

# Graduate Handbook

## PhD Program, Applied Sociology and Social Justice

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## Program Mission

To advance graduate research on applied sociology and social justice issues

## Focus

The program's commitment to applied sociology, critical inquiry, and advancing social justice through both academic research and community engagement.

- To further research into criminal justice reform, community development and social change, and race, gender and economic justice, locally, nationally, and internationally.
- To instruct students in advanced sociological and transdisciplinary methods that can be used to advise local, state, and federal government agencies, nonprofit groups, as well as business and industry sectors.

- To equip social science professionals with the research skills and the knowledge to deliver evidence-based solutions to social problems.
- To equip future academics with innovative teaching experience and cutting-edge transdisciplinary research experience to become attractive job candidates on the academic market.
- To nurture an environment of collaboration and collective problem-solving among students and faculty, including extensive student mentoring by faculty.

## Coursework, Milestones, Administrative Forms

Timeline of required coursework, qualifying exams, dissertation proposal, and dissertation defense, with expected benchmarks at each stage.

- Expected timeline: The standard timeline for the ASSJ graduate program is 5 years, which is inclusive of coursework, comprehensive exam, qualifying exam, dissertation proposal defense and dissertation defense. The maximum timeline is 8 years.
  - The Extension of the Statute of Limitations form is designed for students who have not completed their graduate degree in the 5 or 7 year window initially allowed for the respective program. This form provides for an extension to study within the School of Graduate Studies for up to an additional academic year (2 semesters). Students should be prepared to provide rationale why they were unable to complete the program of study within the given timeframe and how additional time would be advantageous to the completion of the degree requirements. You may start the request for an Extension of the Statute of Limitations by clicking on the following: [Extension of Statute of Limitation Form](#).
- Continuous enrollment and termination from the program: Students are expected to be continuously enrolled in the graduate program. Leave of absence (1-2 semesters) may be granted via the administrative process listed below. Program withdrawal is also possible via the form below, and is not a reversible process. Not enrolling in any required coursework while being enrolled in the graduate program means an abandonment of the program and may result in the termination of program enrollment.
- Deferral of initial admission: To defer your initial admission, you will need to go into your original application at the following link: [www.morgan.edu/gradAPPLY](http://www.morgan.edu/gradAPPLY). Once into your application, you may go to the "Supplemental Items" tab and scroll to the bottom. At the bottom of the list will be a button to Request a Deferral. From this point, the process is handled within the admissions system.
- Leave of absence policy: The Leave of Absence form is designed for situations when a student may need to leave the University for a given amount of time to attend to student illness, illness in the family, pregnancy, loss of employment, military deployment, etc. The student should be prepared to provide concrete rationale with documentation as requested to support the request for a leave. A Leave of Absence may be taken for 1 semester or a maximum of 2 semesters (1 academic year). If additional leave is required after the duration of the first leave, then the student will need to fill out a new request detailing why additional time is required. You may start the Leave of Absence process by clicking on the following: [Leave of Absence Form](#).

- Program Withdrawal: The Program Withdrawal form is to be used by students who wish to stop their study within their given program. This form is used to remove the student from being a student. This form is NOT a form to withdraw from courses. Withdrawal from courses occurs through the WEBSIS interface and is completed entirely by the student. Even if leaving your program, the student is obligated to withdraw from their current coursework via the WEBSIS interface. Financial obligations and loan agreements still apply. Finally, it is very important to note that a withdrawal from the program is a final action. It is not possible to undo the withdrawal once it has been enacted. You may start the Withdrawal from the Program process by clicking on the following: [Withdrawal from Program Form](#).
- The Reinstatement of a Past Course to the Student's Schedule form is to be used in odd situations when the student took a course, it can be verified by the instructor, earned a grade that the instructor is willing to post, and documentation supports such. This situation often occurs due to a lack of payment for tuition, an error in funding posted to the student's account at the University, or a course that was dropped without knowledge or by error. See <https://www.morgan.edu/school-of-graduate-studies/new-and-current-students/forms>
- Transfer credits: For students, who have taken a master's program in sociology outside MSU and want to have their degree recognized by MSU's ASSJ program, they should work with the Graduate Standard Committee (Dr. Pratt-Harris, Dr. Drewery, Dr. Layne, Dr. Howell) to check their eligibility for recognition. The Graduate School has a Transfer of Credit form. The Transfer of Credit form is used to transfer credit from another institution to Morgan State University as part of a degree program. Most often, the credits were taken prior to attending Morgan, but sometimes the form is used to seek pre-approval of courses taken at another institution while the student is at Morgan. In either case, this is the form to use. Students should be prepared to supply course descriptions, syllabi, and rationale why the courses should be transferred to Morgan's program of study. Only graduate-level credits that have NOT been used as part of another degree and have earned a grade of B or higher will be considered (grades of B- will not be considered). Further, the course must be compatible with a course in the program of study in which the student is enrolled at Morgan or as an approved elective within the program of study.
- Policy on Student Residency Classification for Admission and Tuition Purposes: Students who are resident in Maryland and want to obtain in-state tuition status should follow the procedures outlined in the MSU document: A change in status must be requested by submitting a "Petition for Change in Classification for Tuition Purposes". A student applying for a change to in-state status must furnish all evidence that the student wishes the University to consider at the time the petition is due which is the last published date to register for the forthcoming semester/term for which the change in classification is sought. See <https://www.morgan.edu/Documents/ADMINISTRATION/Regents/policies/StudentResidencyClassification-a1.pdf>
- All relevant graduate student forms are obtainable from <https://www.morgan.edu/school-of-graduate-studies/new-and-current-students/forms>

The timeline will differ between students who enter the ASSJ program with a Bachelor's degree vs. a recognized Master's degree.

1) Ph.D. with En passant Master's Degree (60 credits) - for students who have only earned a Baccalaureate Degree

#### Core Courses 33 credits

- [SOCI 500 - Proseminar in Sociology](#) **3 Credits**
- [SOCI 510 - Social Statistics](#) **3 Credits**
- [SOCI 511 - Classical Sociological Theory](#) **3 Credits**
- [SOCI 520 - Techniques of Social Research](#) **3 Credits**
- [SOCI 521 - Contemporary Sociological Theory](#) **3 Credits**
- [SOCI 650 - Applied Sociology and Social Justice, Part 1 Seminar](#) **3 Credits**
- [SOCI 660 - Applied Sociology and Social Justice, Part 2 Seminar](#) **3 Credits**
- [SOCI 810 - Preparing the Literature Review](#) **3 Credits**
- [SOCI 820 - Independent Research](#) **3 Credits**
- [SOCI 850 - Independent Research](#) **3 Credits**
- [SOCI 860 - Dissertation Proposal](#) **3 Credits**

Electives 24 credits (See elective list for the different areas of focus)\*\*\*\*

Electives are 24 credits chosen from the course list.

- XXXX - Electives **24 credits**\*\*\*

#### Dissertation Course 3 credits

SOCI 997/SOCI 998 Dissertation Guidance/Dissertation Defense 3/9 credits\*

\*Student Advances to Candidacy - Upon achieving Doctoral Candidacy, the student will continuously register in Fall and Spring terms for SOCI 997 (Dissertation Guidance) until the Dissertation is completed and submitted to the School of Graduate Studies for review. The course is used only when the curriculum has been completed, candidacy has been achieved, and the student is completing the research and writing of the Dissertation. The SOCI 997 course registration maintains the student status as a matriculated, full-time student (student is registered for three (3) credit hours and the system reports a full-time nine (9) credit hour load). After the Intent to Defend the Dissertation form has been received by the School of Graduate Studies, this course registration will be changed to SOCI 998 (dissertation Defense) for the given semester and count for three (3) credit hours of curricular coursework (SOCI 998 will also count as nine (9) credit hours of load). SOCI 997 will not count toward curricular credits. Other courses cannot be substituted for SOCI 997 (Dissertation Guidance). The only eligible grade for

SOCI 997 (Dissertation Guidance) is the grade of “S” and the only acceptable grade for SOCI 998 (Dissertation Defense) is “P/F” (Pass/Fail).

2) Ph.D. (36 credits) - for students who have already earned a Master’s Degree in Sociology or closely related field

#### Core Courses 21 credits

- SOCI 500 - Proseminar in Sociology **3 Credits**
- SOCI 650 - Applied Sociology and Social Justice, Part 1 Seminar **3 Credits**
- SOCI 660 - Applied Sociology and Social Justice, Part 2 Seminar **3 Credits**
- SOCI 810 - Preparing the Literature Review **3 Credits**
- SOCI 820 - Independent Research **3 Credits**
- SOCI 850 - Independent Research **3 Credits**
- SOCI 860 - Dissertation Proposal **3 Credits**

Electives 12 credits (see elective list for areas of focus\*\*\*)

Electives are 12 credits chosen from the course list.

- XXXX - Electives **12 credits**\*\*\*

#### Dissertation Course 3 credits

- SOCI 997/SOCI 998 Dissertation Guidance/Dissertation Defense 3/9 credits\*

\*Student Advances to Candidacy - Upon achieving Doctoral Candidacy, the student will continuously register in Fall and Spring terms for SOCI 997 (Dissertation Guidance) until the Dissertation is completed and submitted to the School of Graduate Studies for review. The course is used only when the curriculum has been completed, candidacy has been achieved, and the student is completing the research and writing of the Dissertation. The SOCI 997 course registration maintains the student status as a matriculated, full-time student (student is registered for three (3) credit hours and the system reports a full-time nine (9) credit hour load). After the Intent to Defend the Dissertation form has been received by the School of Graduate Studies, this course registration will be changed to SOCI 998 (dissertation Defense) for the given semester and count for three (3) credit hours of curricular coursework (SOCI 998 will also count as nine (9) credit hours of load). SOCI 997 will not count toward curricular credits. Other courses cannot be substituted for SOCI 997 (Dissertation Guidance). The only eligible grade for SOCI 997 (Dissertation Guidance) is the grade of “S” and the only acceptable grade for SOCI 998 (Dissertation Defense) is “P/F” (Pass/Fail).

Full Text is obtainable at:

[https://catalog.morgan.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=25&poid=5956&returnto=1793&\\_gl=1\\*18rdcwr\\*\\_ga\\*Nzc2OTczNTEuMTcwOTkxNDY3NA..\\*\\_ga\\_T3TCY7Q7D7\\*czE3NTg1MDQ4NTIkbzMzNSRnMCR0MTc1ODUwNDg1MyRqNTkkbDAkaDA](https://catalog.morgan.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=25&poid=5956&returnto=1793&_gl=1*18rdcwr*_ga*Nzc2OTczNTEuMTcwOTkxNDY3NA..*_ga_T3TCY7Q7D7*czE3NTg1MDQ4NTIkbzMzNSRnMCR0MTc1ODUwNDg1MyRqNTkkbDAkaDA).

## ASSJ Hyflex Model

### Overview

The ASSJ program offers both high-residency and low-residency options, supported through HyFlex and remote course delivery, as well as evening scheduling. Some courses are also available in fully online formats. All students are required to attend one intensive, in-person retreat in Baltimore during the fall Proseminar course.

### ASSJ Course Structures

Because the program follows a hyflex model, all courses offered directly within the Department of Sociology are able to be completed online. However, their structure and delivery may vary.

The majority of courses in the ASSJ program are offered in alignment with the “MorganFlex” course modality (see details below), wherein students have the option to attend in person, remotely, or a blend of the two throughout the semester. This is true of courses even when the section number is listed in the standard numerical format (e.g. SOCI500.001).

Courses within the Department of Sociology may also be offered in asynchronous (W) or synchronous (R) online modalities (see details below). These courses will be identifiable by the section number.

No courses in the department will fully require in-person attendance, in order to accommodate students enrolled in the program who do not reside in the Baltimore region.

### Courses in Other Departments

As an interdisciplinary program, ASSJ requires students to take courses in other departments. Students are responsible for verifying that the modalities of their chosen courses align with their residency needs. Students are encouraged to contact instructors in advance to clarify course structure, attendance expectations, and the availability of accommodations for online participation.

### University Course Modalities

Course modalities are identified in the course section numbers. Section numbers are the three digit number that comes after the standard course number, separated by a period (i.e. if a course is listed as SOCI500.001, the “500” is the course number, while the “001” is the section number). In-person courses are listed with section numbers that are numerical only (e.g. .001 or .103). Courses in other modalities are listed with section numbers made up of one letter and two numbers (e.g. .W01 or .M55). The letter in these section numbers indicates the specific format for the course as follows:

- Online Asynchronous (W): If the section number includes a 'W' (for example, SOCI101.W03), the course is completely asynchronous. The professor cannot require students to come to campus. The professor cannot ask students to join a meeting at a set time. Professors may (and are encouraged to) record spoken lectures and ask students to view them during the week. Professors should check in with their students regularly (at least once a week) through announcements or discussions.
- Online Synchronous (R): If the section number includes an 'R' (for example, SOCI550.R85), the course is synchronous and online (remote). The students will be online with the professor at a specified time and day each week. The professor may not require students to come to campus.
- Hybrid (H): If the section number includes an 'H' (for example, ARCH511.H85), the course is hybrid, and the professor will outline the attendance pattern within the syllabus. The course meeting pattern as indicated on the schedule must not be changed. There will be two meeting patterns, which are usually on campus and something else (consistent W, R, or off-campus in the case of some internships/practicums).
- MorganFlex (M): If the section number includes an 'M' (for example, SOCI510.M85), the course is offered in the MorganFlex mode, which allows students to select between being present in the classroom or participating synchronously online (usually through Zoom). The instructor should be present on campus in the classroom listed on the schedule. The professor cannot require students to come to campus unless they have agreed to do so by signing an agreement form provided at the start of the term, before the add/drop period, which will give students an opportunity to change sections or courses if they do not agree.
- Discussion Sections (D): If the section number includes a 'D' (for example, HIST101.D01), the section is a discussion section and is offered in the modality consistent with the pattern on the listing. If a room is identified, it is face-to-face; otherwise, it may be either Synchronous with a specified time for a remote discussion section or Asynchronous to indicate a completely asynchronous discussion section.
- Independent Work (A): If the section number includes an 'A' (for example, MISC.498.A70), the section is being offered as an Independent Academic Work. The modality and meeting pattern are set by agreement between the instructor and the student and must be communicated to Academic Affairs in the IAW agreement form. The schedule listing should be consistent with that agreement.

## Qualifying exam

### **Purpose and contours of exam**

Qualifying exams allow students to demonstrate a cogent knowledge of at least two subfield/area within sociology (e.g., violence against women, the sociology of social media, policing, sociology of religion) by independently synthesizing the important literature within the subfield, and identifying gaps, deficiencies, and potential avenues for future research. The idea of the exam is to start broadly with one of the department's areas of specialization (1) Criminal Justice Reform; 2) Community Development and Social Change; 3) Race, Gender and Economic Justice; 4) Advanced Applied Sociological Methods, and then to narrow the focus to two subfields in which students will be expected to demonstrate a mastery of the literature.

Examples of subfields are inclusive of but not limited to Migration, Religion and Spirituality, Family, Race and Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality, Technology, Economy, Labor, Media, Sports, Urban Sociology, Social Psychology, Criminology, Education, Law, Social Movements, Medical Sociology, Environmental Sociology, Indigenous Rights, Cultural Sociology/ Anthropology, Political Sociology, Social Stratification, Comparative-Historical, International Relations, Social Networks

The chosen subfield(s) should be manageable for an exam (i.e., neither overly-broad, nor too narrow) and allow students to showcase their expertise in the subarea. The Qualifying Exams will also help students frame and position their own independent research within a subfield, and explain how their work will contribute to the existing literature.

Qualifying Exams consist of both a written component that examines relevant literature and an oral defense that tests the student's knowledge related to the literature outlined in the review essays or the in-person exams. Both parts of the exam should take place together, preferably in the Fall or Spring semester following the completion of required coursework, including the second-year research paper. Qualifying Exams must be passed to advance to candidacy and prior to writing the dissertation.

Students should submit a Qualifying exam "declaration" form to the Department's administrative staff the semester they plan to complete the Qualifying exam. This form will include scheduling a date for the oral exam. Students or their advisors can download the form from the ASSJ website.

### **Written Exam:**

There are two options for how to satisfy the written component of the Qualifying Exams, the Literature Review Essays or the Committee Generated Essay Exam.

### **Option One: Literature Review Essays**

Students should expect to spend approximately four months on the exam which includes compiling a reading list of the important articles and books that, together, represent 2 particular areas of scholarship, reading the selected articles, and writing the written exam. Students



should work closely with their advisory committee to identify relevant readings in the student's chosen subfields.

A Qualifying reading list should consist of approximately 100 to 150 substantive works, including both articles and books, that represent the central theoretical and empirical contributions to sociology as a discipline and to that specific subfield. Reading lists may be shared and collaboratively revised among students pursuing similar areas of study. Students are strongly advised to consult their faculty advisors for existing lists and to review additional resources available through the ASSJ website.

Review essays should be approximately 20 double-spaced pages in length, not including the bibliography. These essays are best understood as comprehensive literature reviews that synthesize key scholarship while acknowledging the foundational theorists and researchers who have shaped the field of sociology broadly, as well as the student's chosen subfield. Students are encouraged to consult review journals (e.g., Annual Review of Sociology, Trauma, Violence, and Abuse) as models for formatting, style, and scope.

Review essays are expected to address the following components:

- Theoretical perspectives: both classic and contemporary within sociology.
- Methodological concepts: key approaches and debates in the discipline.
- Subfield traditions: classic and contemporary theoretical traditions specific to the student's subfield.
- Empirical studies: major research findings and contributions within the subfield.
- Critical analysis: identification of gaps, deficiencies, methodological challenges, relevant debates, and potential avenues for future research.

Written exams will be due to committee members two weeks prior to the scheduled oral defense. Only after the committee approves the written essay as "passable" will a student be allowed to move on to the oral exam. Students whose papers are not ready will be given an opportunity to revise the written exam based on feedback. But failure to complete the exam in the designated semester will place students on probation with a condition to pass both the written and oral exam by the following semester. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the program.

### **Option Two: Committee Generated Essay Exam**

Students should expect to spend approximately four months preparing for the exam which includes compiling a reading list of the important articles and books that, together, represent 2 particular areas of scholarship, and reading the selected articles. Students should work closely with their advisory committee to identify relevant readings in the student's chosen subfields (See advisory committee roles in Section X, below).

A Qualifying reading list should consist of approximately 100 to 150 substantive works, including both articles and books, that represent the central theoretical and empirical contributions to sociology as a discipline and to that specific subfield. Reading lists may be shared and collaboratively revised among students pursuing similar areas of study. Students are strongly advised to consult their faculty advisors for existing lists and to review additional resources available through the ASSJ website.

After approving the reading lists, the faculty committee will develop a set of essay questions for each of the speciality areas. Approximately two weeks before the scheduled Oral Defense date, students will take the written Qualifying Exams over a two day period. The essay exams will be administered in the morning and afternoon of Day One and Day Two.

The essay questions will require students to think critically about and display mastery of their 2 chosen subfields of study. Specifically, they will cover the following:

- Theoretical perspectives: both classic and contemporary within sociology.
- Methodological concepts: key approaches and debates in the discipline.
- Subfield traditions: classic and contemporary theoretical traditions specific to the student's subfield.
- Empirical studies: major research findings and contributions within the subfield.
- Critical analysis: identification of gaps, deficiencies, methodological challenges, relevant debates, and potential avenues for future research.

The committee will grade the written exams and provide feedback within 48 hours. Only after the committee approves the written essay as "passable" will a student be allowed to move on to the oral exam. Students who do not pass will be given the opportunity to revise the exam based on feedback. If students do not pass after one opportunity to revise and rewrite will place students on probation with a condition to pass both the written and oral exam by the following semester. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the program.

### **Oral exam**

The oral exam assesses whether students can engage in a thoughtful discussion about the relevant literature identified in their written essays (for both options), and adequately address questions from their committee. The questions asked by committee members in the oral exam should be specifically related to the review essays.

### **Grading**

The Qualifying exam will receive one overall grade of pass or fail. If a majority of the members vote to pass the exam, it is considered a pass.

A passing grade indicates confidence in a student's competency based on:

1) Substance: Is the student fully informed about the scope and content of the subfield? Did they demonstrate an ability to synthesize and critically analyze the relevant literature?

1. Theoretical and Methodological Mastery: Depth of understanding and ability to apply sociological theories and research methods. (Literature: Classical/Contemporary Theory; Stats/Methods)
  2. Sociological Knowledge: Skill in applying sociological knowledge to social justice problems.
  3. Applied Sociological Knowledge within two subfields (inclusive of but not restricted to two subfields that are selected within their specialization)
  4. Originality: Originality in presenting the literature or responding to applied questions, reflecting the ASSJ program goals.
- 2) Writing quality: Is the essay clear and concise, logical and well organized?
- 3) Oral proficiency: Did they adequately address questions and demonstrate their proficiency in the subfield?

Following the passage of the Qualifying exam, a form must be signed by all committee members and submitted to the Department's administrative staff. Students or their advisors can download the form from the [ASSJ website](#).

Failure to complete (and pass) the oral exam will constitute a failure of the exam. Students who fail will be placed on probation with a condition to pass the oral exam by the following academic semester. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the program.

## Dissertation

### Description of the Dissertation:

The Dissertation is the last phase of the Ph.D. program. It is a written analysis of a specific academic topic that applies traditional scientific methods of inquiry to examine specific research questions, or hypotheses. The purpose of the dissertation is to ensure that the student has mastered the ability to pursue a systematic investigation which examines significant issues or problems in the area of Applied Sociology and Social Justice. The Dissertation is also designed to contribute to the student's knowledge, skills, and research expertise in Applied Sociology and Social Justice.

### Dissertation Development and Scope

Graduate students are expected to approach the dissertation as a rigorous and original scholarly project. Building on the foundation of the qualifying exam, students should situate their research within the relevant academic literature, demonstrating both mastery of the field and the ability to contribute new insights. The dissertation should be appropriately scoped, focusing on research questions that are both significant and answerable within the timeframe allotted for degree completion. The respective courses the students needs to be enrolled in are specified in the Coursework, Milestones, Administrative Forms section above and in

[https://catalog.morgan.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=25&poid=5956&returnto=1793&\\_gl=1\\*\\_liphbv\\*\\_ga\\*Nzc2OTczNTEuMTcwOTkxNDY3NA..\\*\\_ga\\_T3TCY7Q7D7\\*cze3NTg1NjMyNzEkbzMzOSRnMSR0MTc1ODU2Mzl4MCRqNTEkbDAkaDA](https://catalog.morgan.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=25&poid=5956&returnto=1793&_gl=1*_liphbv*_ga*Nzc2OTczNTEuMTcwOTkxNDY3NA..*_ga_T3TCY7Q7D7*cze3NTg1NjMyNzEkbzMzOSRnMSR0MTc1ODU2Mzl4MCRqNTEkbDAkaDA)

### **Research Approval and Committee Guidance**

All dissertations must be conducted under the guidance of a dissertation chair and two additional committee members. A larger committee or the addition of external reviewers should be discussed with the dissertation chair. Students must obtain approval from their dissertation committee for the dissertation proposal before collecting and analyzing data. Projects involving fieldwork, human subjects, or other forms of data collection require prior approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Ongoing communication with the committee is essential to ensure methodological soundness, feasibility, and adherence to ethical research standards.

### **Defense and Degree Completion**

Once the dissertation has been approved by the committee, students may schedule their oral defense. The scheduled defense date must allow for a minimum of 30 days between committee approval and the defense itself, ensuring adequate time for preparation and review. A successful oral defense marks the final step in the dissertation process, after which students will be formally awarded the PhD.

## **Advising & Mentorship**

Outlines how faculty advisors are assigned, the process for changing advisors if needed, and expectations for maintaining regular meetings with mentors.

- Advising objectives:
  - Helping students to clarify their values and goals and to better understand their goals in the program;
  - Helping students to understand the nature and the purpose of higher education;
  - Providing accurate information about educational options, requirements, policies and procedures to ensure timely completion of the graduate program;
  - Planning a research agenda consistent with a student's interests and abilities;
  - Assisting students in the continual monitoring and evaluation of their educational progress;
  - Integrating the resources of the institution to meet the student's unique educational needs and aspirations.
- Faculty advisor assignment
  - The first advisor is assigned by the Faculty Graduate Program Committee
  - If the student requests changing advisors, they should contact the Sociology Department chairperson to request the assignment of a new advisor.
  - Students should meet with their advisors at least once per semester.
  - The faculty advisor does not have to be the same person as the dissertation chair.

### **ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

By their second year, students should have identified at least THREE faculty members willing to serve on their advisory committees. The main advisor or "chair" of their advisory committee must be a regular member of the graduate faculty in Sociology and Anthropology.

Committees may include an additional "outside" member for dissertation research projects. This member can be from another MSU department or from outside MSU, as long as the general requirements for committee membership are followed.

Ideally, the same internal committee members will advise students for all of their benchmarks (the second-year research paper, Qualifying exam, and dissertation), but they may be changed with the approval of the Graduate Chair. All committee members should be fully informed of the student's progress.

### **Committee structure**

A committee should consist of no fewer than three members, a main advisor and two additional faculty members. The main advisor is housed within the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. No family members may serve on the committee of his or her relatives. In special circumstances, a Co-Chair, i.e. two advisers, arrangement may be appropriate.

### **Changes to committees**

Once an advisory committee has been officially established, it is expected that the same committee will work with the student until graduation. Substitution of committee members may occur at the request of either the student or faculty prior to candidacy. Changes to the committee after the student has successfully advanced to candidacy requires Graduate Chair approvals. Depending on circumstances, replacement of the chair of an advisory committee may require that a prospectus approval meeting be repeated.

### **Responsibilities of the Main Advisor/Committee chair**

A student's main advisor is intended to be their primary point of contact for all questions and guidance about research. Students should secure a commitment from a main advisor as early as possible, but should be aware that their preferred faculty member may need to say no if they are already working with at least THREE other students.

The main advisor/Chair's responsibilities include advising the student in selecting topics for research, assisting with the development of research projects, assisting with methods/procedures for data collection and analysis, and assisting in navigating the IRB approval process. The main advisor also prepares the candidate for Qualifying exams and defense processes, and should keep them on track for a timely completion of the students' degree.

### **Responsibilities of other Committee Members**

All other members of the committee share responsibility in ensuring that students produce high-quality scholarship. Committee members are responsible for reading all written material within a predictable time frame, suggesting substantive editorial changes, and providing rationale for their critiques. Committee members who have concerns about major flaws in any of a student's written work should discuss these concerns with both the student and committee chair.

### Responsibilities of the Doctoral student

Students are expected to complete all required benchmarks in a timely manner. They are responsible for submitting proofread drafts of materials to their main advisor and committee members, preparing adequately for meetings, and addressing all feedback and concerns about their work in a timely manner. They are also expected to ensure that their dissertation research adheres to the agreed-upon proposal, and meets all deadlines set by the department and University. Finally, students are expected to maintain contact with all of their committee members and notify them of their progress or events that might interfere with a timely completion of their degree.

## Research Ethics & IRB Process

The importance of ethical research, and a step-by-step guidance for obtaining IRB approval at Morgan State University is described below.

Scholarly research must abide by the ethical guidelines established by Morgan State University.

**Research Misconduct** is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results according to 42 CFR Part 93 .

- Fabrication: making up data or results and recording or reporting them.
- Falsification: manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.
- Plagiarism: the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.

Deliberate or repeated non-compliance with the regulations can be considered misconduct.

Research misconduct does not include honest errors or differences of opinion. See

<https://www.morgan.edu/office-of-research-administration/research-compliance/research-misconduct>

Morgan State University requires all research involving human subjects to be reviewed and approved by the **Institutional Review Board (IRB)** in compliance with federal regulations (45 CFR 46). The Office of Research Compliance (ORC) oversees this process, and proposals must include research protocols and consent forms. Researchers should allow at least 30 days for review, after which the IRB will notify them in writing of the outcome - approval, disapproval, or conditional approval. All processes, procedures, instructions, required training, and documentation are found in the link:

<https://www.morgan.edu/office-of-research-administration/research-compliance/human-subjects-research>

CITI Human Subjects Training is required in order to receive IRB approval for research projects ("IRB Training Requirements" in the above link):

MSU IRB committee meets once a month on the dates listed in the above link ("IRB Meeting Schedule" in the above link). Thus, students must plan ahead when they want to collect human subject data because no such data may be collected prior to the approval of the IRB form.

Graduate Students undertaking research and filling out an IRB form must have a Faculty Sponsor sign off on their form. This is usually the advisor, dissertation chair or the faculty member with whom the student is performing the research.

**IRB Human Subjects Research Approval Request Form:**

<https://www.morgan.edu/Documents/ADMINISTRATION/OFFICES/ora/IRB%20Forms/Human%20Subjects%20Approval%20Request%20Form%202025-03a.docx>

## Academic Conferences and Publications

Students are encouraged to present their research in academic conferences (funding is discussed in Funding & Assistantship Policies) including but not limited to American Sociological Association, The Society of Black Archaeologists, Association of Black Sociologists, Transforming Anthropology, Association of Black Anthropologists, American Anthropological Association, Eastern Sociological Society. The most common formats in conferences are paper presentations and roundtables. Acceptance rates at conferences tend to be high. Some conferences require entire papers while many others require only abstracts in their submissions.

Students are *not* obliged to publish their research in academic journals as a condition to graduate from the ASSJ PhD program, but they are encouraged to publish their work in academic journals. The review process at an academic journal will depend from journal to journal. It can be as short as a few days up to a year, but most commonly it will be 2-3 months for the first response. There are four possible responses: desk reject, review and reject, revise and resubmit, and accept. The first two responses are quite common, especially in the more highly-ranked journals with more submissions. Lower ranked journals will have higher acceptance rates, but might be viewed more skeptically by higher-ranking sociology departments that are seeking job market candidates or decide on tenure and promotion decisions. There is no universal rule of thumb on what type of journal to submit to but students should have a discussion with their advisors if they are unsure about their decision making. Editors will send out the paper for review unless the response is a desk reject. The academic review process can be quite arbitrary, as some poorly written papers might sail through peer review easily, while other very well-written papers might be desk-rejected. Some papers are published on the first try with minor comments, while others can be stuck in peer review for years. Don't be hard on yourself for failing to publish on the first try, and don't give up easily!

A common outcome is revise and resubmit based on the feedback of the 2-3 reviewers that are commenting on the strengths and weaknesses of the submission. You do not have to address all of the reviewer comments, but you do have to respond to all of them. If the comment is easily addressable, you should make the requested modifications to your paper. If they are not or would distort the research findings you are presenting, you need to give your reasons in the response memo why you will not incorporate these suggestions. Given that journal rejections are common, make sure you have a list of publications that you will submit to next.

Students should read the general journals in sociology, anthropology and their subfields, which will help them decode the language used in articles, methods commonly used and the

literatures commonly cited. ASA has a list of journals:

<https://www.asanet.org/publications/journals/>

UW has a list of top sociology journals:

<https://guides.lib.uw.edu/c.php?g=341375&p=2303554>

Google Scholar maintains a list of top journals:

[https://scholar.google.com/citations?view\\_op=top\\_venues&hl=en&vq=soc\\_sociology](https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=top_venues&hl=en&vq=soc_sociology)

OOIR sociology journal rankings:

<https://oair.org/journals.php?field=Social+Sciences&category=Sociology&metric=average>

SJR has a list of journals by ranking and has a comprehensive list of indexed journals:

<https://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php?category=3312>

Tips on journal publishing in the Belcher book "Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks."

Link [here](#)

Additional publishing opportunities are book chapters in edited volumes following calls for papers (sometimes peer-reviewed but not always), and book publications that require a book contract with an academic publisher. In most sociology departments, the books rank the highest while edited volumes rank the lowest with academic journals in between. Tips for how to write and publish an academic book can be found in the Portwood-Stacer book "The Book Proposal Book". Link [here](#)

Presenting at academic conferences and publishing in peer-reviewed journals allow graduate students to share their research with broader scholarly communities, receive constructive feedback that strengthens their work, and build professional networks that can lead to future collaborations. These experiences also enhance students' academic and professional profiles, demonstrating their expertise, advancing their careers, and contributing to the reputation of their program and institution.

## Funding & Assistantship Policies

- Types of Graduate Assistantships
  - **Research Assistantships (RAs)** are available to students to assist departmental faculty members with their research projects. Students awarded Research Assistantships may also assist faculty with their grant projects. Graduate Research Assistants are expected to work 20 hours a week during the school year.
  - Graduate Research Assistantships are 9 ½ month assignments, and students are required to be enrolled for 9 credits at Morgan State University. GTAs receive a tuition award for 9 credits every semester and a stipend.
  - **Teaching Assistantships (TAs)** are available to students who possess the minimum qualifications to teach undergraduate courses. Students awarded Teaching Assistantships may also assist University faculty in the preparation of course materials, grading tests or other assignments. Graduate Teaching Assistants will teach or assist two courses every semester



- Graduate Teaching Assistantships are 9 ½ month assignments, and students are required to be enrolled for 9 credits at Morgan State University. GTAs receive a tuition award for 9 credits every semester and a stipend.
- Renewal criteria for funding
  - TAs and RAs must remain in good academic standing and show progress toward the degree. Details are listed in the policy below.
- General expectations for graduate assistantships
  - The successful graduate assistant (TA, RA) should demonstrate a strong collaborative work ethic, research acumen, and excellent written and verbal communication skills, and enable opportunities for mentorship, publishing, grant development, and community engagement.
  - To enable social science professionals the ability to utilize research skills to deliver evidence-based solutions to social problems.
  - To enable future academics with innovative teaching experience and cutting-edge transdisciplinary research experience the ability to become attractive job candidates on the academic market.
  - To nurture an environment of collaboration and collective problem-solving among students and faculty, including extensive student mentoring by faculty.
  - Exceptions or violations of expectations and requirements of graduate assistants will be in accordance with university policy (Graduate Assistantship policy listed below)
- Travel funding for conferences
  - The Department of Sociology and Anthropology has a fund to support student conference travel. They should contact the Department Chair to inquire about the availability of funds and the procedure to obtain them. If students are on a faculty grant or have their own grant, they should have their conference travel funded by the grant.
- Applying for external grants
  - Students are encouraged to apply for external grants to support their research. If they are already in the ASSJ program, they should discuss the procedure with their adviser.
  - National Science Foundation: <https://www.nsf.gov/funding/graduate-students>
  - McNair Scholars: <https://mcnairscholars.com/funding/>
  - GWU Fellowship Lists: <https://gradfellowships.gwu.edu/external-fellowships>
  - JHU Fellowship Lists: <https://research.jhu.edu/rdt/funding-opportunities/graduate/>
- How students learn about opportunities to gain teaching and research experience (TA, RA).
  - Students will be notified of TA and RA positions via internal email communication
  - If students feel like they have missed the email communication, they should contact the Graduate Program Chair to inquire about graduate assistantship availability.

The full listing of the MSU graduate assistantship and fellowship policy including enrollment expectations, workload, responsibilities, duration, reporting requirements, termination, grievance procedures among others are spelled out below:

**MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF REGENTS POLICY GOVERNING  
Graduate Assistantships and Fellowships**

**Title:** Policy Governing Graduate Assistantships and Fellowships

**Document Purview:** Board of Regents Policy

**Document Category:** Policy governing Graduate Assistantships including Teaching Assistantships and Research Assistantships and all Fellowships managed by the University

**Policy Number:** N/A

**Effective Date:** XXX

**New Policy:** Yes, Replaces: XXX

**Suggested Review/Revision date:** Every five years

**Issuing Authority:** Board of Regents

**Responsible Offices:** Division of Academic Affairs, Division of Research and Economic Development; Human Resources; Information Technology; School of Graduate Studies, all University Colleges/Schools; All units providing assistantships and/or fellowships to graduate students.

**Document Responsibility:** Division of Academic Affairs, School of Graduate Studies

**References:** Supersedes all prior policies and guidelines governing Graduate Assistantships and Fellowships.

Signature:

Originating Date: 3-25-2021

**Purpose**

The purpose of the **MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF REGENTS POLICY GOVERNING GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS** is to establish standards for awarding, compensating, managing, modifying, and terminating graduate assistantships and fellowships. These standards are intended to ensure that graduate assistantships and fellowships at Morgan incorporate the best practices in all aspects of the contributions that assistantships and fellowships make to the University mission and conform to all appropriate federal and state guidelines.

- **Definitions**

The following definitions of certain terms are used in this Policy.

- *School:* Shall individually or collectively mean Morgan State University's Colleges and Schools of the University. These are currently: James H. Gilliam, Jr. College of Liberal Arts, School of Architecture and Planning; School of Business and Management; School of Community Health and Policy; School of Computer, Mathematical and Natural Sciences; School of Education and Urban Studies; School of Engineering; School of Global Journalism and Communication; School of Graduate Studies; College of Interdisciplinary and Continuing Studies; and and School of Social Work.
- *Division:* Shall individually or collectively mean Morgan State University's operational divisions, currently identified as Academic Affairs, Division of Research and Economic Development, Division of Student Affairs, Division of Finance and Administration, Division of Enrollment and Student Success, Division of Institutional Advancement, Division of Facilities, Design and Construction, Division of International Affairs.
- *Unit and Department:* Shall individually or collectively refer to a unit at Morgan State University with a budgetary structure exercising administrative control over the expenditure of funds, management of personnel, and completion of assigned duties.
- *Center or Institute:* Shall individually or collectively refer to a permanent or temporary unit at Morgan State University designated with a special mission regarding instruction, service, and/or research that may fall within one of the divisions or schools or have an independent or multi-unit charter.
- *Graduate:* Educational level following the baccalaureate including certificate, master's, and doctoral study.
- *Graduate Student or Prospective Graduate Student:* A graduate student is a student enrolled in a graduate degree or certificate program and who possesses a qualifying baccalaureate degree or its equivalent. A prospective graduate student is an individual who has been accepted to a graduate degree or certificate program but has not yet enrolled. (Acceptance may occur prior to the award of the qualifying degree.) Non-degree seeking and visiting students enrolled in graduate courses and who possess a qualifying degree are also considered graduate students.
- *Assistantship:* An award granted to a student in the form of compensation for the completion of specific duties related to or derived from the student's curriculum and academic program and/or professional interests. The duties must reflect some form of educational advancement with regard to the student's academic growth and professional development. The duties include research (thus a Research Assistantship), instruction (thus a Teaching Assistantship), and/or a range of activities that support the University's mission (Graduate Assistantship or Graduate Administrative Assistant). Assistantships are typically considered a graduate-level award.

- *Teaching Assistantship:* A Teaching Assistantship (TA or GTA) is an assignment to assist with instruction. The specific level of instructional support depends upon the assignment itself and may range from supporting instructors with essential tasks such as grading, preparing instructional and laboratory materials, monitoring examinations, leading discussion sections, occasional lecturing, and monitoring laboratories to the level of having complete responsibility for a course section and being the instructor of record. The time requirement is equivalent to half the time (50%) of a regular faculty. This is referred to as a full assistantship. The award period typically coincides with the Fall and Spring terms, generally mid-August to mid-May (typically, 20 University pay periods). For training purposes, the award may begin earlier.
- *Research Assistantship:* A Research Assistantship (RA or GRA) is an assignment to assist with research. The assignment may be to a particular faculty or research faculty, or it may be to a research project, grant, or contract. Funding typically originates with a sponsored program or other external agency, though some programs may designate an assistantship as a research assistantship in order to support the research objectives of a program or department. The time requirements are based on half-time of a regular employee workload, or twenty (20) hours per week. A regular record of time and effort is required.
- *Graduate Assistantship:* A Graduate Assistantship (GA), sometimes referred to as a Graduate Administrative Assistantship, is an assignment to assist with general activities of the University. These can include research, general instructional support, administrative duties, service, and community outreach. GAs can be found in the comptroller's office, admissions, financial aid, the Writing Center, the Offices of the President, many offices of vice-presidents, Information Technology, the Library, and many other of the campus services. The time requirements are based on half-time of a regular employee workload, or twenty (20) hours per week. A regular record of time and effort is required.
- *Resident Assistant:* A Resident Assistant (also RA) is not a graduate assistantship. Graduate students frequently hold these University contractual positions, but they do not qualify as assistantships. These positions require full-time work and may provide contractual tuition waivers. International students who accept a resident assistant position are, however, restricted to twenty (20) hours of work weekly.
- *Fellowship:* An award granted to an individual to support that individual's research, scholarship, creative work, and/or the advanced training needed to attain the skills necessary to succeed at the chosen endeavor. The award is not considered compensation for performing specific duties or tasks. A fellowship may be awarded to any person, and is not specifically linked to a level of study. Often the level is stipulated with the prefixes of pre-doctoral, post-doctoral, graduate, etc. The use of the award is typically unrestricted and can apply to tuition, living expenses, travel, supplies, etc. **Please note**, on occasion the term "Fellow" may be applied to an assistantship to indicate an advanced level or special category of assistantship, such as "Teaching Fellow." The designation of *fellowship* is applied to funding as described above.

- *Post-Doctoral Fellow:* As defined by the NSF and the NIH, “An individual who has received a doctoral degree (or equivalent) and is engaged in a temporary and defined period of mentored advanced training to enhance the professional skills and research independence needed to pursue his or her chosen career path” (NSF and NIH common definition; NSF/NIH Letter to Alyson Reed, Executive Director, National Postdoctoral Association, January 29, 2007). The Board of Regents of Morgan State University adopts this definition and directs that the definition be updated when the NSF and NIH make any adjustments.
- *Pre-Doctoral Fellowship:* A pre-doctoral fellowship is the equivalent of a post-doctoral fellowship with the exception of the fellowship being awarded prior to the completion of a doctoral degree. Typically, the fellowship supports the completion of the doctoral research and the final document (dissertation) while being engaged in appropriate training and professional development. Some Pre-Doctoral Fellowships provide specific advanced training in a laboratory, a center, or similar agency with the intent of providing an experience that will have significant impact on the dissertation research. While compensated through a variety of means and sources, the recipient typically is expected to retain a student status.
- *Scholarship, Tuition Scholarship, or Tuition Award:* An award that is strictly made for the payment of tuition. Awards that are provided by funds from Morgan State University or managed by the University can be used for tuition only and cannot result in a monetary refund to the student, should the award be in excess of charges. Externally funded awards may cover broader charges such as fees and books, but must be stipulated by the awarding agency.
- *Stipend:* Though widely used to refer to the compensation given for assistantships, the National Science Foundation has strictly defined a stipend as a financial award intended to provide support for living expenses while the recipient undertakes a training program, serves as a participant in a research study, or other similar activity. As it applies to educational institutions, a central test is the question of whether or not a regular employee could do the task. TA, RA, and GA appointments do not qualify as eligible for a “stipend,” though the term may frequently be applied to assistantship compensation.
- *Assistantship Supervisor:* The University employee to whom a graduate assistant reports. The Assistantship Supervisor monitors the activity of the graduate assistant, maintains and approves a time record (if required), reviews progress toward the assistantship goals and objectives, evaluates the achievement of outcomes, and serves as a coach or mentor as needed. The Assistantship Supervisor may be a Dean, a faculty member, a Unit Head, a Vice President, or even the President. In non-academic units, an office manager or other designated staff member may serve in this role.

## ● Policy Statement

Morgan State University seeks to recruit, develop, and retain the most qualified graduate students. These students embrace the University mission and values and seek advanced educational experiences that will foster growth and leadership in all fields. A significant experience of graduate education occurs in the course of participation in the activities of

instruction, research, creative production, administrative support, and ongoing service. A graduate assistantship provides the opportunity for this participation beyond the curricular requirements of the student's chosen program. Morgan will provide as many of these opportunities as is feasible to as many graduate students as possible. Similarly, fellowships provide financial support for similar objectives. This document provides the guidelines for assistantships and fellowships and is intended to ensure the excellence and enduring value of the experience.

## ● Designations and Levels

The phrases "Graduate Assistantship," "Graduate Assistant," and "Fellowship" encompass the broad category of financial support given to graduate students as compensation for completing assignments relevant to their advanced training and professional development. "Graduate Assistantship" is inclusive of research (RA), teaching (TA), and service (GA) assistantships and may be used interchangeably with Research Assistantship, Teaching Assistantship, and Graduate Administrative Assistantship. Fellowships refer to awards that have fewer stipulations and no specific work or time commitment requirements. There are several variations, and in some cases can be distinguished by the intention of the fellowship, such as research, teaching, service, training, etc.

- *Research Assistantships* have three levels of responsibility. For purposes of compensation and annual award periods, master's and doctoral awards are distinguished by compensation levels. Often, a doctoral RA is expected to be more skilled than the masters level, and advanced doctoral RAs may have more independent responsibility in a laboratory.
  - **Level I:** This is the beginning level and requires close monitoring of tasks, often including training with essential research skills and protocols. This level applies to both masters and beginning doctoral students.
  - **Level II:** This is the intermediate level, where the RA has competence with research activity and protocols and can complete duties independently. This level applies to both masters and doctoral students.
  - **Level III:** This level is reserved for doctoral students who have achieved candidacy as defined by each program. Doctoral candidates focus on their own research in addition to that of the research program in which they are engaged. The term "Research Fellow" may be used to distinguish this level.
- *Teaching Assistantships* have three distinct levels of responsibility:
  - **Level I:** Basic course support for an instructor, preparing materials, monitoring examinations, grading examinations and projects, providing technical assistance, and other instruction-related duties as needed by the instructor.
  - **Level II:** In addition to the work of Level I, this individual may lead discussions, lecture on occasion, serve as a lab instructor, engage in individual and group tutoring, and provide course-relevant advice.

- **Level III:** This level is reserved for doctoral students who have achieved candidacy as defined by each program. Advanced doctoral students with sufficient experience can be responsible for an entire section of a course and in some cases the entire course itself. A Level III TA serves as the instructor of record. The term “Teaching Fellow” may be used to distinguish this level.
- *Graduate Administrative Assistants* have three levels of responsibility. Often, the supervisors requesting a GAA (typically only referred to as GA) stipulate specific skills, such as accounting skills, computer skills, or general background experiences, such as work in client service or as an athletic trainer. Graduate Assistantships are awarded throughout campus and are engaged as assistants in all aspects of the University community.
  - **Level I:** This is the beginning level and requires close monitoring of tasks, often including training with the professional duties and support tasks required of the appointment. This level applies to both masters and beginning doctoral students.
  - **Level II:** This intermediate level is assigned when the GA has acquired sufficient experience to complete tasks as assigned without additional training or monitoring.
  - **Level III:** This level is reserved for doctoral students who have achieved candidacy as defined by each program. Advanced doctoral students with sufficient experience with the duties that have been assigned and work independently on assignments.
- *Fellowships:* Fellowships can be distinguished as Research, Service, Training, or Teaching Fellowships, named fellowships, or simply as “Fellowships.” The grantor may also have a specific name and service expectations associated with the award (such as a Ford Fellowship, Eisenhower Fellow, Fulbright Fellowship, etc.). Frequently the fellowship has some expectation of performance or service or have other characteristics that make the award a form of compensation rather than a stipend in the technical sense. Post-Doctoral Fellows may or may not receive “fellowships” as they are employees.
  - *Research Fellowship:* The award or grant is given to support the research of the recipient and/or the placement of the recipient with a specific mentor, in a specific research center, or to solve a research problem. University entities, departments, centers, schools, etc., that establish Fellowships must define the fellowship and its purpose carefully with appropriate scope and resources for support.
  - *Service Fellowship:* The award or grant is given to support the recipient during a period of supervised service, such as community outreach, during which the recipient acquires and improves skills necessary for effective service.

- *Training Fellowships:* The award or grant is given to support the training of the recipient and may focus on acquiring a specialized skill or experience and is thus focused specifically on the training experience.
- *Teaching fellowship:* The award or grant is given to support the recipient during a period of supervised instruction and training related to instructional effectiveness. Some fellowships combine the completion of a research project and the experience of teaching in fellowships that prepare the recipient for future appointment in the professoriate.
- *Named Fellowships:* The diversity of fellowships is reflected in the wide number of named fellowships. These include MacArthur Fellowships, Eisenhower Fellowships, Fulbright Fellowship, etc. The duration and amount of the awards varies significantly. The University may create fellowship awards to attract the best and most promising scholars and researchers as well as to strengthen the activity of centers.
- *External versus Internal Fellowships:* External fellowships can be managed at the University as a pass-through award, or the recipient may be given an appropriate zero-sum contract granting various access as needed to undertake the mission of the fellowship. Internal fellowships may be supported either with institutional general funds as well as institutional endowments and direct gifts to support the fellowship, or through externally secured grants. Fellowship recipients who are associated with the University will be provided the necessary access to complete their activity. An agreement between the granting agency or organization and Morgan State University must be completed in advance of the residency that stipulates the university's obligations, the grantors obligations, and the fellowship recipient's obligations.
- *Pre-Doctoral Fellowships versus Post-Doctoral Fellowships:* Pre-Doctoral fellowships are awarded to advanced doctoral students. Post-Doctoral Fellowships are awarded to recent recipients of doctoral degrees.
  - *Pre-Doctoral Fellowships:* As indicated in the definitions above, these awards compare to half-time (20 hours weekly) awards though the time obligation may only be intended to distinguish the continued expectation of the candidate to complete the doctoral project from the specific opportunity offered by the fellowship. Often the award is given to support the completion of that project, but it may involve a commitment to undertake professional development in teaching or service, or some special research skill or experience. The award and compensation are structured in a manner similar to the assistantship, though the amount may be significantly higher.
  - *Post-Doctoral Fellowships:* As indicated in the definitions above, this award typically supports advanced professional development for recently completed doctorates. Funding sources include internal funds, sponsored projects, and external agents and entities. There are three classes of Post-Doctoral Fellowships:



- *Post-Doctoral Fellow I:* This appointment is funded through institutional funds or through institutionally-managed sponsored programs. The recipient is classified as a short-term employee. Selection of the recipient is made through a competitive process with the choice of recipient being within the responsibility of the unit that is managing the fellowship.
- *Post-Doctoral Fellow II:* This appointment is selected and funded through an external agent such as a government program, a foundation, another university, a foreign government and is assigned to work in a specific laboratory, center, academic division, or on a specific project. The basis of the fellowship is an arrangement between the funding agency and the University. The recipient is a visiting scholar and provided access through a zero-cost contract. The University may act as a pass-through for the fellow's funding, with appropriate administrative charges taken.
- *Post-Doctoral Fellow III:* Similar to Post-Doctoral Fellowship II. The difference is that the fellowship recipient has chosen to conduct the fellowship activity at Morgan while funded by an external agency. The choice of working at Morgan is that of the individual and not as a result of an agreement between Morgan and the external agency. Typically, the University does not manage funding.
- *Status:* Post-Doctoral fellows have the status of faculty or non-faculty researcher, but do not participate in faculty governance, though service contributions (such as committee participation) may be included in the fellowship agreement.
- *Duration:* Post-Doctoral Fellows I and II are limited to 5 years in the status of Post-Doctoral Fellow in any combination of appointments. The Post-Doctoral Fellow III duration is governed by the funding agency.
- *Enrollment Expectations:* Recipients of graduate assistantships and graduate fellowships are required to maintain full academic loads of nine (9) credit hours. Exceptions are allowed with approval of the program, the program's governing Dean, and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. Recipients of half-time partial awards must enroll in six (6) hours or more. Doctoral and masters guidance courses count as full-time enrollment.
  - *Exceptions:* Exceptions include requirements for ADA accommodations, students who have fewer than 9 credit hours remaining in their curriculum for completion of the degree (typically the last term of the program), short-term medical conditions.

- *Leave of Absence:* Recipients of graduate assistantships and graduate fellowships who take a leave of absence must take a leave from the assistantship or fellowship for the duration of the leave. Reinstatement from a leave of absence that is one semester or longer requires program approval. The program must reserve the funds for the reinstated position.
  - *Course Withdrawal or Drop:* The permanent record will show all courses for which the student has registered except those audited and those from which the student has withdrawn on or before the “Drop Course without W” deadline. Students with graduate assistantships are expected to attend all classes. If this is not possible, it is the responsibility of the student to drop the course from their own schedule. Otherwise, a grade of “F” is received for the course. Dropping courses may also impact repayment of some forms of financial aid and impact the student's ability to continue their assistantship. Students should consult with their advisor/major professor before dropping courses.
  - *Tuition Charge Adjustments Resulting from Leaves of Absence, Withdrawals, and Drops:* If any of the actions listed results in the number of enrolled hours falling below 9 credits, then the student is responsible for the remaining tuition balance.
- *Resident Assistant* is not qualified as an assistantship. This is a contractual employment situation with the University managed by University Housing.
- **Graduate Assistantship Workload, Time Limitations, and Employment Restrictions**
  - *Graduate Assistantship Workload.* The combination of academic program requirements and a maximum workload of twenty (20) hours per week of a graduate assistantship is considered a full-time obligation at Morgan State University (the “University”). Twenty (20) hours per week represents the equivalent of fifty percent (50%) of a regular employment workload. Any combination of compensated University graduate awards (assistantships and fellowships) cannot exceed the twenty (20) hour threshold during terms. The University recognizes that some awards are grants-in-aid that do not restrict additional awards or employment.
    - *Partial Awards:* Graduate Assistant awards can be half-time (10 hours per week) or three-quarter (15 hours per week). Partial awards can be combined, but combined, they may not exceed the time equivalent of a full-time award of 20 hours per week.
  - *Additional Campus Employment.* Graduate students who receive full-time (20 hour) graduate assistantships or equivalent awards are allowed additional University or other state agency employment upon receiving prior administrative approval. This administrative approval must comply with any applicable University policies and procedures, including any Human Resource employee regulations and restrictions, International student work restrictions, and School of Graduate Studies regulations. The additional work cannot create a workload that would qualify the student as a regular employee as defined by Human Resources and the IRS.

- *Partial Awards and Work Restrictions:* Review and approval is required for recipients of partial awards who are also seeking additional on-campus work or state agency employment. Workload restrictions must comply with the same standards applied to recipients of full awards.
- *Additional Non-University and Non-State Agency Employment.* Other employment outside the University or other state agencies is prohibited when that employment interferes with the student's graduate assistantship work schedule.
- *Additional Work During Breaks.* During term breaks between the end of a semester and the beginning of the next, during which there are no academic program requirements, students holding graduate assistantships may work additional hours at the University. The additional work cannot create a workload that would qualify the student as a regular employee.
- *Oversight and Enforcement.* The Division of Academic Affairs, the School of Graduate Studies, and the Graduate Program Directors shall establish procedures for monitoring student workload as identified in this section, creating and publishing required processes and procedures, and defining sanctions, including termination of the graduate assistantship or fellowship when these guidelines are violated.

#### ● **Award Procedure**

The award procedure must be uniform and consistent throughout the University. All units with a budgeted award may select candidates and discuss the award. When a selection is made or when a unit otherwise chooses to offer an assistantship to an eligible graduate student (or prospective student), the School of Graduate Studies prepares an award offer letter, sends it to the student, and the student returns the document, either accepting or rejecting the offer. If accepted, the School of Graduate Studies then prepares and submits the required Payroll forms. When the process is completed a graduate assistant contract is generated and the student must sign this contract. The School of Graduate Studies maintains records of all awards for purposes of internal and external reporting.

- *Eligibility:* Graduate students and prospective graduate students must meet the minimum qualifications for regular admission to be eligible for any form of assistantship or fellowship.
  - These qualifications must be established by the Graduate Council and published accordingly.
  - Units may impose more stringent qualifications for awards made within the given unit.
  - The School of Graduate Studies must review the eligibility of the awardees prior to preparing and sending the award offer letter.
  - Eligibility must be determined at the beginning of each term and continuation of an award requires continued eligibility.

- *Award Letter:* The award letter conveys the offer of the assistantship to the graduate student (or prospective graduate student). The following elements must be included:
  - Duration, indicating start and end dates.
  - Compensation, indicating amount and method of payment.
  - Direct Supervisor's name, title, and location.
  - Time and reporting requirements.
  - Description of duties, expectations, and outcomes.
  - Expectations concerning continuation and renewal.
- *Contract:* The award of a graduate assistantship requires a contract specific to graduate assistantships and fellowships, developed with the leadership of Academic Affairs and approved by the University General Counsel. The contract is the culmination of an award process that incorporates all the appropriate job and position coding, budget assignment, departmental approvals (including sponsored programs), timesheet mechanisms, and related notifications.
- *Fellowship Awards:* The notice of award and the contract or letter of agreement for all University managed fellowships will be specified in the terms of the fellowship award. To the extent possible, the award letter and the contract shall duplicate those of the assistantship award letter and contract. To the extent possible, the award must accompany a statement indicating the following:
  - Duration, indicating start and end dates.
  - Compensation or stipend, indicating amount and method of payment.
  - Direct Supervisor or responsible director, dean, or unit head's name, title, location.
  - Time and reporting requirements (if any).
  - Description of duties, expectations, and outcomes.

#### ● **Assistantship Compensation Amounts and Methods**

Minimum compensation for assistantships and fellowships is set by the Provost in consultation with the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and in conjunction with the University's annual budget development. All awards must conform to these minimums with proration on a per-pay period or per hour basis. The Provost will announce these award levels in the Fall term for the following fiscal year.

- *Holidays and Term Breaks:* Graduate assistants observe all the holidays as observed by regular employees with time allotted based on the weekly time requirements of the award. Teaching assistants observe term breaks (i.e. Spring

Break, Thanksgiving, Christmas Holiday), and graduate assistants observe the same breaks as observed by the offices and laboratories in which they work.

- *Adjustments to Award Amounts:* Several circumstances warrant higher level of compensation:
  - Funding agencies frequently establish allowed amounts and in some cases require a specific level of compensation. These amounts must meet or exceed the established University minimums. Offers based on these awards do not require additional approval, and they must be justified in the grant proposal and be reflected in the budget. The School of Graduate Studies must be notified of the exception.
  - Special awards offered in schools and colleges that seek higher award levels require the use of the departmental or unit budget, not that of the institutional appropriation managed by the School of Graduate Studies.
  - Award levels may be adjusted for competitive reasons with approval of the Provost. These adjustments must also be funded separately from the existing institutional appropriation managed by the School of Graduate Studies.
- *Payments:* All payments for assistantships are made through the payroll system. The manner of payment for Post-Doctoral Fellowships is contingent upon the nature of the appointment. Stipend payments shall be made to the student account for student, and through the comptroller office for non-student stipend recipients (i.e., Post-doctoral stipends not managed by payroll). Stipends must qualify as described in the definitions in Item 2, above.
  - *Stipend Payments:* Stipends for graduate students should be placed on the student account for distribution. These stipend payments must be coded as stipends and distinguished from tuition awards. They cannot be considered part of a financial aid award and must conform to IRS stipulations concerning fellowships and stipends. The payment may also be processed through the payroll system.
  - *Assistantship and Fellowship (non-stipend) Payments:* All compensation for assistantships shall be paid through the payroll system with appropriate exemption of FICA, Medicare, and unemployment insurance. Awards will be paid on the by-weekly pay periods with auto pay. Those paid on an hourly basis will complete timesheets in the Payroll system.
  - *Post-Doctoral Payments:* Post-doctoral fellows are qualified as employees and are not eligible for the student-based exemptions identified in Sections 7.3.1 and 7.3.2 (above).
  - *Payments as Awards, not Wages:* Both stipend and assistantship payments made to graduate students are financial awards made in the context of support for graduate study. They are not wages, though many are defined by activities based on hour and time equivalents. As such, they are not eligible for unemployment when the terms are complete or

the award is otherwise terminated. These may be counted as income as determined by the IRS, but they are not hour-based wages in the strictest sense.

- *Hour-Based Assistantships.* Some units may organize the award on the basis of recorded time on task. In some cases, the ability to allow an assistant to work more than 20 hours per week during a term break (Spring break, Holiday break, Summer) is warranted. In these cases, using the hourly web-based timesheet is appropriate.
- *Benefits:* Graduate Assistants with full-time appointments are eligible for the University's student health benefits at no cost to the student. The University pays the costs for the student.

## ● Tuition and Tuition Rates

A tuition award must accompany an assistantship. Tuition rates are set by the Board of Regents. Non-resident recipients of graduate assistantships (partial, or less than 20 hours, and full, twenty hours) are charged the Resident tuition rate. Non-resident recipients of scholarships that cover 6 or more reported credit hours per term, where the funds either originate from institutional funds or are otherwise managed through institutional accounts by Morgan State University, are charged the Resident tuition rate. Recipients of fellowships not managed by the University are not eligible for tuition rate adjustment, except for special rates approved by the Morgan State University Board of Regents.

- *Full Awards:* Awards of fifty percent of full time employee equivalent, that is 20 hours, are offered 9 credit hours per term. Summer tuition is not included.
- *Partial Awards:* Awards representing half (10 hour) or two-third (15 hour) time assistantships are offered 6 credit hours tuition award per term. (Should a student receive a scholarship for tuition that is not associated with the assistantship, that partial assistantship does not limit the tuition award to a partial award.)
- *Continuing Residency Tuition:* Doctoral and Masters students who have completed coursework maintain their student status by enrolling in one of the residency courses with the equivalent charge of three credit hours per term.
- *Duration of Resident Rate for Award Recipients:* The application of the resident tuition rate for non-resident assistantship or scholarship recipients remains in effect for the duration of the award. The billing rate will be restored at the conclusion of the award period depending on the residency status at the time of the conclusion of the award. If the award ends during a term, the billing rate status will take effect at the beginning of the next full term.
- *Graduate Tuition Award Applicability:* Tuition awards are intended for graduate coursework in the student's program curriculum. Coursework that is not part of the program curriculum, undergraduate coursework, and courses repeated to improve grades are not supported by scholarship awards.

- *Scholarships for Certificate:* Students enrolled in degree granting programs may be eligible for tuition support when completing a graduate or post-master's certificate. Enrollment in a certificate program without enrollment in a degree-seeking program is not eligible for support.
- *Refundability:* Morgan State University tuition awards cover tuition only and cannot be refunded to the student. Students cannot accept multiple awards and receive refunds for the excess award amount or apply the excess award to non-tuition purposes.

## ● **Budget Expectations and Authorization**

All assistantships require consistent budget planning. Units developing assistantships that are not supported by the institutional and grant-based financial awards managed by the School of Graduate Studies must prepare a budget for both the assistantship compensation and the appropriate tuition scholarship.

- *Unit Budgets:* Unit heads must allocate the funding for both the compensation and the tuition into the appropriate budget lines. The School of Graduate Studies will prepare the compensation as indicated in **Section 7: Assistantship Compensation Amounts and Methods** (above) and post the tuition award to the student's account.
- *Externally Funded Assistantships:* Many federal awards prohibit the direct payment of tuition as a budget item. In these cases, funds from the indirect cost, grant-purchased time, and other cost offsets shall be applied to the tuition budget to the extent possible. The Principle Investigator (PI) or equivalent shall work with the department chair and the dean to identify funding sources for tuition.
- *Authorization:* Budget authorization for tuition and assistantship compensation shall follow the established signature approval processes as directed by the Office of the Internal Auditor.

## ● **Reporting**

Information concerning assistantships and tuition awards is important data for internal and external reports. It is also critical to accreditation, both for the University and for individual professional accreditation. This data must be easily accessed and easily reported.

- *Job and Position Coding:* The Department of Human Resources and Department of Information Technology shall be responsible for the uniform application of job descriptors that generate appropriate coding for all necessary internal and external reports. These include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - IPEDS: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System managed by the National Center for Education Statistics.
  - MHEC: Maryland Higher Education Commission
  - NSF GSS Survey. The Graduate Student Support Survey (GSS) and annual report concerning funding of graduate students in STEM areas

and used by NSF and NIH, among other agencies. Key data regarding Post-Doctoral Fellows and doctorally qualified non-faculty researchers (NFRs) contributes to the Carnegie Classification of Morgan's doctoral research ranking.

- HERD: Higher Education Research and Development report is submitted annually to the NSF.
- SGAP: Space usage report supports Morgan's capital requests by analyzing the eligibility for space.
- MSCHE: Middle State Commission on Higher Education is the regional accrediting body for Morgan State University.
- Professional Accreditation Agencies and Program Specialization Accrediting Organizations. These include ABET, AACSB, for example.

### ● **Student Responsibilities**

Graduate assistantships place graduate students in positions of responsibility and authority comparable to that of a regular employee in similar roles. Graduate assistants must respect FIRPA regulations, Title IX, University Substance Abuse policies, pertinent confidentiality requirements, Responsible Conduct of Research requirements, and Intellectual Property policies. In addition, graduate assistants are expected to maintain professional conduct as specified by the professional association most closely aligned with their academic program. Students must comply with the graduate catalog regulations, program handbooks, and University policies governing staff and students, as applicable. Other duties include the following:

- *Time Commitment:* Timely completion of work and training assignments.
- *Other Employment:* See sections 5.2 and 5.3 regarding other employment restrictions.
- *Record Keeping:* Recording time and/or time on task as required by the specifics of the award letter and contract. This may be in the form of a timesheet or a time-and-effort report. Many external sponsors have time-and-effort reporting requirements and provide directions for University compliance. The University and the Principle Investigator are required to maintain these reporting systems.
- *Availability and Work Interruption:* Informing supervisors and the appropriate office of the School of Graduate Studies of any anticipated schedule change or other interruption in work.
- *Schedule Conflicts:* Maintain the required course load as specified in the award letter, contract, and School of Graduate Studies regulations. Inform supervisor(s) and the School of Graduate Studies of any course schedule conflict with work schedule.
- *Workplace Etiquette:* Appropriate dress, communication etiquette, and interpersonal behavior are expected. For teaching assistants, faculty often



establish rules for the conduct of class. Teaching assistants must respect these rules and reinforce them as required. Laboratories and offices have established routines that must be respected and followed.

- *Safety and Security:* Like any workplace, the location of an assignment must be safe and secure. Behaviors that threaten the safety or security of individuals in the workplace must be reported to the appropriate authority, typically the unit head, chairperson, or dean.
- *University Policies:* The graduate assistant must conform to all student conduct policies as well as employee conduct policies. Teaching Assistants become required reporters of Title IX violations.

- **Supervisor, University, School of Graduate Studies Responsibilities regarding Graduate Recipients of Assistantships or Fellowships**

The supervisor of a graduate assistant is the individual who monitors the work and training activity of the graduate assistant. The supervisor signs the required timesheet and affirms that the progress toward the stated goals and outcomes of the assistantship has been satisfactory and according to plan. The supervisor acts as the agent of the University in managing the assistantship. However, the University must also provide necessary safeguards against capricious and inappropriate activity of the supervisor, other University employees, students, and external agents. The School of Graduate Studies is the primary agent for the University in regard to matters related to graduate assistantships.

- *The Supervisor must:*
  - Establish outcomes and expectations of the assistantship and monitor the progress of the graduate assistant in pursuit of these outcomes.
  - Maintain a record of time and reportable outcomes.
  - If utilized, sign the bi-weekly timesheet/time-and-effort record as established in the assistantship assignment.
  - Provide regular and engaged supervision.
  - Report any unresolved issues to the appropriate next level of administration.
  - Record all irregular activity and report any violation of University policy as required by those policies (for example, sexual harassment, substance abuse, code of conduct, etc.).
- *The University must:*
  - Provide the funding for both the compensation and tuition award as specified in the contractual arrangement.
  - Process the compensation and tuition awards in a timely manner.

- Ensure that the workplace remains an environment conducive to work and learning.
  - Provide the equipment and resources to the Supervisor and the graduate assistant that are necessary for the satisfactory achievement of the goals and outcomes of the assistantship.
  - Safeguard the Supervisor and the graduate assistant to the extent possible and as required by University policy against recognizable violations of campus rules, regulations, and processes.
  - Ensure due process in addressing any issues, complaints, grievances, or appeals.
- *The School of Graduate Studies (SGS) must:*
- Serve as the central processor of graduate assistantships. The SGS will undertake the following:
    - Confirm eligibility of the awardee.
    - Confirm the availability of the supporting funds
    - Prepare award letters based on the provided specific information regarding budget source, duration, supervisory assignment, and other required information.
    - Send the award letter to the awardee for acceptance and approval, then maintain record of the acceptance.
    - Process award letters to inform all appropriate offices.
    - Submit awardees' contracts into the payroll system.
    - Collect and maintain records of time-and-effort reports, outcomes, and deliverables as required according to the GA assignment.
      - Input time in the WebSIS time reporting system, if required by the appointment.
    - Incorporate these records, as needed, into internal and external reports.
  - Be the central agent providing the standard of care outlined in the University obligations Section 12.2.
  - Regularly review and update the procedures and make recommendations for policy or procedure revisions to the appropriate group (Graduate Council, Dean's Council, Provost, etc.).

- Develop and deploy training and professional development opportunities for Graduate Assistants, Fellowship recipients, and Post-Doctoral Fellows.
- Regularly assess the effectiveness of assistantship programs.
- **Duration, Continuation, Termination, Grievance, and Appeal regarding Graduate Recipients of Assistantships or Fellowships**

While serving as a graduate assistant, the student enjoys many benefits of employment at the University. However, the student does remain a student and certain employee benefits, such as sick leave, retirement, employee health insurance, unemployment benefits, among others, are not available to the student. The student does not have access to the employee grievance process. Instead, the following procedures govern Continuation, Duration, Termination, Grievance, and Appeal.

- *Duration:* The duration of an institutionally funded assistantship or a fellowship is limited to one year terms for those that begin in the Fall, and for one semester, or half-year terms, for those that begin in the Spring. The award offer must specify whether the award is based on the term or upon the fiscal year. Multi-year special awards, e.g., named awards and some externally sponsored awards, must be administratively renewed each July 1. Teaching assistantships conform to the term schedules with start and end dates matching those of the faculty. Some adjustments to the start dates are made for training sessions that occur prior to the term start date.
- *Appointment length:* The length of the appointment must always be specified by start and end dates. Typically, assistantships cover twenty (20) pay periods for those that begin with the fall term and end with the conclusion of the spring term. Full-year appointments begin in September and conclude at the end of August the next year. Appointments that begin later in a term must still conclude at the end of the spring term or end of August. Federally funded awards may follow the cycle of the federal fiscal year.
- *Continuation:* Though the duration of each award is based on annual cycles, the continuation of an award offer for a student is contingent upon the source and administration of the award. Institutionally funded awards, with the exception of any named award that specifically addresses duration, can only provide support for the duration as described in Section 13.1. However, the practice shall be to continue an award on the condition that the recipient remains in good standing and meets any performance expectations as described in the award offer or award program. The University and the recipient must recognize the contingency of institutional funding sources. Special, named awards and externally sponsored awards must address continuation in the announcement of the award, founding documents of the award, or the rules and regulations of the sponsoring agency or organization. The University cannot guarantee the renewal or continuation of awards.
- *Termination:* Award recipients must remain in good academic standing and comply with the university codes of conduct. In addition, any stipulations in the award letter or the award description must also be met by the award recipient.

Termination of an award must be based upon violations of student, employee, and/or professional codes of conduct. Termination may also occur for failure to complete assignments.

■ *Process for Termination:* Termination can result from any of the following:

- *Supervisor's Recommendation.* A supervisor may recommend termination to the School of Graduate Studies based on unsatisfactory performance. The recommendation must follow the academic chain to the School/College Dean and then to the School of Graduate Studies. Alternatively, for appointments outside the schools and college, the recommendation must pass to the appropriate Unit head (the budget center that funds the award) and then to the School of Graduate Studies.
- *Violations of Code of Conduct.* The outcome of reviews that arise from a violation of one of the various codes of conduct shall be reported to the School of Graduate Studies as recommendations for termination or other sanction.
  - *Student Judicial System:* The student judicial system may produce a finding against a graduate student. This finding must be reported to the School of Graduate Studies as well as the student's program. This report must be reviewed by a designee of the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies with recommendation for sanctions, should they be warranted.
  - *Violations of University Codes and Policies:* The University has several codes governing behavior, and any violation of these leading to a sanction must also be reviewed by a designee of the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies with recommendation for sanctions, should they be warranted.
- *Academic Standing.* Good academic standing is necessary for continuation, and loss of academic standing is thus grounds for termination. A student whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 becomes ineligible for assistantship or tuition funding automatically. The School of Graduate Studies monitors the GPA and terminates the award when the registrar's record shows a GPA below 3.0. Violation of codes of conduct can result in a change in academic standing. Typically, standing is determined at the conclusion of each semester. Recovery of good standing does restore the student as eligible for funding, but it does not restore lost funding.
- *Tuition Award:* A tuition award posted to a student's account while a student is in good standing shall not be revoked for that term, even if termination occurs during the term. The termination will result in loss of eligibility for the following term. Restoration of

eligibility is effective at the beginning of the first term following return to good standing. The award is not automatically reinstated.

- *Award Compensation:* The compensation portion of an award may be revoked at the time a termination decision is made. In the case of termination for cause other than academic standing, the termination will result in loss of eligibility for following terms.
- *Duration of Loss of Eligibility.* The School of Graduate Studies will determine the severity of the infraction resulting in termination and report the term of ineligibility to the student.
- *Due Process:* The termination of an award shall be timely and follow appropriate cautions to the student. A hearing is expected in terminations arising from Sections 13.4.1.1 and 13.4.1.2. The process must include:
  - *Notice of Violation.* This may be a series of verbal and written warnings or a memorandum of caution.
  - *Notice of Recommendation.* The recommendation to terminate must be sent to the appropriate next level administrator with a copy to the student and to the School of Graduate Studies Director of Graduate Funding.
  - *Hearing.* The administrator must conduct a hearing and make a recommendation to the School of Graduate Studies with the School/College Dean or Unit Head providing review and recommendation.
    - *Other Adjudication:* Violations that result in investigation, hearings, and adjudication involving established University processes (sexual harassment, etc.), professional organization (professional ethics, etc.), external agencies (research misconduct, etc.) shall be governed by the regulations of those bodies.
  - *Termination for Low Academic Performance:* The School of Graduate Studies shall automatically terminate students who do not remain in good standing at the end any term (Fall, Spring, Summer, Minimester, etc.).
    - *Registrar's Record:* This action is based on the registrar's record of grades and cumulative GPA.
    - *Grading Error:* If standing is a result of a grading error, the action shall be reversed and the award restored if the reversal occurs in a timely manner.
    - *Scope and Exceptions:* Assistantships and fellowships are awarded on the basis of merit. The minimum criteria for

determination of merit is maintaining the status of good academic standing. At Morgan State University, good academic standing for graduate students requires a cumulative grade point average of 3.0. This criterion establishes eligibility for all merit-based funding administered by the University. External funding sources must comply with this minimum standard. Furthermore, there are no exceptions to this rule. The loss of funding support for students no longer in good academic standing is automatic and cannot be waived or otherwise excepted.

- *Grievance:* A graduate assistant or a graduate fellowship recipient may file a grievance regarding any aspect of the assistantship or fellowship through the grievance and appeal process established by the School of Graduate Studies. The grievance must pass through the administrative hierarchy of the assistantship or fellowship. If unresolved, it must be brought to the School of Graduate Studies. Students, faculty, and staff may file a grievance against a graduate student serving in an assistantship or receiving a fellowship to the extent that the assistantship or fellowship is entailed in the act being grieved. All other grievances must be processed according to the appropriate, governing policy.
  - *Notice of Grievance.* The grievance must be submitted in writing. The grievance must be submitted to the immediate supervisor, who then must report the grievance through the appropriate hierarchy. The supervisor must address the grievance and recommend a resolution to the student and his or her supervisor.
  - *Notice of Recommendation.* The recommendation for resolution of the grievance must be sent to the appropriate next level administrator with a copy to the student and to the School of Graduate Studies Director of Graduate Funding.
  - *Hearing.* The School of Graduate Studies will conduct a hearing to review the grievance and the concurring and non-concurring recommendations. The hearing will include a finding of facts and also consider requests for remedies.
    - *Outcome:* The Dean of the School of Graduate shall designate an officer of the School of Graduate Studies to conduct an initial review. The review should consider administrative resolution, and should that not be acceptable, then recommend a formal adjudication following the procedures established in the School of Graduate Studies Handbook of Procedures and Regulations published in the Catalog.
    - *Other Adjudication:* Violations that result in investigation, hearings, and adjudication arising from established University processes (sexual harassment, etc.), professional organization (professional ethics, etc.),

external agencies (research misconduct, etc.) shall be governed by the regulations of those bodies.

- *Office of the Provost:* The Provost represents the final level of appeal. The Provost may undertake administrative review, conduct a hearing, or establish a hearing panel.
- *Appeal:* All students have the right to appeal sanctions imposed upon them by the University. Appeals for assistantship-related sanctions must be uniform for all recipients if assistantships.
- *Notice of Appeal.* The appeal must be submitted in writing within 10 days of the action being appealed.
  - *Process:* Appeals must begin with the supervisor and follow the administrative chain from that point: Supervisor; School Administrators (including Dean) or Unit Head; School of Graduate Studies. The appeal must identify the jurisdiction of the appeal. The Schools and College have “unit” based appeals processes that may be related to grades and disciplinary actions. These must be differentiated from the appeal of action arising from a sanction applied to the assistantship or fellowship.
- *Notice of Recommendation.* The recommendation to accept or deny the appeal must be prepared in writing by each level of review. The complete set of recommendations must be given to the student.
- *Hearing.* The administrator must conduct a hearing and make a recommendation to the School of Graduate Studies with the School/College Dean or Unit Head providing review and recommendation.
  - *Appeals of Other Adjudication:* Violations that result in investigation, hearings, and adjudication arising from established University processes (sexual harassment, etc.), professional organization (professional ethics, etc.), external agencies (research misconduct, etc.) shall be governed by the regulations of those bodies. Appeals are similarly governed.
- *Limitation:* The processes described above are intended to separate the graduate assistants and recipients of graduate fellowships from Human Resource regular and contractual employee processes. Graduate Assistants and Fellows who appeal or file grievances through the Human Resource processes must be referred to the procedures established herein to the extent that the appeal or grievance relates to the assistantship role or fellowship.
- ***Post-Doctoral Fellowship Grievance and Appeal Processes:*** Post-Doctoral Fellows are technically employees of the University. Consequently, Sections 5 through 13 do not

apply to Post-Doctoral Fellowships. Instead, the appropriate employment manual (identified by the award letter) provides the governing regulations. Exceptions must be articulated in the details of the fellowship and may vary from agency to agency. Without exceptions identified on the original appointment and the fellowship founding documents, the governing procedures are determined by employment regulations.

## Student Responsibilities & Conduct

- Expectations around academic integrity, collegiality, professional behavior, and active participation in program seminars and events.
  - Students are expected to maintain their **research integrity** as specified in the Research ethics section.
  - **Professional behavior:** Graduate students are expected to demonstrate professionalism in all academic and community settings. This includes treating peers, faculty, staff, and community partners with respect, fostering a spirit of collegiality in collaboration and discourse, and promoting inclusivity by valuing diverse perspectives and ensuring equitable participation in classrooms, research, and professional environments.
  - **Community responsibilities:** As representatives of Morgan State University and their academic program, graduate students are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity and professionalism in all external engagements. This includes conduct at conferences, workshops, and professional meetings; authorship and collaboration in publications and research dissemination; and participation in community and institutional partnerships. Students should demonstrate respect for the University's values, contribute positively to the reputation of the program, and act in ways that reflect academic excellence, ethical responsibility, and mutual respect in all professional settings.
  - **Program engagement:** Graduate students are expected to participate actively in program seminars, workshops, and events, as these provide opportunities for intellectual growth, professional development, and community building. Attendance and engagement in these activities allow students to learn from peers and faculty, share their own work, and stay current with developments in the field. Participation in the annual graduate student retreat is also encouraged, as it fosters collaboration, networking, and a sense of shared purpose within the program.
  - **Civility and harassment policies:**

### Title IX

#### Commitment To A Safe And Supportive Community

Morgan State University is committed to maintaining an academic and working environment where all individuals feel safe and are free to develop intellectually, professionally, personally, and socially. Such an environment must be free from all forms of Prohibited Conduct and Sexual Harassment ("sexual misconduct) and Retaliation. Sexual misconduct includes



incidents of sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, gender harassment, sexual coercion, sexual exploitation, and sexual intimidation.

The University encourages the reporting of allegations of sexual misconduct and will take steps to respond in a prompt, thorough, fair, and impartial manner.

Please see the University's Sexual Harassment and Prohibited Conduct Policy for definitions of terms and additional information. The Policy is available on the University's Title IX page.

Students, faculty, and staff who violate this Policy may face disciplinary action up to and including expulsion or termination from the University.

#### University Definition Of Consent

Consent is knowing, voluntary and unambiguous agreement, affirmatively expressed in mutually understandable words or action, to engage in a specific sexual activity. Consent must be obtained, voluntary, affirmative, and ongoing. Consent cannot be inferred by:

- Silence, lack of resistance, or absence of a verbal "No" or "Stop"
- The existence of a current or prior dating or sexual relationship between the individuals

Consent to one form of sexual activity or with one person does not automatically imply consent to other forms of sexual activity or with another person. Consent cannot be obtained from someone who is incapacitated.

#### Obtaining Help And Support

Your health and safety are of primary importance. If you experience sexual misconduct:

- Find a Safe Place
  - In an emergency, call (443) 885-3103 or 911
  - Don't wash your body, change your clothes, use the restroom, or brush your teeth
- Seek Medical Attention
  - [University Health Center](#) can perform an exam and provide treatment
  - Mercy Medical Center in Baltimore City can perform a forensic medical exam.
  - The University can arrange transportation for those wanting a forensic medical exam.
- Obtain Confidential Support
  - Confidential resources on campus include the University's Counseling Center and Chapel.
  - Confidential resources in the community include TurnAround, Inc; House of Ruth; and MCASA.
  - A [complete list of confidential resources](#) can be found on the Title IX website

#### Reporting Options

You have the right to report sexual misconduct to law enforcement. In case of an emergency, or if you wish to file a report with police and pursue criminal charges, contact:

Morgan State University Police Department

Emergency: (443) 885-3103

Non-Emergency: (443) 885-3100

Baltimore City Police Department

Emergency: 911

Non-Emergency: (410) 396-2444

You may also file a complaint of sexual misconduct with the University's Title IX Coordinator.  
[titleixcoordinator@morgan.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@morgan.edu)  
 (443) 885-3580

The complaint form can be accessed at the University's Title IX page and completed online. You may request that your report remains confidential or that the University not take formal action. The University will take this request into consideration with its obligation to provide a safe, non-discriminatory environment. These requests may limit the University's ability to investigate and/or pursue disciplinary action against the person accused of sexual misconduct.

**Supportive Measures**

Even without making a formal report, the University may implement appropriate and reasonable supportive measures to enhance safety. Supportive measures include:

- No Contact Orders
- Access to Counseling
- Work, Academic, and/or Housing Accommodations

Please refer to the Policy for more information on supportive measures.

#### Responding to Disclosures

Even though you may not be a mandatory reporter per University policy, your response to a disclosure from a student or colleague should create a safe environment that encompasses Morgan State University Core Values. The following guides will help you accomplish this.

- [Prohibited Conduct Process](#)
- [Responding to Disclosures](#)
- [Sexual Harassment Flow Chart](#)

See <https://www.morgan.edu/titleix>

### **Nondiscrimination Policy**

Approved Board of Regents November 3, 2014 and is effective on that date. Morgan State University Nondiscrimination Policy It is the policy of Morgan State University that all employees and students should be able to enjoy and work in an educational environment free from discrimination. Discrimination against any person or group of persons on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, genetic information, gender identity, or any other applicable protected basis under applicable law is prohibited by this Nondiscrimination Policy (Policy). Any employee, student, student organization, or person privileged to work or study at Morgan State University who violates this Policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including permanent exclusion from the University.

Discrimination includes conduct (oral, written, graphic, or physical) directed against any person or group of persons because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, genetic information, gender identity, or any other applicable protected basis under applicable law and that has the purpose or reasonably foreseeable effect of creating an offensive, demeaning, intimidating, or hostile environment for that person or group of persons. Incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and other acts of sexual misconduct constitute discrimination based upon sex in violation of Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other applicable laws.

Incidents of this nature should be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinator located in the Office of Diversity and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), at Tyler Hall, Room 503. The Title IX Coordinator can be contacted by phone at (443) 885-3559 or by email at [titleixcoordinator@morgan.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@morgan.edu).

The scholarly, educational, or artistic content of any written, oral, or other presentation or inquiry shall not be limited by this Policy. It is the intent of this paragraph that academic freedom be assured for all members of the academic community. Accordingly, this provision shall be liberally construed but shall not be used as a pre-textual basis for violation of this Policy. Persons who feel they are victims of discrimination or who observe incidents of discrimination should immediately make a detailed written record of incidents, dates, and times at which they occurred, and of the names of perpetrators and witnesses, if known. The incident should be reported to the Office of Diversity and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). The EEO Officer will, after a prompt investigation, in accordance with accepted due process procedures, take measures appropriate to the nature of the incident.

These measures will be designed to accomplish the following: 1. Determine whether discrimination has occurred; 2. Prevent further acts of discrimination; 3. Restore to victim any losses suffered as a result of the discriminatory conduct; 4. Remove any material that violates this policy and/or repair any resulting damages; and 5. Prevent acts of retaliation against persons bringing the complaint.

If it is determined that discrimination or retaliation has occurred, sanctions will be devised in accordance with the seriousness of the behavior. Sanctions may range from admonishment to, in extreme cases, dismissal.

Any member of the University community who attempts to interfere, restrain, coerce, discriminate against, or harass any individual for filing a discrimination complaint or participating in the investigation of a discrimination complaint will be subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to: for employees – termination, suspension, or formal reprimand; and for students – suspension or expulsion.

The President shall establish rules and procedures that govern the investigation and adjudication of complaints filed under this Policy. \*This Policy was reviewed and updated on April 1, 2021 to revise references to the University office that should be notified of incidents and the office's contact information.

See

<https://www.morgan.edu/Documents/ADMINISTRATION/OFFICES/ora/Diversity%20and%20EEO/AttachmentA.%20Morgan%20State%20University%20Nondiscrimination%20Policy.pdf>

### **Sexual Harassment Statement**

MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY SEXUAL HARASSMENT PROCEDURES UNDER THE UNIVERSITY'S SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND PROHIBITED CONDUCT POLICY –  
RESPONDENT IS AN EMPLOYEE I. Introduction Morgan State University (the "University") has established a Sexual Harassment and Prohibited Conduct Policy (the "Policy") that articulates the expectations for maintaining an academic and working environment that is safe and free from all forms of Sexual Harassment, Prohibited Conduct, and Retaliation. This document sets forth procedures (the "Procedures") for responding to, investigating, and resolving reports of Sexual Harassment (as defined below) where an Employee (as defined below) is the

Respondent (as defined below). These Procedures should be read in conjunction with the Policy. These Procedures apply to complaints by University faculty, students and staff against an Employee (as defined below) and replace all procedures previously in effect under the University's Policy.

Full Statement in

<https://www.morgan.edu/Documents/ADMINISTRATION/OFFICES/EEO/EmployeeSexualHarassmentProcedures.pdf>

**Stop Campus Hazing Act (SCHA)** is a recent federal law that aims to strengthen campus safety and student well-being nationwide. Hazing has no place in our community. It endangers lives, undermines trust, and runs counter to Morgan's values of Leadership, Integrity, Innovation, Diversity, Excellence, and Respect.

What is Hazing?

Under the Stop Campus Hazing Act, hazing is defined as:

“any intentional, knowing, or reckless act committed by a person (whether individually or in concert with other persons) against another person or persons regardless of the willingness of such other person or persons to participate, that

(1) is committed in the course of an initiation into, an affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in, a student organization (e.g., a club, athletic team, fraternity, or sorority); and,

(2) causes or creates a risk, above the reasonable risk encountered in the course of participation in the IHE or the organization, of physical or psychological injury.”

This definition makes clear that consent is not a defense, and hazing can include actions that cause physical, emotional, or psychological harm.

Requirements of the Stop Campus Hazing Act

The Act requires colleges and universities to:

- Increase transparency by publicly reporting incidents of hazing in the Annual Security Report and through a Campus Transparency Report that will be made available to the community.
- Provide prevention education to students, faculty, staff, and advisors.
- Ensure accountability and support through clear resources for reporting and responding to hazing.

- At Morgan State, we are committed to promoting safety and meeting these requirements. The [Division of Student Affairs](#) will continue to:
- Expand hazing prevention education and awareness programming.
- Strengthen reporting processes so that all members of our community know how to report concerns confidentially.
- Partner with student organizations, athletics, and university leaders to foster a culture of care, belonging, and responsibility.

### How to Report Hazing

If you witness or suspect hazing, I urge you to report it immediately:

Reports may be made through any of the following:

#### Police

- MSUPD/Campus Police: 443-885-3100
- MSUPD/Campus Police online reporting form: [Campus Police Reporting Form](https://www.morgan.edu/police-and-public-safety/feedback-and-reporting/silent-witness-form) (<https://www.morgan.edu/police-and-public-safety/feedback-and-reporting/silent-witness-form>)
- Local Law Enforcement: Call 911 in emergency situations

#### Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities

- Online Reporting Form: [Incident Reporting Form](https://www.morgan.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities/report-an-incident) (<https://www.morgan.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities/report-an-incident>)
- Email: [studentrights@morgan.edu](mailto:studentrights@morgan.edu)
- Phone: 443-885-4710

#### Learn More

- [Hazing Policy](#)
- [Hazing Prevention Website](#)

## Career Preparation Resources

Resources for both academic and non-academic career paths, including workshops on publishing, grant writing, and networking.

Morgan State University offers publishing-related workshops primarily for its graduate students and faculty through the School of Graduate Studies' **G.R.E.A.T. Series**. Offerings include

workshops on strategic writing plans, submitting dissertations, and grant writing. The **University Writing Center** also provides in-class workshops on writing-related topics and offers one-on-one consultations to help students become more effective writers.

G.R.E.A.T. Series:

<https://www.morgan.edu/school-of-graduate-studies/new-and-current-students/graduate-professional-development>

University Writing Center: <https://www.morgan.edu/writingcenter>

Morgan State University's **ASCEND/RCMI program** offers a grant-writing workshop series, including a semester-long NIH Pilot Grants workshop and a 6-week summer workshop for getting started on research proposals. These workshops are designed for individuals with varying levels of grant-writing experience and focus on developing competitive proposals for internal and external funding opportunities. MSU also provides links and resources for grant writing.

ASCEND:

<https://www.morgan.edu/ascend/faculty-development-opportunities/grant-writing-workshops>

MSU links and resources for grant writing:

<https://www.morgan.edu/ascend/faculty-development-opportunities/grant-writing-resources>

Morgan State University offers workshops and events focused on professional networking

- **Center for Career Development:**

Students can request presentations on various career topics, including networking and social media, through the Center for Career Development.

<https://www.morgan.edu/center-for-career-development/about-us/request-a-presenter>

- **Events Page Workshop:**

The MSU events page contains events for workshops on networking.

<https://events.morgan.edu/>

- **Networking Mixer:**

An annual event where students can connect with employers, alumni, and industry professionals for career-focused conversations and opportunities. 2025 event link (for future events search for "Networking Mixer"):

<https://events.morgan.edu/event/fall-2025-networking-mixer>

- **T. Rowe Price Resume Session & Networking Lunch:**

A recurring event where students can enhance their resumes and network with professionals from T. Rowe Price. September 2025 event link (for future events search for "T. Rowe Price"):

<https://events.morgan.edu/event/t-rowe-price-resume-session-networking-lunch>

- **Networking for Health Equity, "Morgan Cares":**

The "Morgan Cares" initiative organizes events like this one, providing networking opportunities within the healthcare sector. September 2025 event link (for future events search for "Morgan Cares"):

<https://events.morgan.edu/event/networking-for-health-equity-in-baltimore-city>

## Resources to Develop as Scholar-Teacher

- Students should take advantage of MSU centers and programs that help them in their development as scholars and teachers.
  - Center for Career Development: <https://www.morgan.edu/careerdevelopment>
  - Center for Continuing and Professional Studies: <https://www.morgan.edu/ccps>
  - Center for Global Studies & International Education: <https://www.morgan.edu/academics/centers-and-institutes>
  - Center for Innovative Instruction and Scholarship: <https://www.morgan.edu/academicaffairs/ciis>
  - Center for Research and Experiential Study Abroad: <https://www.morgan.edu/cresa>
  - University Writing Center: <https://www.morgan.edu/writingcenter>
  - Full list of centers and Institutes: <https://www.morgan.edu/academics/centers-and-institutes>

## Wellness & Support Resources

Information on counseling, health services, writing support, and student organizations to promote balance and resilience during the PhD journey.

The MSU **Counseling Center** provides a mental health resource for students of Morgan State University (MSU), who are in need of information, support, consultation, and/or clinical intervention. Our primary goal is to offer comprehensive and holistic services that promote the developmental and mental health needs of our students.

<https://www.morgan.edu/counselingcenter>

The **University Health Center** (UHC) is the primary care facility where Morgan State University students can be evaluated and treated for acute and chronic medical conditions as well as guidance on practices that promote good health and disease prevention. These high quality and accessible health services are fully covered under the University's Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). Our staff is dedicated to providing efficient, quality care in a compassionate and understanding manner. <https://www.morgan.edu/healthcenter>

Under the auspices of the Department of English and Language Arts, the mission of the Morgan State University **Writing Center** is to support undergraduate and graduate students from all academic disciplines to become more effective and confident writers and communicators.

<https://www.morgan.edu/writingcenter>

The **Morgan State Graduate Student Association** is dedicated to the enhancement of the graduate experience at Morgan State University. The organization has been established to serve as a foundation for building unity, support, & academic excellence among these students as well as the greater Morgan State community. The association will accomplish these goals by designing experiences that focus on, but are by no means limited to: recruitment; the transition



from undergraduate to graduate school; academic support; & opportunities for fellowship, service, and activism. <https://www.morgan.edu/gradschool/gsa>

## Program Governance & Student Voice

How decisions are made and how graduate students get their voice heard.

- **Student representation opportunities**

Students are encouraged to participate in the student committees and propose changes to the operation and design of the graduate program to make it better for themselves and future cohorts of graduate students.

- **Description of the Graduate Program Committees (composition, responsibilities).**

**The Annual In-Person Doctoral Retreat Committee.** This committee is responsible for planning a weekend long in-person retreat, which takes place in late summer or early fall, and is designed to foster meaningful connections among faculty and students, acclimate folks to Baltimore's culture and structure, and provide space to share policies and concerns.

Cheryl Stewart, DeJa Love, Raiana Davis, Lucy Moran; Natasha Pratt-Harris; Angela Howell; Leon Wilson

**The Hy-Flex Course Delivery Committee.** This committee works together to improve hybrid course delivery and develop a recommended set of best practices. JeNene Lee; DeJa Love; Remi Zellers; Corliss Wilson; Natasha Pratt-Harris; Simone Durham; Malcolm Drewery

**The Graduate Student Handbook Committee.** This committee works to create a handbook of policies and useful information for graduate students. [If there are additional graduate committees to be added to this handbook, email Larry Liu, [larry.liu@morgan.edu](mailto:larry.liu@morgan.edu))  
Corliss Wilson; Raiana Davis; Lucy Moran; Natasha Pratt-Harris; Larry Liu; Asha Layne

**Accessibility Committee:** The Graduate Student Accessibility Committee advocates for an inclusive and supportive environment by addressing the diverse needs of students. This includes ensuring access for students with disabilities, supporting those with dietary or special food requirements, and promoting the use of accessible technologies. The committee works to identify barriers, recommend solutions, and foster equity so that all graduate students can fully participate in academic, research, and community activities.

Cecelia Watson, Arthur Powell, Raiana Davis, Lance hatcher, Tierra Major Kearney, and Tinea White

**Graduate School Standards Committee:** Graduate School Standards Committee objectives include setting and maintaining academic standards for graduate programs, approving new graduate programs and curriculum changes, evaluating the quality of existing programs, promoting ethical scholarship and research, and ensuring compliance with institutional and accreditation policies. The committee works to uphold the integrity of graduate education and enhance the reputation and effectiveness of the university's graduate offerings.

Dr. Malcolm Drewery, Dr. Angela Howell, Dr. Asha Layne, Dr. Natasha Pratt-Harris



**Admissions and Qualifying Exam Committee:** The objective of the Graduate Admissions Committee is to select the most qualified applicants for admission into the ASSJ graduate program. The objective of the Qualifying Exam Committee is to develop the Qualifying Examination (formality, standards).

Dr. Cynthia Bragg, Dr. Malcolm Drewery, Dr. Angela Howell, Dr. Natasha Pratt-Harris

## Grievance Procedure

Process for handling concerns or grievances (departmental, then school-level escalation).

There is a process for handling graduate student concerns and grievances.

- Step One: Speak directly to the source of your grievance, e.g. faculty member, administrator or graduate student. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Step One, go to Step Two.
- Step Two: Contact your Graduate Program Director (Dr. Natasha Pratt-Harris). If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Step Two, go to Step Three. If the Graduate Program Director is the source of the complaint, skip Step Two and go to Step Three.
- Step Three: Bring the case to the School of Graduate Studies. If you (or the other party) are not satisfied with the outcome of Step Three, go to Step Four.
  - Graduate school grievance form: The Appeal/Grievance form is intended to ensure that students receive fair treatment in both curricular and co-curricular learning environments. The University has procedures for action on specific issues such as race discrimination, sex discrimination, academic and non-academic misconduct, and sexual harassment and such appeals should not be considered with this form. The form you are requesting applies only to grade appeals and other situations involving program requirements, plans of study, program dismissal, qualifying or comprehensive examination procedures, and thesis and dissertation defenses as well as matters pertaining to the roles, responsibilities, and sanctions against graduate assistants. Only procedural issues are considered appealable. Appeals must be based upon school, department, or program failure to adhere to their published rules and regulations or the published rules and regulations of the School of Graduate Studies or University.
  - School of Graduate Studies appeal/ grievance form is obtained from the following website:  
<https://www.morgan.edu/school-of-graduate-studies/new-and-current-students/forms>
- Step Four: Refer the case to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). MHEC's student complaint process provides that:
  - A. A student must first exhaust the complaint/grievance procedures established by the institution.
  - B. Specific types of complaints are handled by different agencies or organizations. A student must submit a complaint to the appropriate agency or organization.

- C. Complaints involving alleged violations of the Education Article or Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) Title 13B Maryland Higher Education Commission, or a Private Career School's own written institutional policies, may be submitted to MHEC.
- D. A complaint pertaining to matters other than those addressed in the Education Article or COMAR Title 13B, or pertaining to the institution's approved policies, will not be entertained by MHEC, nor will it be referred to another agency or organization.

MHEC student complaint process and forms are found in:

[https://mhec.maryland.gov/institutions\\_training/Pages/career/pcs/complaint.aspx](https://mhec.maryland.gov/institutions_training/Pages/career/pcs/complaint.aspx)