the Advisor/Chair before the exam. The Advisor/Chair collates the answers and distributes these to all Committee members at least one week before the oral examination.
> ● *Closed-book exam*. Similarly, Committee members prepare questions that the Chair provides to the student. The student prepares answers within a specified time without the use of references or other resource materials. The Chair collates the answers and distributes these to all Committee members at least one week before the oral examination.

Possible outcomes are pass, pass with additional requirements, or fail. Written documentation of the preliminary examination process should clearly indicate whether the student is required to receive a pass on the written exam prior to advancing to the oral exam.

Other formats for the written exam are allowable, and final determination of exam format is at the discretion of the Advisor/Preliminary Exam Committee.

Oral examination
The Chair of the Preliminary Exam Committee has flexibility in determining the format of the oral exam. The structure and procedures should be clearly understood by all parties before the exam date (*see above*). Possible outcomes are pass, pass with additional requirements, or fail.

The oral exam is used to extend the Committee's assessment of the student's preparation. Prior to the start of the exam, the Committee reviews the student's academic record, the written exam, and other matters pertaining to the student's overall academic performance and interests. The student then joins the Committee who pose questions that follow up on the written exam and/or further explore the student's ability to synthesize knowledge and discuss topics in the fields under examination. The venue (e.g., in person, remote, hybrid) for the oral exam should be discussed and agreed upon by the Advisor/Dissertation Chair, Dissertation Committee, and student.

Evaluation of preliminary exam
The preliminary examination is graded with three possible outcomes: pass, pass with additional requirements, and fail. As noted above, the Preliminary Exam Committee should have indicated to the student prior to the exam whether the written exam will be evaluated independently and prior to taking the oral exam, and if the written exam must receive a grade of pass or pass with additional requirements before advancing to the oral exam.

If the student receives a **pass** on both the written and oral components of the exam, no additional work is necessary.

For an assessment of **pass with additional requirements** on either the written or oral components of the exam, the Committee will provide the student with specific requests to strengthen knowledge in specific areas in writing. The Committee may ask the student to consult with committee members and other faculty to strengthen familiarity with concepts or methods, and/or prepare a document that addresses the specific areas for improvement that the Committee has identified. The student will notify the Committee in writing when the additional requirements are met, and the Preliminary Exam Committee Chair will assess whether the additional requirements are satisfied. Additional requirements must be met within two weeks of receiving the grade of pass with additional requirements. A student who fails to complete additional requirements within the allotted time frame will not be in good academic standing and will be discontinued from the program. Conditions should be feasibly able to address within a two-week timeframe.

A **failing grade** on either the written or oral component of the exam indicates that the Committee has identified more significant issues and concerns with the student's academic preparation (typically, deficiencies that could not be addressed within two weeks). The Committee will provide the student with specific recommendations in writing for addressing these issues and concerns and allow the option for the student to retake the failed component(s) (e.g., the written, the oral, or both) of the exam no later than the end of the summer following the fourth term. Students are permitted to retake written and/or oral exams only one time. For the retake of the written exam, the committee may ask the student to answer the same questions or give them new questions to answer. A student who chooses to not retake the exam, or who fails to pass the exam on the second attempt, will be discontinued from the program at the end of their current term of enrollment.

Students **must receive a grade of pass on both written and oral components** prior to being advanced to candidacy. After passing both the written and oral exams, the Committee will provide the student with a written evaluation of the exam together and sign the [Pre-Candidacy Examination Report Form](#) which the student will submit to the Program Chair and the Assistant Director of Curriculum and Student Support (seas.gradsupport@umich.edu).

5. Candidacy and the dissertation

The Dissertation Committee
Once the Dissertation Committee is in place, guidance for the remainder of the student's doctoral program passes to the Dissertation Committee. The membership of the Dissertation Committee is often, but not necessarily, the same as the Pre-Candidacy Examination Committee. The appointment process is initiated by the student and the Dissertation Chair in an equivalent manner as that for the Pre-Candidacy Examination Committee. All guidelines applicable to the composition of the Pre-Candidacy Examination Committee also apply to the Dissertation Committee. This procedure is needed even if the composition of the Dissertation Committee is the same as the Pre-Candidacy Examination Committee. The minimum number of Dissertation Committee Members is four.

Dissertation Committee Chair (or co-chairs) and Cognate Member
The dissertation chair (or co-chairs) is responsible for guiding and encouraging the design and execution of an original, high-quality, doctoral-level research project. The dissertation chair is typically the advisor the student was admitted to work with. The cognate member's role is to broaden the scholarly representation of the dissertation committee beyond SEAS. The cognate member also serves the Graduate School and its faculty by providing a non-specialist's perspective on the quality of the dissertation. For additional information regarding eligibility and Dissertation Committees, see the chart found in the Rackham School Academic Policies. The Quick Reference Chart for Membership on the Dissertation Committee is also useful.

Membership of the Dissertation Committee may need to change for a variety of reasons. When such changes are occasioned (e.g., a faculty member is leaving the University), candidates may modify the membership of the Committee simply by submitting a Revised Dissertation Committee form to the ADCSS.

If an emeritus professor is nominated to serve as sole chair or cognate member, the completed Dissertation Committee Form must be accompanied by a memorandum, signed by the faculty member's Dean of their school or college, requesting the appointment and affirming the professor's experience in teaching, advising, and dissertation committee service. Once approved, the appointment will be in effect for 3 years and may be renewed with the approval of the faculty member's Dean, and the Dean of the Rackham Graduate School.

In addition, to include faculty, staff, and individuals outside the University on a dissertation committee, the completed Dissertation Committee Form must be accompanied by a) a memorandum from the student's Dissertation Chair describing the individual's qualifications for

dissertation committee service, and b) a copy of the nominee's curriculum vitae. This information should be submitted to the ADCSS.

Dissertation proposal
The student must submit—and have approved—a Dissertation Committee and a Dissertation Proposal by the end of the 5th academic semester. The preparation of the proposal is conducted under the direction of the faculty member who will chair the Dissertation Committee (typically the advisor assigned at admission). The candidate should strive to develop a dissertation that is novel and will establish them as a leading scholar in the field. The candidate will work closely with the Dissertation Chair to develop a strong research proposal that sets the candidate up for a successful PhD dissertation. The dissertation proposal should be written in enough detail that Dissertation Committee members can provide substantive feedback on the candidate's research questions and proposed methodology. Approval of a Dissertation Proposal and a Dissertation Committee does not preclude a student from modifying the proposal or developing a different proposal, provided that the student's Dissertation Committee agrees to the changes. When the Dissertation Committee is formalized, the Preliminary Examination Committee is dissolved, noting that there is often considerable if not full overlap in membership in the two committees.

The Dissertation Committee should meet regularly with the student during candidacy, and at least once a year in each winter term, to review progress and future plans. The committee should certify at this meeting that satisfactory progress has been made that year. The [PhD Student Annual Progress Report](#) (including date and signatures of all committee members) should be forwarded to the ADCSS.

Dissertation proposal format
There is no single, prescribed format for all dissertation proposals. Students are encouraged to use formats such as proposals written to the National Science Foundation or other external sponsors and should discuss the expected format with their Dissertation Chair well in advance of starting to work on the proposal, and iteratively while working on the proposal, to clarify format and expectations. Below is a suggested outline of what is typically included with suggested page lengths.

1) Overview/Introduction (1 page):
   State in broad terms the general goals of the research. State concisely the precise purpose of the research and what the hypotheses are to be tested.

2) Background (3-5 pages):
   Briefly describe the most significant previous work in the field under consideration. Critically evaluate existing knowledge. Specifically identify gaps that the proposed research is intended to fill by relating the specific aims of the proposed research to previous work in the field.

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3) Research plan and methodology (4-8 pages):
- *Approach*. State how the problem is to be resolved using general terms and relating this general approach to the specific aims and hypotheses to be tested. Use plain language (free of jargon) understandable to faculty who represent a broad range of academic disciplines.
- *Design*. Provide specific details of the research design, (e.g., hypotheses, sample sizes, analytical approaches, etc.) and describe the formal analysis to be used to determine the certainty of inductive inferences.
- *Methods and techniques*. Provide the technical details of methods to be used in the research.
- *Possible/preliminary results*. Indicate the kinds of results expected and how they will be used to support or refute the hypotheses being tested and/or how they will relate to the specific objectives. Students may also produce preliminary results if preliminary data are available.
- *Limitations and pitfalls*. Indicate the technical pitfalls to the proposed approaches, methods, and techniques. If possible, indicate alternative approaches that might be used to circumvent these potential problems. Indicate the limitations to the interpretation or inferences that can be made from the findings.

4) Strategy for funding data collection (0.5-1 page):
If funds beyond stipend are required to complete the dissertation the student should outline a plan for obtaining the funds. For example, what internal and external grants have been obtained, or will be applied for, and what is the contingency if required funding is not received.

5) Elaboration of plan for research approvals for the use of vertebrate animals and human subjects
University policy and federal law require the review of research projects. This is done to ensure humane treatment and safe use of vertebrate animals and/or protect human participants.

6) Work schedule (0.5-1 page):
Provide an estimate of the period during which the research and dissertation writing will occur, and a timeline for important accomplishments.

7) Literature cited

Dissertation proposal defense
The dissertation proposal must be submitted to the Dissertation Chair and all members of the Dissertation Committee at least 10 days in advance of the proposal defense meeting. The format of the proposal defense is flexible; a suggested format is a 2-hour meeting where the student first presents the proposal (20-30 minutes), and the remaining time is open for committee members to ask questions and provide feedback. The venue (e.g., in person,

remote, hybrid) for the proposal defense should be discussed and agreed upon by the Dissertation Chair, Dissertation Committee, and student.

At the end of the proposal defense, the committee evaluates the dissertation proposal and proposed work plan, provides feedback, and may request changes from the student. The student is expected to then address any concerns raised by the committee in writing. The exact format and procedure to do this is at the discretion of the Dissertation Committee, with final decision power resting with the Dissertation Chair. Typically, the student may either update the dissertation or they may write a separate statement to address committee feedback. These updates must then be approved by the Dissertation Chair, with feedback from committee members as desired. The timeline to address committee feedback is flexible and should be decided during the proposal defense based on the scope of changes requested.

After the dissertation proposal has been approved by the faculty who will serve on the Dissertation Committee, it is attached to a [Dissertation Committee and Proposal Form](#), bearing the signatures of the faculty who approved the proposal, and submitted to the Assistant Director of Curriculum and Student Support (ADCSS) for the PhD Program.

Dissertation standards and scope
The final format of the dissertation should be determined in close collaboration with the Dissertation Chair. Depending on discipline, common formats include a chapter format, where each chapter represents a separate article that can be submitted for peer-review publication, or a monograph format. In addition, dissertations typically include an abstract, an introduction, and a conclusion. Work presented in the dissertation can be at any stage in the peer-review process, including submitted, in review, or published.

Human Subjects and Other Research Approval: Before dissertation research is started, the student and Dissertation Chair are responsible for ensuring that standards of research ethics for human subjects and animals are met. Federal regulations and university policy require that all investigations using humans as subjects of research be reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) before such investigations may begin. No dissertation based on the use of data involving humans as subjects can be accepted without prior review and approval by the appropriate IRB(s). The Dissertation Chair may request the review, but the student should verify that this has taken place and approval has been granted prior to data collection/interaction with human subjects. See the Use of Human Volunteers in Research. Special approval may also be required for animal research. For more information, visit the University Committee on Use and Care of Animals.

Use of Copyrighted Material: Doctoral students are required to receive written permission from the copyright owner for any material to be used in the dissertation that falls outside the guidelines of "fair use." See "The Dissertation Handbook: A Guide to Submitting Your Doctoral Dissertation and Completing Your Degree Requirements."

Dissertation evaluation and defense
Members of Dissertation Committees vary in the degree to which they interact with students during the writing stage. Students should meet with all committee members to clarify mutual

expectations. At least 8 weeks before the defense is scheduled, the student should hold a pre-defense meeting of the full committee to ensure that the expected final dissertation content and quality are consistent with faculty expectations. The dissertation defense should be scheduled once the Dissertation Chair and Dissertation Committee members are satisfied that the final dissertation work is acceptable.

All requirements, including those that follow, must be met by the final Rackham Office of Academic Records and Dissertations (OARD) deadline to avoid having to register for another term. Deadlines are available on the OARD website. A candidate must [register online](#)to schedule a pre-defense review (in-person or remote) with a representative of Rackham OARD. The pre-defense review must take place at least 10 working days before the oral defense. Candidates will submit a copy of the dissertation for a format review. OARD staff and the candidate review steps to complete the degree. Oral defenses must be public. Candidates provide OARD with the date, time, and location of the defense, and OARD will publicize the information.

As soon as possible, but no later than 10 working days before the oral defense, a candidate should distribute copies of the dissertation and abstract to all committee members. A committee member who does not receive a copy of the dissertation and abstract at least 10 working days before the defense may ask for a postponement. At least 3 working days before the oral defense, Rackham OARD must receive and review dissertation evaluations from the committee members so that Rackham may authorize the final defense. After Rackham OARD has authorized the oral defense, the Final Oral Examination Report will be available to the chair or co-chairs.

At the conclusion of the defense, Committee Members should meet in executive session and sign the Oral Examination Report form. This must be submitted to Rackham OARD within 48 hours of the defense. The Dissertation Committee may delegate to one or more of its members the responsibility for checking the final draft to see that required changes are made. The Dissertation Chair is the most common delegate. The Dissertation Chair should also ensure that the identity of the person(s) who will certify that all corrections have been made is clearly noted on the form. The Dissertation Committee evaluates the dissertation based on the following components:
- the scholarly character of the work,
- the contribution to the field,
- originality,
- quality of writing, and
- quantity of research represented.

The Dissertation Committee then decides whether the dissertation and abstract are acceptable (1) as submitted, (2) after minor typographical and stylistic corrections, (3) after minor substantive changes, or (4) after substantial revisions, or are (5) not acceptable. A clear timeline for completion of the dissertation revisions should be established and agreed upon by the PhD candidate and Dissertation Committee when minor substantive changes (3) or substantial

revisions (4) are required. In the extremely rare event that the Committee determines that the dissertation is not acceptable (5), the PhD Candidate will be discontinued from the PhD program without the opportunity to revise or defend a new or revised version of the dissertation.

After the oral dissertation defense, the candidate should submit all required content revisions and corrections to the Dissertation Chair for approval and arrange for a post-defense meeting that must take place before the Rackham Graduate School doctoral deadline. The Certificate of Dissertation Committee Approval must be submitted online by the Dissertation Chair no later than the deadline with which the student is working. If the final deadline is exceeded, the PhD Candidate must register for the full term until the final degree requirements are completed. If no funding plan is in place for this additional term, students may be responsible for the tuition and fees and may not be eligible for a stipend. If challenges with deadlines are expected, the Dissertation Chair and student should reach out to the PhD Program Director. Candidates who defend their dissertations must submit final revisions to OARD within a year of the defense date. A candidate who does not meet this deadline will be required to defend the revised dissertation again.

Every dissertation is submitted electronically to the University Library as the official copy of record. After the post-defense format check, the candidate will upload a PDF of the final corrected and complete dissertation. Once the degree is conferred, the Graduate School will transfer the dissertation to the Library for electronic access in the Deep Blue Dissertation and Theses Collection. Additional information, including final format requirements, is available in the Rackham Dissertation Handbook.

6. Academic standing, probation, and dismissal

Satisfactory progress through the PhD program should be certified every year, by the student, faculty advisor, Guidance/Dissertation Committee, Program Director, and ADCSS as appropriate to the stage of degree. This will include:

A.   Certification at the end of year 1 by the faculty advisor based on courses taken, coursework planned, and research plan for year 2 in the form of completed Course of Study Approval Form. Completion of the Responsible Conduct of Research requirement and submission of a Formal Mentoring Plan.

B.   Certification by the end of the fourth academic semester by the Preliminary Exam and advancement to candidacy. In cases where students are addressing deficiencies in the preliminary examination process during the summer months their effort will be considered as progress towards degree requirements.

C.   Certification at the end of fifth academic semester by submitting the approved Dissertation Proposal and formation of the Dissertation Committee.

D. Certification at the end of each year of candidacy, by the Dissertation Committee, based on a meeting and written documentation of research progress and plans in the form of the [PhD Student Annual Progress Report](#).

Certification of satisfactory progress is required annually for PhD students to maintain satisfactory academic standing with the Rackham Graduate School. Students who are not certified for satisfactory progress will be ineligible to apply for Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) positions in SEAS and in the Program in the Environment and will be ineligible to apply for SEAS or Rackham funding that requires a signature from the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs (ADAA).

Satisfactory progress requires the timely completion of several milestones. In some cases, illness, parenting needs, caregiving, or other extenuating circumstances may result in slower progress than would normally be expected. Students who have significant life events that affect their ability to complete their milestones should notify their committee and may apply for [Rackham's Leave of Absence](#) (LOA). Unless students are on an approved Leave of Absence, students must remain enrolled until the PhD program is complete. In some cases, further permission to extend time to degree would be petitioned to Rackham.

Unsatisfactory academic standing and academic probation and dismissal

The Rackham Graduate School will place a notation of "below minimum academic requirements" on the academic record of a student whose cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0 or who does not meet additional minimum academic requirements as established by the SEAS doctoral program. A student with unsatisfactory academic standing will not be advanced to candidacy, will not be awarded a degree or graduate certificate, and may change programs and transfer credits only with permission of the admitting program.

Upon the recommendation of the SEAS PhD Program Director, and with the consent of the Rackham Graduate School, a student will be given an opportunity to correct the academic deficiency and return to satisfactory academic standing. In addition, the program may recommend academic probation for a student who is not making satisfactory progress. The decision to place a student on academic probation, which may lead to dismissal from the program, will be made by a group of at least 3 members of the SEAS graduate faculty, including the student's faculty advisor, the PhD Program Director, and another faculty member selected by the Program Chair. If the Program Director is the advisor of the student being considered for probation, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will appoint faculty to consider the recommendation. A probation period is normally required before a recommendation for dismissal can be made. The program will notify the student and Rackham before the probationary period begins, explaining the reasons and conditions of probation; the start and end dates; funding support; conditions, and options for appeal. Probation will be no shorter than two months of the fall or winter term and ordinarily conclude at the end of that term. The student will continue to be funded through the probationary period at the level of funding that was in place prior to probation.

If the probationary period begins within two months of the end of fall term, probation will extend into winter term for a total of at least two months. If the probationary period begins within two months of the end of winter term, probation will extend into either the spring/summer term or, at the discretion of the program, into the fall term for a total of at least two months. Students on probation may request a leave of absence or withdrawal. Either will stop the clock for time to degree, which resumes when the student returns to active status.

As an exception, a student who fails preliminary exams and either refuses to retake the exams or fails the exams on the second attempt, may be dismissed without a probationary period.

A student who is discontinued from our PhD program while in good academic standing, or who has been discontinued for failing to show sufficient progress, may seek Reinstatement to the same program through the Rackham Graduate School.

Rackham Academic and Professional Integrity Policy
Integrity in research and scholarship is a fundamental value of the University of Michigan. It is the responsibility of all students to always conduct research and scholarly activities in an ethical manner. An indispensable part of graduate education is for students to become knowledgeable about the responsible conduct of research and scholarship appropriate to their discipline or field of study. Students are responsible for understanding and observing the graduate school's academic and professional integrity policy. Students are also expected to understand and maintain standards of integrity and professional conduct endorsed by their program that are particular to their field of study and research.

This policy defines serious violations of academic integrity. Allegations of violations will lead to inquiries conducted under the authority of the graduate school or other schools and colleges and may result in the imposition of disciplinary actions. Procedures for these inquiries are described as part of Rackham's Academic Dispute Resolution Policy.

7. Resolving academic disputes and grievances

If a student faces an academic conflict with their faculty advisor, committee members, or others in the SEAS or University of Michigan community, there are both informal dispute resolution and formal grievance mechanisms that can be pursued. Though not mandatory, it is preferred that all conflicts be first considered under the informal dispute resolution procedure detailed below, and if not resolved then, within formal grievance mechanisms at SEAS. Academic disputes that cannot be resolved informally or formally within SEAS should then be referred to the Rackham Graduate School. Formal dispute resolution and grievance processes may not occur concurrently.

7.1. Informal academic dispute resolution within SEAS
If at any time in the PhD program the PhD student has a dispute about an academic outcome related the PhD preliminary exam process, is in conflict with their advisor, or believes that arrangements with their advisor, or disagreements among, committee members are so adverse as to constitute an insurmountable obstacle to successful completion of the dissertation, they

should discuss their concern with the PhD Program Director (or the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs - ADAA - in the case where the PhD Program Director is involved in the dispute). The PhD Program Director serves as a sounding board and an advocate for students to evaluate whether the dispute can be resolved through informal channels, or if a formal dispute resolution should be pursued. All informal discussions surrounding dispute resolution are confidential. When appropriate, the PhD Program Director will request a written statement from the student about the issue and what steps have been taken to mitigate it to date. All communications related to disputes are considered confidential.

7.2. Formal academic grievance mechanisms within SEAS

If disputes cannot be resolved informally students should consult [SEAS student grievance and appeal procedures](). The ADAA is the SEAS Resolution Officer for academic matters pertaining to the PhD Program. The student should provide the ADAA a written petition with a full statement of facts. After reviewing the petition, the ADAA will set up a meeting with the student to discuss workable solutions and next best steps. Dispute resolution will be timely, and the student should expect to hear from the Academic Dean within ten business days of submitting the petition. The Resolution Officer will remain impartial and will recuse themselves for a conflict of interest. Such circumstances include if the Resolution Officer has a personal or professional relationship with any party in the dispute that would impede their impartiality. In such instances, the Dean of SEAS may ask another impartial and qualified faculty member to handle the dispute resolution process.

7.3. Special case of conflict with the advisor/Dissertation Chair

In the special case of a conflict with the faculty advisor/Dissertation Chair/Committee, the student should submit a written petition to the PhD Program Director (or the ADAA in the case where the PhD Program Director is involved in the dispute) with a full statement of facts as the candidate sees them. The PhD Program Director will review the petition. If necessary, they will contact members of the Dissertation Committee (existing or proposed). If the PhD Program Director concurs with the petition, they will nominate a new advisor/Dissertation Chair and/or Dissertation Committee and submit this nomination to Rackham. Approval of this nomination by Rackham constitutes appointment of a revised Dissertation Committee. Notification of such action is handled in accordance with standard Rackham procedures. Any changes in the composition of the Dissertation Committee must be submitted for approval by the Rackham Graduate School using the Dissertation Committee Form

7.4. Formal academic grievance mechanisms within Rackham

The [Rackham Graduate School's Designated Resolution Officer (RO)]() has a wide range of resources available for addressing [graduate study grievances]() and advises faculty, staff and students on matters related to student emergencies, crisis situations, disputes, and student conduct violations. The Rackham Resolution Officer provides information about Graduate School and University policies and procedures, makes referrals, and provides resources when appropriate.

If the parties are unable to reach a resolution through the informal dispute resolution process described above, and within the formal dispute resolution process at SEAS, a formal [Rackham Dispute Resolution](#) process may be initiated. The student should provide a written statement (up to two pages) that details the complaint to rack-adr@umich.edu. The complaint should include a copy of the program notification, where applicable. A Rackham Resolution Officer will then ask all parties involved in the dispute to submit written statements within five business days. This information will be provided to an Ad Hoc committee, who will provide a written decision to the student, PhD Program Director, and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. In general, decisions at each stage of the process will be made within ten business days from the time the Resolution Officer receives case materials.

7.5 Other conflict resolution mechanisms

- [Office of the Ombuds](#) is a place where student questions, complaints, and concerns about the functioning of the University can be discussed confidentially in a safe environment. 6015 Fleming, Phone: (734) 763-3545
- [Office of Student Conflict Resolution](#) (OSCR) Promotes justice by facilitating conflict resolution for the Michigan community and creating a just and safe campus climate. 100 Student Activities Building, Phone: (734) 936-6308.

Other units in the university maintain campus-wide policies and procedures concerning personal conduct including sexual harassment and misconduct; assault, theft, cyber-misconduct, and other violations; discrimination and harassment in the workplace; conflict of interest; use of information technology resources; misconduct in sponsored research; protocols for the conduct of research involving human subjects and animal use; and requirements concerning export controls and access restrictions for certain technologies. Students engaged in research are expected to understand and follow the policies and regulations that apply to their investigations.

8. Financial information

SEAS follows guidance set by the Rackham Graduate School regarding the funding of Graduate Students at the University of Michigan.

8.1 Overall funding philosophy and pathways

The SEAS PhD Program is a fully funded program that guarantees 5 years of funding (Fall semester of first year though Winter semester of 5th year; or 10 academic year semesters and 4 summers) to all admitted students. Each student's funding model is unique, and advisors should be fully transparent and forthcoming about the plan for funding students through each year of the program. Students are typically admitted through one of two funding pathways: SEAS funded, or faculty funded.

8.1.1 SEAS funded students

For students admitted in 2021 and later, the SEAS funded model is comprised of 2 academic year semesters of SEAS Fellowship funding; 2 academic semesters of a 0.5 SEAS GSI position; and 6 academic semesters funded through any combination of faculty grants, internal or external fellowships, and/or GSI positions. A typical pathway is for students to use the SEAS Fellowship and GSI requirement in years 1 and 2, but there is complete flexibility regarding how funding is structured throughout the program (for example, the Fellowship semesters could be banked and used in year 5 of the program). The SEAS funded model includes 4 summers of funding.

In consultation with advisors, students are highly encouraged to apply for both internal and external funding sources to support all aspects of their training (e.g., data collection, professional development, and grantsmanship). It is not uncommon for admitted students to come with prestigious externally funded fellowships (e.g., National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program; Gates Scholarship, Fulbright Fellowship etc.). SEAS is committed to working with students to ensure they can make the most of these highly competitive opportunities.

8.1.2 Faculty funded students

For students admitted in 2021 or later, SEAS has a provision for admission under the Faculty Funded model. Faculty are required to have at least 2 years of funding to support students in the pre-candidacy years of the program and commit to providing funding for all three of the post candidacy years. The expectation is that support provided through this model comes from sponsored research, meaning that students will have GSRA appointments in each academic year semester. In consultation with advisors, students are encouraged to apply for both internal and external funding sources to support data collection, professional development, and grantsmanship. The faculty funded model includes 4 summers of funding (see below).

8.2 Types of student appointments

8.2.1 SEAS Fellowship

Research expectations associated with SEAS Fellowship semesters are at the discretion of the advisor. Students should work closely with their faculty advisors to explore academic training and research opportunities that enhance their progress towards degree and training as researchers. Appointment to a half-time assistantship or to an equivalent fellowship is intended to provide sufficient financial support to enable a student to devote full time to their graduate program. In conditions of unusual financial stress, such as may result from extra dependents or extraordinary circumstances, the student should discuss projected additional employment with their Advisor.

8.2.2 Graduate Student Research Assistantships (GSRAs)

Graduate Student Research Assistants (GSRAs) are positions that support faculty research. They are typically funded through sponsored research, though may also be funded through other internal or external sources of research funding. GSRA appointments are assigned on a semester-by-semester basis with GSRAs reporting to the faculty member overseeing the funding source supporting the GSRA position in the applicable semester. GSRAs at the 0.5 level include a full tuition waiver, fees, a stipend equivalent to the collective bargaining agreement for GSI positions, health insurance and other benefits. A 0.5 GSRA position has an expectation of 20 hours per week level of effort. Graduate Student Research Assistantships are not subject to the provisions of the university's collective bargaining agreement with the Graduate Employees' Organization (G.E.O.).

8.2.3 Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs)

Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs) are hired to support faculty teaching. GSI appointments are allocated on a semester-by-semester basis with GSIs reporting to the faculty member teaching the class they are assigned to. GSIs at the 0.5 level include a full tuition waiver, fees, a stipend set by the collective bargaining agreement for GSI positions, and health insurance and other benefits. A 0.5 GSI position has an expectation of 20 hours per week level of effort. All SEAS GSI assignments are at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. To comply with SEAS full funding commitments GSI positions should be awarded at the 0.5 level. If a student accepts a <0.5 GSI in a year funded by faculty, then the advisor is expected to top up the stipend to the 0.5 level.

8.2.4 Graduate Student Staff Assistants (GSSAs)

Graduate Student Staff Assistant (GSSA) positions are typically housed in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs at the University of Michigan. They require high interpersonal communication and research skills as well as experience designing and planning workshops and interactive programs for students, staff, and faculty. Successful applicants will have a vested and demonstrated interest in DEI and would have taken advantage of facilitation and student life training opportunities on campus. These positions are limited, so it's important to submit your application early.

8.2.5 Summer Funding

There is an expectation of year-round academic progress for PhD students at the University of Michigan. SEAS Doctoral Students are guaranteed four summers of funding for the months of May-August at a stipend rate equivalent to academic year GSI/GSRA 0.5 positions regardless of what funding model they were recruited under. Summer work plans should be discussed and agreed upon with advisors and addressed explicitly in mentoring plans. Summer funding includes a stipend and GradCare when students are enrolled in the Winter Semester preceding and the Fall semester following the summer. Students may be engaged to work on faculty research projects over the summer (e.g., as GSRAs funded through faculty research projects),

may be funded as Fellows with an expectation of conducting research that contributes to progress towards degree, or in rare circumstances as GSIs. Students should discuss expectations for summer research output and whether they will be engaged as a GSRA, under Fellowship, or as a GSI as part of their regular annual workplan discussions with Advisors.

8.3 Policy on SEAS PhD students teaching their own classes

SEAS PhD students do not typically teach independent course sections. Under rare circumstances (e.g., core classes that need to be taught during faculty sabbaticals; unexpected faculty leaves or departures) advanced SEAS PhD students may be given the opportunity to teach an independent section of a course. All SEAS teaching assignments are at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

8.4 Other financial information

8.4.1 Tuition and fees
Tuition and fees are set by the University of Michigan Office of the Registrar. The Rackham Graduate School provides information on resources related to the cost of attendance for graduate students at the University of Michigan.

8.4.2 Additional funding opportunities
SEAS PhD students are strongly encouraged to compete for both internal and external funding opportunities that will advance their research, teaching, service, and other education goals. It is the responsibility of the student and advisor to identify opportunities, consider when the most appropriate time to apply for opportunities in the context of SEAS PhD Program Milestones, and monitor submission deadlines. There are three major Rackham Graduate School Awards that require nomination within SEAS.

Rackham Merit Fellowship Admitted students meeting Rackham Merit Fellowship criteria are nominated for this award in the Winter prior to matriculation into the SEAS PhD Program.

The following two awards require nomination within SEAS and submission of final nominations to the Rackham Graduate school. Students should work with their faculty advisors to assess the appropriate timing of the awards and the potential for nomination by SEAS.
- Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship supports outstanding doctoral students who have achieved candidacy and are actively working on dissertation research and writing. We seek to support students working on dissertations that are unusually creative, ambitious, and impactful.
- Rackham One-Term Dissertation Fellowship is awarded to students who are in the writing stage of the dissertation phase of writing.

Rackham Travel Grants The Rackham Graduate School provides up to $800-$1,050 for travel to domestic (up to $1300 for international) professional conferences and meetings. You can only receive one travel grant per fiscal year (July 1 – June 30).

8.4.3. Employment Outside of UM
Students should view their time at the University of Michigan as PhD students/candidates as a full-time job. Opportunities do emerge that provide students for related professional opportunities. Per Rackham guidelines, fully funded students should not accept supplemental employment involving more than 10 hours per week. Students are fully responsible for all tax and immigration related rules and procedures related to work they do outside of the University of Michigan

8.5 Income Tax Liability
Current practice is subject to review by the IRS and may change at any time. Graduate Student Instructor and Graduate Student Research Assistantship stipends are considered salary for services performed and, as such, are subject to withholding and income tax. Under the income tax law of 1986, stipends for fellowships and other forms of student aid are subject to income tax and must be reported quarterly. It is the student's responsibility to report fellowship/award aid to the IRS.

8.5.1 Resources for International Students
The International Center is the primary source of information for international students. International Students are responsible for ensuring that their immigration status is current and that all rules and regulations regarding status in the United States are adhered to.

9. Rackham academic policies

In addition to the policies, requirements, and procedures for the SEAS PhD that are described in this handbook, students should be aware of Rackham's academic policies concerning registration and enrollment; grades and academic standing, and requirements for candidates that apply to all PhD students in Rackham's programs.

Key policies include the following:

Registration and enrollment
Leaves of absence (medical reasons; family necessity or dependent care, military service, personal reasons)
Withdrawal and discontinuation
Reinstatement
Within-semester medical accommodation
Graduate student parental accommodation
Time limit extensions for family care
Emergency health withdrawal and reinstatement
Retroactive term withdrawal
Adding, dropping, modifying and repeating a course
Grades and transcripts
Good academic standing
Deficiencies in academic progress, academic probation, and dismissal

Doctoral cognate requirement
Responsible conduct of research and scholarship training
PhD candidacy requirements
Doctoral dissertation requirements
Time limit for completing a doctoral degree
Candidacy course registration
Formation of the dissertation committee

Rackham also has webpages with guidance and information about registering for classes, applying for leaves of absence, support for grad students with children, seeking academic accommodations for students with disabilities, and procedures for seeking reinstatement to the program.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
In addition to your faculty advisor, the Student Services staff, the PhD Program Director and Committee, and the Rackham Graduate School staff, there are many resources on campus to help you succeed in the SEAS PhD program.

Mentoring Resources
How to Get the Mentoring You Want
A general guide for graduate students about the importance of the student-mentor relationship.
Mentoring Others Results in Excellence (MORE)
A senior faculty committee providing information and resources on mentoring to students and faculty.

Selected Campus Academic Resources
Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT)
CRLT offers programs and services designed to support graduate students in all stages of their teaching careers from training for their first teaching experience through preparation for the academic job market.
      Preparing Future Faculty Conference
      U-M Graduate Teacher Certificate
      Seminars for Graduate Student Instructors
Sweetland Center for Writing
The Sweetland Center for Writing supplements formal writing instruction by providing free programs that help students understand assignments, develop ideas, support arguments and claims, cite sources, and revise at the paragraph and sentence level.
      Writing workshops
      Writing references and resources
      Peer tutoring
      Dissertation Writing Institute
English Language Institute (ELI)
The English Language Institute offers opportunities for students to participate in courses and workshops aimed at improving their language and communication skills.

English for Academic Purposes Courses
Workshops
Writing Clinics
English Learning Links

[Center for Statistical Consultation and Research (CSCAR)](#)

CSCAR emphasizes an integrated, comprehensive statistical consulting service, covering all aspects of a quantitative research project ranging from the initial study design through to the presentation of the final research conclusions.

Workshops and seminars
Software help
Software access
Spatial Analysis/GIS

[Scholar Space](#)

Scholar Space teaches individuals how to use technology in coursework, teaching, or research.

One-on-one technology consultations Workshops
Digitalization of documents

[University of Michigan Library](#)

MLibrary supports, enhances, and collaborates in the instructional, research, and service activities of the faculty, students, and staff, and contributes to the common good by collecting, organizing, preserving, communicating, and sharing the record of human knowledge.

Borrowing and circulation
Course reserves
Instruction and workshops

Selected Sources of Campus Support

• [The Career Center](#) is committed to preparing U-M students and alumni to be active, life-long learners in developing and implementing their career decisions.

• [Center for the Education of Women (CEW+)](#) offers support services to students, faculty, staff and community members.

• [Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)](#) offers a variety of confidential services to help students resolve personal difficulties. Services include brief counseling for individuals, couples and groups.

• [Department of Recreational Sports](#) is the place for fun and fitness on campus. Rec Sports offers both informal activities and structured programs: Club Sports, Challenge Program, Drop-in Program, Intramural Sports and/or Outdoor Adventures.

• [International Center](#) provides a variety of services to assist international students, scholars, faculty and staff.

• [Psychological Clinic](#) provides psychological care for students. Services include consultation, short-term and long-term therapy for individual adults and couples.

• [Department of Public Safety (DPS)](#) provides information on crime prevention strategies, the law enforcement authority of the University police, and policies and statistics about crime on campus.

• [Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC)](#) provides educational and supportive services for the University of Michigan community related to sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking.

• [Spectrum Center Spectrum Center](#) provides a comprehensive range of education, information and advocacy services working to create and maintain an open, safe and inclusive environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students, faculty, and staff, their families and friends, and the campus community at large.

• [Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD)](#) provides services to students with visual impairments, learning disabilities, mobility impairments, hearing impairments, chronic health problems and psychological disabilities, so they may enjoy a complete range of academic and non-academic opportunities.

• [University Health Service (UHS)](#) is a health care facility, located on central campus that offers many outpatient services in one building for U-M students, faculty, and staff. Many of UHS services provided to registered students are covered by the Health Service fee. Including extensive [mental health and wellness resources](#).