

# DOMESTIC APPLICATION

U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS [www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective\\_students](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students)

**STEP A: Items 1-7 are outlined below. Items 1-7 are required of all domestic applicants, to be worked on simultaneously. Scroll down to follow detailed application instructions for each item.**

<p>S T E P A</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>ITEMS 1-4</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>ITEM 5</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>ITEM 6</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>ITEM 7</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>CONTACT</b>
	<p>Submit 1-4 using applicant portal. <a href="http://www.admissions.msu.edu/apply">www.admissions.msu.edu/apply</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>MSU GRADUATE APPLICATION</b> (Item 1) <a href="https://explore.msu.edu/apply/">https://explore.msu.edu/apply/</a> \$65 application fee; scroll for instructions.</li> <li>• <b>PERSONAL STATEMENT</b> (Item 2) Scroll down for instructions.</li> <li>• <b>ACADEMIC STATEMENT</b> (Item 3) Scroll down for instructions.</li> <li>• <b>RESUMÉ</b> (Item 4) Scroll down for instructions.</li> </ul> <p>(Upload Items 2-4 separately in student application portal)</p>	<p>Request 5 using applicant portal. <a href="http://www.admissions.msu.edu/apply">www.admissions.msu.edu/apply</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>3 LORs (LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION)</b> (Item 5)           <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify your 3 recommenders in application portal. Specify whether or not you waive your right of access to their comments.</li> <li>2. Recommenders will receive an email from MSU's Office of Admissions to complete the online LOR.</li> <li>3. Applicants should follow up directly with recommenders, reminding them to complete LOR forms and letters before the CSUS application deadline.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<p>Request 6 from testing agency. <a href="http://www.ets.org/">www.ets.org/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GRE</b> (Item 6) <b>MSU General Code: 1465</b> (scores no older than 5 years) Order official scores through ETS; ask ETS to send official scores <b>electronically</b> directly to MSU Office of Admissions: <a href="mailto:admis@msu.edu">admis@msu.edu</a>  Michigan State University Office of Admissions Hannah Administration Building 426 Auditorium Road, Room 250 East Lansing, MI 48824 517-355-8332 <a href="https://admissions.msu.edu/contact-us">https://admissions.msu.edu/contact-us</a></li> </ul>	<p>Request 7 from former institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS</b> (Item 7) Ask <b>all</b> former institutions to send official transcripts directly from university as electronic transcript or by postal mail in a sealed, official university envelope to:  For e-transcript: (preferred): <a href="mailto:admis@msu.edu">admis@msu.edu</a> or (for hard copy): Office of Admissions Michigan State University Hannah Administration Building 426 Auditorium Road, Room 250 East Lansing, MI 48824</li> </ul>	<p>Notify CSUS Graduate Secretary when all 7 items are complete: <a href="mailto:edington@msu.edu">edington@msu.edu</a></p> <p>Completed applications will be sent to the CSUS Graduate Admissions Committee 1-3 days after all items are received and uploaded in applicant portal from/by the applicant, former institutions, ETS, and recommenders.</p> <p>All application items must be received no later than application deadline, February 1.</p> <p>Applications with missing, unofficial, or incomplete items will not be processed or reviewed.</p>

**STEP B: The 4 components of STEP B occur in the order listed below. STEP B occurs after STEP A is completed satisfactorily, based on the detailed instructions found on following pages.**

<p>S T E P B</p>	<p><b>APPLICATION REVIEW</b></p>	<p><b>DEPARTMENT DECISION</b></p>	<p><b>UNIVERSITY DECISION</b></p>	<p><b>APPLICANT DECISION</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed applications are reviewed by the CSUS Graduate Admissions Committee, a committee of CSUS Department faculty.</li> <li>• Applications that pass Admissions Committee review are made available to all faculty in the Department for review (2-week time window). Individual faculty indicate their interest and ability to accept an applicant, and if they are able to provide any funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typically, applicants can expect a Department admissions decision by email 8-10 weeks after their application is complete (all items received/uploaded in portal), depending on when in the review cycle it is completed.</li> <li>• If you are accepted, initial advisor assignment and funding information are provided in your Department offer letter. Assistantship details, if applicable, will follow in a separate letter.</li> <li>• If you are accepted, the CSUS Dept's decision is preliminary to MSU's review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MSU Office of Admissions reviews application items of applicants who are admitted by the Department.</li> <li>• If an applicant is accepted by MSU, an official notice of acceptance will appear in the student's applicant portal. (Email will let you know when decision is available.)</li> <li>• Notify the CSUS Department Graduate Secretary and Graduate Program Coordinator if and when you receive notification from MSU Office of Admissions via applicant portal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are admitted by the Department and the University, send an email notification to the CSUS Department Graduate Secretary and Graduate Program Coordinator that you accept or decline the offer. Please CC your assigned advisor.</li> <li>• Send this decision by email as soon as possible, or by April 1 or (if you applied near the February 1 deadline) <b>no later than two weeks</b> after you receive the official University acceptance notice.</li> </ul>

# APPLICATION DEADLINES

Department of  
**Community Sustainability**  
**Michigan State University**

DOMESTIC APPLICATION - U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS [http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective\\_students](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students)

**All applicants should apply for fall admission**, consistent with the CSUS cohort program structure, because it allows students to:

- attend the formal once-yearly CSUS orientation held a few days before fall semester begins;
- enroll in required core foundations courses, offered in sequence during first fall and spring semesters; and
- become part of a CSUS graduate student cohort (this group provides mutual support throughout your degree program, based on shared experiences early in your CSUS career).

---

## I want to start my graduate program **FALL 2023**

Applications for **FALL 2023** admissions are accepted on a rolling basis (as completed) from August 1, 2022 through February 1, 2023.

Rolling admissions means the applicant can submit application materials via the MSU applicant portal to the Department of Community Sustainability (CSUS) at any time between August 1, 2022 and February 1, 2023. Rolling admissions enables the CSUS Graduate Admissions Committee to review applications as they are completed, and to make admissions decisions typically within 8 weeks after the applicant submits all the required application items. The Department does not hold all applications until the February 1 deadline.

If Fall 2023 applicants submit all application items by **November 1, 2022**, they have an improved chance of consideration for:

- university-wide fellowships, *if* applicant is deemed eligible and competitive <https://grad.msu.edu/msu-graduate-school-fellowships>
- early availability research assistantships offered by individual faculty, or other campus opportunities <https://grad.msu.edu/assistantships> (note that applications to work in the Residence Education and Housing Services system are due usually early in November of the previous year for the Fall term for which you intend to apply (see <https://liveon.msu.edu/graduateassistantships> ).

If Fall 2023 applicants submit all application items by **February 1, 2023**, they can be considered for:

- research assistantships as available and offered by individual faculty, or other campus opportunities <https://grad.msu.edu/assistantships>

---

## I want to start my graduate program **SPRING/SUMMER 2023** or **2024**

CSUS accepts applications only for **FALL** semester starts so all students are part of a cohort. Therefore, plan ahead to meet **Fall 2023** deadlines. See above.

# PROGRAMS AND DEGREES

Department of  
**Community Sustainability**  
Michigan State University

DOMESTIC APPLICATION - U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS [http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective\\_students](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students)

---

## COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

---

The Department of Community Sustainability offers three degree types (MS-A, MS-B, PhD\*) within the Community Sustainability (CSUS) graduate program:

CSUS GRADUATE PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS: links via <http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/programs/csus>

MS-A, MS-B, PhD DEGREE DESCRIPTIONS: links via <http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/programs/csus>

---

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM & PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT

---

The Department of Community Sustainability offers three degree types (MS-A, MS-B, PhD\*) within the Sustainable Tourism & Protected Area Management (STPAM) graduate program:

STPAM GRADUATE PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS: links via <http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/programs/stpam>

MS-A, MS-B, PhD DEGREE DESCRIPTIONS: links via <http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/programs/stpam>

\* A Master of Arts (MA) degree program in Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Education (AFNRE) also is offered in the CSUS Department.

To learn more about that program, see separate information and application guidelines at: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/csus/graduate/programs/afnre>

---

## CSUS GRADUATE HANDBOOK

---

To review details about the department, the graduate programs, and the graduate degree program requirements for CSUS and STPAM, you may link to the most current version of the CSUS Graduate Handbook via: [http://www.canr.msu.edu/csus/graduate/current\\_students/graduate\\_handbook](http://www.canr.msu.edu/csus/graduate/current_students/graduate_handbook)

# APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

DOMESTIC APPLICATION - U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS [http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective\\_students](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students)

## ITEM 1 - MSU ONLINE GRADUATE APPLICATION

**Submit Item 1 using the MSU applicant portal.**

Submit Item 1 using the MSU Office of Admissions Graduate Education Student Portal available at:

<https://explore.msu.edu/apply/>

If you forget your applicant ID and/or your password, contact the MSU Office of Admissions for assistance. Use the same name that appears on legal documents, such as a passport or identification card, to complete your application. No paper or email applications can be accepted. The online portal allows you to request letters of recommendation (LORs), request LOR cover forms from your recommenders, view and send e-messages from/to the CSUS Department, submit your application, and check the status of your application.

Select the major code for your desired program on the applicant portal. Major codes are:

### **MS CODES** - Plan A and Plan B

- 5389: CSUS (Community Sustainability)
- 5376: STPAM (Sustainable Tourism & Protected Area Management)

### **PhD CODES**

- 5390: CSUS (Community Sustainability)
- 5377: STPAM (Sustainable Tourism & Protected Area Management)

**Applicants must answer the supplementary questions on the MSU online graduate application before submitting the \$65 application fee.**

## ITEM 2 - PERSONAL STATEMENT

**Submit Item 2 using the MSU applicant portal.**

A typed personal statement (external to the MSU application) is required of all applicants. The personal statement gives the applicant an opportunity to share personal experiences with the Admissions Committee. Prospective faculty advisors and other faculty members also read personal statements during the review and advisor selection process. Upload the statement to the applicant portal. The content below should be addressed in your personal statement, using format guidelines:

### CONTENT: BACKGROUND AND LIFE EXPERIENCES

- How have your background and life experiences (social, economic, cultural, familial, educational, and/or other opportunities or challenges) motivated your decision to pursue your selected graduate degree from the Department of Community Sustainability?
- Describe how these experiences have prepared you or led you to your proposed degree work. You can choose to focus on a single aspect of your background or write about multiple experiences.
- Applicants who have overcome economic barriers or extreme personal, social, or cultural obstacles to seek a graduate degree are encouraged to include this information in the personal statement.

**FORMAT:** Follow the format guidelines below in preparing your personal statement:

- Essay format
- Single-spaced, using 12-point font in a Word document, converted to PDF
- Maximum length: 500 words
- 8.5" X 11" paper, not A4 (use only white paper)
- Create a header at the top of the document, to include:
  - **Personal Statement**, as the title of the paper and part of header
  - your first and last names (as appear on your application)
  - program & degree type for which you are applying (CSUS or STPAM; MS-A, MS-B, or PhD)
- Include page numbers at the bottom of each page (in the footer).
- Do NOT include any of the following anywhere on your personal statement:
  - MSU EMPLID (formerly MSU PID)
  - Phone number, address, email address
  - Photo

# APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

DOMESTIC APPLICATION - U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS [http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective\\_students](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students)

## ITEM 3 - ACADEMIC STATEMENT

**Submit Item 3 using the MSU applicant portal.**

A typed academic statement (external to the MSU application) is required of all applicants. The academic statement gives the applicant an opportunity to share proposed academic and career goals with the Graduate Admissions Committee. Prospective faculty advisors and other faculty members also read academic statements during the review and advisor selection process. Upload the statement to the applicant portal. The content below should be addressed in your academic statement, using the format guidelines provided:

### CONTENT: PLANS FOR GRADUATE STUDY

- Identify the program option to which you are applying (CSUS or STPAM).
- Identify the degree option for which you are applying (MS-A, MS-B, or PhD).
- Discuss with specificity what you want to study/research during your degree work.
- Identify faculty members you believe most closely match your interests (review advisor-eligible faculty bios--from [Advisor subset](#) pages); click names for links to information). You should have conversations with potential advisors before applying.
- Include a summary of discussions you have had with potential faculty advisors and explain why one or more is/are a good match.

### CONTENT: ACADEMIC INTERESTS, PASSIONS, AND CAREER GOALS

- Discuss why you want to earn the degree specified above.
- Describe what motivates your interest in this program.
- Describe what experiences have led to this choice.
- Explain why this **interdisciplinary, systems-based program** (rather than a disciplinary program) is a good fit with your goals.
- Explain how the CSUS or STPAM graduate program will help you meet your educational and career goals.

### CONTENT: CONTRIBUTIONS

- Discuss what you will contribute to the Department of Community Sustainability graduate program, to Michigan State University, and to fellow students (especially in your cohort).

### CONTENT: WEAKNESSES

- If you have apparent weaknesses in your application materials, explain them in your academic statement and describe strategies for addressing them in the future.

### FORMAT:

Follow the format guidelines below in preparing your academic statement:

- Essay format
- Single-spaced, using 12-point font in a Word document, converted to PDF
- Maximum length: 750 words
- 8.5" X 11" white paper, not A4 (use only white paper)
- Create a header at the top of each page, to include:
  - **Academic Statement**, as the title of the paper/part of header
  - your first and last names (as they appear on your application)
  - program and degree type to which you are applying (CSUS or STPAM; MS-A, MS-B, or PhD)
- Include page numbers at the bottom of each page (in the footer).
- Do NOT include any of the following anywhere on your academic statement:
  - MSU EMPLID (formerly MSU PID)
  - Phone number, address, email address
  - Photo

# APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

DOMESTIC APPLICATION - U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS [http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective\\_students](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students)

## ITEM 4 - RESUMÉ

**Submit Item 4 using the MSU applicant portal.**

A typed resumé is required of all applicants. The resumé must be two pages in length and formatted on 8.5" X 11" white paper (not A4). Do not include a photo. Upload your resumé to the applicant portal.

The following content should be included in your resumé:

- Education
- Professional experiences (paid and/or unpaid)
- Other relevant experiences (if any)
- Certifications, honors, awards (if any)
- Professional organization memberships and/or involvement
- Publications and professional presentations (as relevant)

NOTE: The applicant portal has sections for "Employment" and "Activities." If this information is included in your resume, you need not complete these sections of the portal.

## ITEM 5 - LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

**Request Item 5 using the MSU applicant portal.**

Three letters of recommendation are required of all applicants. Applicants must request letters from 3 different recommenders via the student application portal. Be sure to indicate whether or not you waive your right of access to the recommendations.

- MS applicants: at least 1 (preferably 2) of your LORs should be academic. PhD applicants: at least 2 (preferably 3) of your LORs should be academic. Be sure they speak to your match with CSUS programs.
- After the applicant identifies a recommender on the portal, an auto-recommendation request is sent (by email) to the recommender.
- Applicants cannot submit the recommendation materials on behalf of the recommenders.
- Applicants can view their recommendation status in the portal.
- Applicants should follow up with their recommenders to ensure letters of recommendation are submitted before the CSUS application deadline.

## ITEM 6 - GRE SCORES

**Request Item 6 from testing agency.**

GRE scores are required of all applicants. Applicants must contact ETS (<https://www.ets.org>) and request GRE reports be sent directly to the MSU Office of Admissions, identifying one of the codes below. The MSU general code is **1465**. The general code identifies to ETS to which university(ies) you want your GRE scores sent. Select only ONE of the ETS codes below to identify your MSU degree program interest. It does not matter which code below you select.

- 0110 - Resource Management
- 0111 - Parks and Recreation Management
- 0113 - Renewable Natural Resources
- 5101 - Interdisciplinary Programs

## REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR GRE SCORES

- GRE scores must be no more than 5 years old at the time of application.
- Contact the Graduate Secretary via email if the name on your GRE report is different than the name on your MSU online application. The Graduate Secretary must notify the MSU Office of Admissions of the name discrepancy to prevent a delay in the processing of your scores.
- Copies of scores sent by the applicant to MSU or CSUS via email and/or postal mail are deemed unofficial by the University and will not be considered.
- Scores must be accessible to CSUS by the application deadline. Thus, the applicant must order a GRE report from ETS long before the application deadline (and take the exam long before that, to allow time for ETS scoring and reporting). GRE reports can take 1-3 weeks to arrive at MSU and an additional 2-4 weeks to be processed after they are received by the MSU Office of Admissions. Thus, it could take as long as 7 weeks for your report to become available to the Department. The scores are not accessible by the Department until processed by the Office of Admissions. Plan accordingly.

# APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

DOMESTIC APPLICATION - U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS [http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective\\_students](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students)

## ITEM 7 - OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS

**Request Item 7 from former institutions.**

Official transcripts are required of all applicants for each previous academic institution attended. Applicants must arrange for one OFFICIAL transcript to be sent directly to the MSU Office of Admissions from EACH university or college listed on the online graduate application. ALL colleges and universities attended (even if no degree was granted) must be listed on the online application.

### REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR TRANSCRIPTS

- Transcripts are deemed official if sent directly to the MSU Office of Admissions (OA) from the respective institutions via official e-transcript (if electronic service is available at those institutions) or in a sealed envelope via postal mail.
- Photocopies or scanned copies of transcripts are considered unofficial and will not be accepted or reviewed.
- Any transcript received by the MSU OA from an applicant or from an entity other than the institution is considered unofficial and will not be accepted or reviewed.
- If any previously attended institution has transcripts/diplomas *not* written in English: Official English translations of non-English transcripts/diplomas confirming degree completion must be submitted with the original official transcript. A translation is deemed official if it is sent with the official transcript/diploma in a sealed envelope via postal mail directly to the MSU OA from the institution or Ministry. (All must arrive by the CSUS application deadline.)
- Applicant must order each official transcript (and translation, if applicable) long before the application deadline and ensure that each institution sends the transcript directly to the MSU OA. Transcripts can take 2-8 weeks to arrive at and be processed and posted by the MSU OA. Plan accordingly.

### TRANSCRIPT MAILING INSTRUCTIONS

The applicant must contact each institution, pay the required transcript, diploma, and translation fee(s), if applicable, and request official transcripts and diplomas be sent to:

*Official Electronic Transcripts* (if university has the service):  
[admis@msu.edu](mailto:admis@msu.edu)

*Official Hard Copy Transcripts:*

Office of Admissions  
Michigan State University  
Hannah Administration Building  
426 Auditorium Road, Room 250  
East Lansing, MI 48824

### NOTE: PREVIOUS DEGREE COMPLETION

If you have not completed a required previous degree at the time of application (bachelor's degree for MS applicants, or master's degree for PhD applicants), a departmental acceptance will be "conditional" until you officially complete your previous degree - prior to beginning your CSUS/ STPAM degree.

**Be sure to submit official confirmation of your degree completion, with transcript, as soon as it is available.**

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DOMESTIC APPLICATION - U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS [http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective\\_students](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students)

## **I am a fall applicant. When should I submit the required application items - by the 'soft' November 1 or the 'hard' February 1 deadline?**

Opportunities for funding are greater, though not guaranteed, early in the fall application cycle. Fall applicants are highly encouraged to submit all required items before November 1 for potential fellowship consideration. Applications will be accepted through February 1 and considered for research assistantships, as available through individual faculty, but applications are likely not to be considered for university-wide fellowships if received after November 1 (insufficient time to fully process, then apply).

## **What fellowship opportunities are available?**

Fall applicants may be considered for university-wide fellowships if all application items are received by November 1 (earlier preferred) and applicants are deemed competitive/eligible for specific fellowships. University-wide fellowship descriptions and criteria can be found on the [Graduate School Fellowships](#) website. The Department of Community Sustainability does not have full-funding fellowships, but *early* admitted students *may* apply for 2 of the endowed scholarships offered by the Department (Axinn, Steinmueller), as relevant (these provide supplemental funding only, not substantial or full funding support for degree work). Deadline: December 1 each year (work with assigned advisor to assess eligibility and to apply, as relevant).

## **What other funding opportunities are available?**

Funding opportunities provided by MSU are available on the MSU [Graduate School Funding](#) website. The [MSU Office of Financial Aid](#) describes additional funding opportunities. Most funding from the Department of Community Sustainability is in the form of hourly work pay or research assistantships for qualified students, as available, through individual faculty.

### **For more information about assistantships, explore these websites:**

MSU Graduate School website: <https://grad.msu.edu/assistantships>

Assistantship Stipend Ranges: <https://www.hr.msu.edu/employment/graduate-assistants/stipend-ranges.html>

CSUS Fellowships: [http://www.canr.msu.edu/csus/graduate/current\\_students/graduate\\_fellowship](http://www.canr.msu.edu/csus/graduate/current_students/graduate_fellowship)

## **What is an assistantship?**

Research assistantships at MSU include a stipend (bi-weekly paycheck) + tuition & fees for 9 credits per semester (fall and spring) + health insurance + fees. Assistantship amounts vary, based on many factors. Admitted students who are offered an assistantship will receive a separate assistantship offer letter having details about the faculty supervisor, assistantship level, hours per week, and stipend.

Because research assistantships in CSUS are offered only by individual faculty members, applicants are encouraged to talk with faculty about potential assistantship opportunities. View [faculty biographies and contact information](#) of potential advisors, then contact those who seem to match best your interests.

## **Does the CSUS Department offer teaching assistantships?**

Occasionally, yes. But generally only research assistantships are available via individual faculty members. Competitive Department-funded teaching assistantships may be available in unusual cases such as made possible by sabbatical faculty salary savings and when a specific teaching need exists. Also, each year one competitive endowed award (Malcolm & Ann Kerr Award for Excellence in Scholarship) will fund one teaching assistantship for one semester. TA-ships typically are offered to current students.

## **Are all CSUS graduate students funded by assistantships?**

No, not all admitted applicants are offered assistantships or other funding, as most funding is based on funded project and research grants of individual faculty (typically the student's advisor). Students fund their education in many ways: full- or part-time jobs on or off campus, hourly project work, assistantships, home government or other agency funding (international students), scholarships, and/or personal savings and loans.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (cont.)

DOMESTIC APPLICATION - U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS [http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective\\_students](http://www.csus.msu.edu/graduate/prospective_students)

## How are applications evaluated?

Completed applications are reviewed by the CSUS Graduate Admissions Committee, comprising 3-4 CSUS faculty members. Applications that pass this review then are made available for review by the CSUS faculty at large. An applicant is admitted only if a faculty member commits to advising an applicant. The multi-stage review cycle does not begin until application fee is paid and all application items are received (official test scores/transcripts/diplomas, and letters of recommendation). CSUS uses holistic review, meaning all items are reviewed as a package, representing the applicant *in toto*; no individual item automatically disqualifies an applicant (except English Language Proficiency scores that do not meet minimums).

## How soon is an admission decision made after all required application items are submitted?

Applicants typically receive an admission decision letter from the Department by email no later than 8-10 weeks after all the required application items are received. The Graduate Admissions Committee will not review an application until an application package is complete. The review process has several steps and takes time. Please be patient.

An applicant can view the official notice from the MSU Office of Admissions on the applicant portal - granting or denying admission - soon after receiving the admission decision email from the Department. The amount of time depends on the university-wide applicant load in the system at the time of decision. An applicant is accepted **officially** to MSU only by the MSU Office of Admissions.

## Does the Department accept spring/summer applications?

No, the CSUS Department does not accept spring/summer applications for CSUS or STPAM degrees. Applicants may apply only for fall semester starts. Applying for fall admission gives admitted students the best opportunity to 1) attend the formal once-yearly CSUS orientation, 2) enroll in fall-offered required foundations courses, and 3) become part of a full student cohort.

## Can I apply if I have not taken GRE or scores are older than 5 years?

No. GRE scores are required and must be no older than 5 years at the time of application. At-home versions are now available as a result of pandemic.

## What is the minimum GRE score accepted by the Department?

The CSUS Department does not specify a minimum GRE score for any section of the exam, as GRE scores are not a singular admissions criterion. We assess the entire application as a whole. That is not to say that GRE scores are irrelevant. In making admissions decisions, the Graduate Admissions Committee considers 1) the degree program for which an applicant is applying, 2) the age of the GRE scores, which must be no older than 5 years at the time of application, 3) experiences between GRE test-taking and application dates that might have enhanced applicant abilities in low-scoring areas, 4) transcripts, and 5) comments in letters of recommendation. Applicants having a low GRE score (low percentile) should address the low score in their academic statement.

## May I send my transcripts by email?

No (unless institution provides e-transcripts), because all academic documents sent by email are not considered official. Contact your former institutions and ask them to send official transcript/diploma and translations in a sealed, official envelope directly to the MSU Office of Admissions (or official e-submission via [admis@msu.edu](mailto:admis@msu.edu)). *Anything sent by the applicant - by email or postal mail - is considered unofficial and will not be accepted or considered.*

## May I send my GRE scores by email?

No, because GRE scores sent by email are not considered official and will not be considered. Contact ETS and ask them to send your official scores to the MSU Office of Admissions. *Anything sent by the applicant - by email or postal mail - is considered unofficial and will not be accepted.*

## May I send any application materials by email?

No; applicants should follow the detailed application instructions (found in this document) and submit items as instructed.