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How to Use This Manual

Topics in the table of contents lead you to chapters and subtopic headings that provide information ranging from simple notes to a thorough review of what to do and why, with frequent examples. Sequential tasks are numbered, notes and/or action results are indented, and user interface element references are formatted to enhance readability. Page images (and data displayed therein) may not be technically identical to what you will see in the actual application, as they are provided for demonstration purposes only.

Your Comments Are Welcome

MSU values and appreciates your comments as a user and reader of this document. As we write, revise, and evaluate our documentation, your comments are the most valuable input we receive. If you would like to contact us regarding comments and suggestions, please call (517) 884-3000, e-mail mailto:ais311@msu.edu.

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Student Section

GradPlan Introduction

Note: Students may access GradPlan by using the https://gradplan.msu.edu link. For assistance, students may contact the University System Support Help Desk at (517) 884-3000 or email ais311@msu.edu.

In GradPlan a student creates/edits a Ph.D. Degree Plan. The student should work closely with his/her Ph.D. advisor while creating his/her Ph.D. Degree Plan. The student will need to adhere to any specific requirements for his/her program, department, or school, as well as University requirements.

Information the student will need prior to starting a Ph.D. Degree Plan:

- Committee members' names or MSU NetIDs
- Course codes for planned courses including MSU equivalents for CIC Traveling Scholar Program courses if applicable
- Comprehensive exam areas
- Tentative dissertation topic
- Specific requirements for your program, department, or school

Note: Students can add updated information simultaneously as they work on his/her Ph.D. before submitting his/her plan for approval.

Overview Screen

After a student logs into GradPlan by using his/her PID, the Overview screen displays:

The Overview screen contains information that will assist the student in creating his/her Ph.D. Degree Plan. In the future, students will be able to update their post-graduate job placement.
1. **Ph.D. Degree Plan** link – student clicks this link to proceed to his/her individual Ph.D. Degree Plan.

   **Note:** This link is also located just below the GradPlan banner on the screen.

2. **Student information** – Contains information about the individual student:
   - PID
   - Award Type
   - Major code
   - Major name
   - College name
   - Department name
   - Award type (*if the student has a dual major)
   - Dual code (*if applicable)
   - Dual major name (*if applicable)
   - Dual college name (*if applicable)

3. **CONTACT US** – contains the following information:  
   *(Note: Also located on login screen)*
   - **Technical Help** – contains contact information related to technical difficulties.
   - **Your Ph.D. Plan** - contains information regarding who to contact to assist with the students Ph.D. Degree Plan.
   - **MSU Student Requirements** – contains resource links to policies and practices for students.
   - **General Graduate Education Questions** – contains contact information for the Graduate School.
   - **Your Academic Records** – contains contact information for Office of the Registrar and Office of Admissions.

4. **HELP** – contains the following information:  
   *(Note: Also located on login screen)*
   - **Technical Help** - contains contact information related to technical difficulties.
   - **Approval Process** – contains information how to view the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan approval process within FTU.
   - **Creating a Ph.D. Degree Plan** – contains information on the procedure to create a Ph.D. Degree Plan.
• Information You will Need – contains information that the student will need before starting a Ph.D. Degree Plan.

• Resources – contains links to other to assist with the students Ph.D. Degree Plan.

LOG OFF – clicking this link logs off the student from GradPlan.

Ph.D. Degree Plan Screen
After a student clicks the Ph.D. Degree Plan link at the Overview screen, the Ph.D. Degree Plan screen will display:

If this is the first time that the student has entered Ph.D. Degree Plan, this screen will initially display the Create Ph.D. degree plan link in addition to general help information that will assist the student in creating a Ph.D. Degree Plan.

Ph.D. Degree Plan Status (Non-Official)
Once a student has created a Ph.D. Degree Plan, but is not officially approved yet, the following Status and Actions options appear on the depending on the Ph.D. Degree Plan screen where the Ph.D. Degree Plan is in the process:

Draft (incomplete) – is when one or more sections of the Ph.D. Degree Plan process (Committee, Courses, Research, Other Requirements, Finalize) have not been completed.

• Draft (incomplete) – status of the Ph.D. Degree Plan in the process

• Edit plan link – student clicks this link to edit current Ph.D. Degree Plan
Draft – Ph.D. Degree Plan seems complete to the system but has not been submitted for approval.

**Draft** – status of the Ph.D. Degree Plan in the process

- **Edit plan** link – student clicks this link to edit current Ph.D. Degree Plan
- **Review and finalize** – student clicks this link to review all the completed sections in the Ph.D. Degree Plan to finalize the process.

Pending Approvals – plan is pending signatures and approvals

- Pending approvals – status of the Ph.D. Degree Plan in the process
- **View plan** link – student clicks this link to view the plan they submitted.
- **View approval of process** link – student clicks this link to view in Forms Tracking Utility (FTU) who has approved the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan.
- **Retract plan** link – student clicks this link to retract the entire Ph.D. Degree Plan from the Forms Tracking Utility (FTU) approval process. This will stop approvals and cause the plan to return to “Draft” status.

Disapproved and Returned to Draft – plan was disapproved by one of the plan approvers and has returned to Draft status.

- Disapproved and returned to draft – status of the Ph.D. Degree Plan in the process. In addition, comments were added by the disapprover to clarify the reason for the status.
- **Edit Plan** link – student clicks this link to edit current Ph.D. Degree Plan.
- **Review and finalize** link – student clicks this link to review all the completed sections in the Ph.D. Degree Plan to finalize the process.
**Official Ph.D. Degree Plan**

Once a Ph.D. Degree Plan is officially created, the students will see the following options on the Ph.D. Degree Plan screen in addition to a “Current revision status” box that contains various status conditions along with optional action links:

- **View official plan** link – student clicks this link to view the Ph.D. Degree Plan that includes signatures of committee members and dates.
- **Start with copy of current plan** link – student clicks this link to start a new blank Ph.D. Degree Plan.
- **Start a new plan** link - student clicks this link to start another Ph.D. Degree Plan by using the current plan as a base.
- **View revision history** link – student clicks this link to see a sequential listing of revisions and events related to his/her Ph.D. Degree Plan.

**Draft (incomplete)** – student has an official Ph.D. Degree Plan as well as an incomplete draft.

- **View official plan** link – student clicks this link to view the official Ph.D. Degree Plan that includes signatures of committee members and dates.
- **Edit revision** link – student clicks this link to modify his/her new draft Ph.D. Degree Plan.
- **Cancel revision** link - student clicks this link to delete the current draft revision.
- **View revision history** link – student clicks this link to see a sequential listing of revisions and events related to his/her Ph.D. Degree Plan.
**Draft** – student has an official plan as well as a draft which the system perceives as complete.

- **View official plan** link – student clicks this link to view the official Ph.D. Degree Plan that includes signatures of committee members and dates.
- **Draft** – status of the Ph.D. Degree Plan in the process.
- **Edit revision** link – student clicks this link to modify his/her draft Ph.D. Degree Plan.
- **Review and finalize** link – student clicks this link to put his/her draft Ph.D. Degree Plan into completed form.
- **Cancel revision** link – student clicks this link to delete the current draft revision.
- **View revision history** link – student clicks this link to see a sequential listing of revisions and events to his/her Ph.D. Degree Plan.

**Pending Approvals** – awaiting confirmation from individuals responsible for approving the changes to the official Ph.D. Degree Plan.

- **View official plan** link – student clicks this link to view the official Ph.D. Degree Plan that includes signatures of committee members and dates.
- **Pending approvals** – status of the changed Ph.D. Degree Plan in the process.
- **View revision** link – student clicks the link to view latest revision of his/her Ph.D. Degree Plan.
- **View approval process for revision** link - student clicks the link to view see who has currently approved the submitted plan.
- **Retract revision** link – student clicks the link to revoke submitted Ph.D. Degree Plan.
- **View revision history** link – student clicks this link to see a sequential listing of revisions to all of his/her Ph.D. Degree Plan(s).
Disapproved and Returned to Draft – student still has an official plan but this submitted change Ph.D. Degree Plan has been disapproved and has been returned to draft status.

- **View official plan** link – student clicks this link to view the official Ph.D. Degree Plan that includes signatures of committee members and dates.
- Disapproved and returned to draft – status of the latest attempted Ph.D. Degree Plan in the process. In addition, comments were added to clarify the reason for the status.
- **View revision history** link – student clicks this link to see a sequential listing of revisions to all of his/her Ph.D. Degree Plan(s).
Ph.D. Degree Plan Process

Creating a plan involves completing the following five sections within the Ph.D. Degree Plan process:

- **Committee** – the student designates committee chair and members
- **Courses** - the student selects doctoral program courses
- **Research** - the student answers research questions
- **Other Requirements** - the student fills out other optional requirements
- **Finalize** - the student reviews the plan and saves it for later changes or submits the plan for approval

**Important!** The student needs to click the [Save] button after changing information on a page or the information that was entered will be lost.

Committee

The Committee screen is where the student will search (either by name or MSU NetID) for tenure or tenured track MSU faculty or librarians, as well as non-tenured individuals who have had prior approval by the Graduate School to be on Ph.D. committees; in addition, these approved people might also be non-MSU people.

**Important!** A minimum of four committee members are required and at least one committee member should be designated as chair.

After the student enters a name or MSU NetID of a person that should be on the Ph.D. committee, the student will then click the [Search] button.
The **Add committee member** screen appears:

![Add committee member screen](image1)

The student will select the correct committee member by clicking the adjacent **Add** checkbox and then clicking the [Submit additions] button located at the bottom of the screen; or if they didn’t find the right person, they may click the [Return to search] button to redo the search or click the [Return to selected committee] button to review/edit his/her previous selections.

The **Committee list** screen appears with the selected committee member(s) when the [Submit additions] button is clicked:

![Committee list screen](image2)
The student can select to either have that committee member to be a Chairperson, Dissertation Director, or remove them entirely by clicking the corresponding checkbox and then clicking the [Save] button (located at the bottom of the screen) or they may click the [ADD COMMITTEE MEMBER] button to add additional committee members. Any additional notes regarding committee members can be added to the notes field at the bottom of the screen.

**Note:** At least one person must be selected to be Chairperson. Optionally, a person may be selected as the Dissertation Director. Multiple co-Chairpersons or co-Dissertation Directors are possible.

Once a student has added all the required committee members (at least four), the student will then click the [Save and continue to the next step] button to proceed to the Courses section in the Ph.D. Degree Plan process. This screen is displayed when the student returns to the Committee section in the future.

**Courses**

The Courses screen is where the student will search for courses to be included in his/her individual Ph.D. Degree Plan. The student may search by either

- **Your courses** - courses that they are already enrolled in or have completed at the graduate level.
- **All courses** - subject and course level.

After the student determines the type of search, the student will then click the [Search] button. The student should start with the **Your courses** section so they can easily find a list of his/her completed or enrolled courses.

**Note:** Approval by the college dean is required for any 399 level or less courses.
The **Add courses** screen appears:

![Add courses screen](image)

**Note:** Any course that a student has completed or enrolled in will have the semester indicated. The student will select a course by clicking the adjacent **Add** checkbox and then clicking the [Submit additions] button located at the bottom of the screen; or they may click the [Return to search] button to redo the search or click the [Return to selected courses] button to review/edit his/her selections.
When the student clicks the [Submit additions] button, the Courses list screen appears with the selected course(s):

1. **Category** – Student may place courses in various course categories to share additional information with his/her committee by selecting from the pull-down menu:
   - Cognate
   - Concentration
   - Core
   - Dual
   - Elective
   - Major field
   - Minor field
   - Required
   - Specialization
   - Specialization 2

2. **Planned semester** – student may choose if desired, the semester in which to take course(s) by selecting from the pull-down menu. This is to help committee members review the student’s course loads per semester and his/her sequence.
3 **Credits** – student must designate for variable credit courses the number of credits by selecting from the pull-down menu.

4 **Note** – a note indicating that this course is a multiple enrollment and variable credit course. The total number of credits for all instances of this course cannot exceed 40 credits. However, this will not prevent the student from adding additional number of credits to the plan. Enforcement of the credit limits will be the responsibility of Student Information Services (SIS) when the student actually enrolls.

5 **Remove** – the student can select to remove a course entirely by clicking the corresponding **Remove** checkbox and then clicking the [Save] button (located at the bottom of the screen).

6 **Add any additional notes . . . .** – the student may enter any additional information about courses that his/her committee might need to know.

The student may click the [ADD COURSE] button to add additional courses. Once a student has added all the desired courses, the student will then click the [Save and continue to the next step] button to proceed to the Research section in the Ph.D. Degree Plan process.
Research

The Research section is where the student will be required to indicate background information for his/her research and acknowledge that they understand all university policies or practices.

Note: These are required fields (except Additional notes for Research) and need to be completed before approval.

1. Tentative dissertation subject - Student enters a tentative dissertation subject.
2 Comprehensive exams - student enters his/her comprehensive examination area(s).

Note: A program or department might want to let their students know what important examination area(s) are required.

3 This shows the semester this student actually passed the comprehensive exams.

3A If however, the student had not taken their comprehensive exams, an empty text box will display where the student will enter the expected completion semester/term for comprehensive exams.

4 Graduate Handbook - student clicks the checkbox to indicate that they understand they are responsible for following the policies and practices stated in the Graduate Handbook, Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities and Academic Freedom for Students at MSU.

5 Responsible Conduct of Research - student enters his/her initials to indicate that they understand the Responsible Conduct Research training is required for degree completion.

6 Research review and approval - student enters his/her initials to indicate that they understand it is necessary to obtain institutional review and approval prior to initiating any research involving the use of human or animal subjects or hazardous material.

7 Human subjects - student will check either the “Yes” or “No” radio-button to indicate if human subjects, his/her identifiable material, or human materials will be used in his/her research.

8 Animal subjects - student will check either the “Yes” or “No” radio-button to indicate if animal subjects will be used in his/her research.

9 Hazardous substances - student will check either the “Yes” or “No” radio-button to indicate if hazardous substances will be used in his/her research.

10 Additional notes for Research - student may enter any additional information involving his/her research. Once a student has completed all the required background information for his/her research, the student will then click the [Save and continue to the next step] button to proceed to the Other Requirements section in the Ph.D. Degree Plan process.
Other Requirements

The Other Requirements section is where the student can indicate additional requirements needed to complete his/her individual Ph.D. Degree Plan.

1. **Foreign language(s)** - student may add a foreign language by entering the language in the text box and then clicking the [ADD] button. The student can also add more than one language and has the option to remove each one by clicking the adjacent Remove link.
**Important!** The student needs to click the [ADD] button which will enter the language in the list and then click the [Save] button, if not; the information that was entered will be lost.

2. **Foreign language course substitution** - student may add a substitute foreign language course by entering the Subject code and the Course code in the text boxes and then clicking the [ADD] button. The student can also add more than one language course and has the option to remove any one by clicking the adjacent **Remove** link.

3. **Dual Major Ph.D. Request** - if the student has *no* dual major, the student may add one by selecting a major from the drop-down menu and the student can also add additional notes regarding the dual major request. The Graduate School will need to approve any plan that has dual requests. This initiates the addition of the student’s degree(s) in Student Information System (SIS) by the Office of the Registrar after all approvals have been completed.

3A. **Current dual major Ph.D.** - if a student currently has a dual major, the student may request to have that existing dual major removed from his/her plan by clicking the check box. The student then has the option to choose a new dual major from the drop-down menu.

4. **Specialization or Graduate Certification** - student may add a specialization or graduate certification by selecting from the drop-down menu and then clicking the [ADD] button. The student can also add more than one specialization or graduate certification and has the option to remove each one by clicking the adjacent **Remove** link. In addition, the student may add any required courses to his/her specialization by clicking the **courses list** link.

Note: This information is being gathered for reporting purposes only. This does not initiate any process for the student within Student Information System (SIS) or in the university.

**Important!** The student needs to click the [ADD] button which will enter the language in the list and then click the [Save] button, if not; the information that was entered will be lost.

5. **Additional notes for Other Requirements** - student may enter any additional information for other requirements.
**Finalize**

The **Finalize** section is where the student will review final information for his/her proposed Ph.D. Degree Plan. In addition, if certain sections are incomplete, various Ph.D. Degree Plan System Requirement messages will display indicating what information is needed to complete the proposed Ph.D. Degree Plan.
Ph.D. Degree Plan System Requirement Messages – These messages indicate to the student where they have incomplete information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Cause(s)</th>
<th>Solution(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The minimum number of committee members were not selected”</td>
<td>• Student did not enter 4 committee members</td>
<td>• Student clicks the Edit link and adds the correct number of committee members, then clicks the [Save] button.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student checked the Add checkbox of the correct committee person(s) but did not click the [Submit additions] button before proceeding.</td>
<td>• Student clicks the Edit link and re-enters the correct number of committee members, then clicks the [Submit additions] button.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A committee chair was not selected”</td>
<td>• Student did not click the Chair checkbox next to the name of a committee chair person.</td>
<td>• Student clicks the Edit link and clicks the Chair checkbox next to the desired name of committee person and clicks the [Save] button before proceeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student checked the Chair checkbox next to committee chair person but did not click the [Save] button before proceeding.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Required fields have not been completed in the research section”</td>
<td>• Student needs to enter information in the field(s) indicated by an asterisk “*”.</td>
<td>• Student clicks the Edit link and enters s information in the field(s) indicated by an asterisk “*”, then clicks the [Save] button.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student entered information in the required field(s) but did not click the [Save] button before proceeding.</td>
<td>• Click the Edit link and re-enters information in the required field(s), then clicks the [Save] button.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Please enter credits for all the courses”</td>
<td>• Student needs to enter credits for all variable credit courses.</td>
<td>• Student clicks the Edit link and enters s credits for all courses, then clicks the [Save] button.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student entered correct credits for all the courses but did not click the [Save] button before proceeding.</td>
<td>• Click the Edit link and re-enters credits for all courses, then clicks the [Save] button.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The revision changes box at the end of this page has not been complete”</td>
<td>Note: This message is displayed only after a student has an official plan and the student has made revisions.</td>
<td>• Student needs to enter why or what are the revisions to his/her plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student entered revisions comments to his/her plan but did not click the [Save revision comments] button before proceeding.</td>
<td>• Student needs to enter revision comments to his/her plan and then click the [Save revision comments] button before proceeding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 ACADEMIC DETAILS – displays student(s) current degree information and also previous degree(s) information from Student Information Systems (SIS).

3 COMMITTEE - displays committee member(s) information that the student has entered in the Committee section of his/her Ph.D. Degree Plan. The student can click the Edit link to change committee member(s) information.

4 COURSE - displays course(s) information that the student has entered in the Course section of his/her Ph.D. Degree Plan. The student can click the Edit link to change course(s) information. In addition, if the student has added a dual major and/or specialization, the student needs to be sure that his/her course list includes the required courses if applicable.

5 RESEARCH INFORMATION - displays research information that the student has entered in the Research section of his/her Ph.D. Degree Plan. The student can click the Edit link to change research information.

6 PLAN ACTIONS – the student lists and explains any changes they have made to this revision of his/her Ph.D. Degree Plan. If there are no incomplete sections in the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan, then the [Submit plan for approvals] button will display.

If the student has completed all the sections within the Ph.D. Degree Plan Process he/she will click the [Submit plan for approvals] button located at the bottom of the Finalize page to start the Approval Process or they may click the Edit plan link to edit a section of his/her plan:

**Submit plan for approvals**
While in the approval process you will not be able to edit your plan without retracting and re-submitting.

Your plan will be reviewed by:
- your major’s graduate secretary
- your committee members
- the department, school, or program’s chair or director
- the college dean’s office

Once you have submitted your plan, you can check the approval status page for updates.

By selecting a committee member, you are authorizing them to see your data.

[Submit plan for approvals] 
Edit plan
Full Approval Process

The full approval process is when the student submits his/her Ph.D. Degree Plan for review for the first time or if any of the following criteria are met:

- There is a new dual major request from the previous official plan.
- There is a dual removal request from the previous official plan.
- There is a change in committee members from the previous official plan.

While in the approval process, the student will not be able to edit his/her individual plan without first retracting the plan.

Once the student submits his/her Ph.D. Degree Plan for approval, this action initiates a Forms Tracking Utility (FTU) routing slip to be activated. This routing slip is sent for approval/disapproval to the following groups:

- **Form Checker** – this is often the graduate secretary(s) in the student’s major.
- **Committee** – this is the student’s selected committee members.
- **Program Signer** – this is often the student’s department, school or program’s chair or director based on the major’s GradInfo program.
- **College Signer** – this is a signer representing the major’s college dean’s office.

Note: Once a student has submitted his/her plan; they may check the approval status for updates.

An example of a GradPlan Forms Tracking Utility (FTU) routing slip:

1. **Requested Action** - student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan requires approvals from Form Checker, Committee members, Program Signer, and College Signer.
2 Person/Group/Script – click on the link to see the name of the person or persons who can sign for that group.

3 Reference – the four digit number for Form Checkers and Program Signers represents the GradInfo program for the student’s major. For a complete list of GradInfo's graduate program codes and names, refer to http://aissecuritycontact.dev.ais.msu.edu/arms/GradPrograms.html

The UUID is a special identifier for MSU people, as well as for non-MSU people, who will get access via MSU Community ID. Refer to http://community.idm.msu.edu for more information.

The OrgStructureCode used by EBSP is the reference number for College Signer(s). The MAU is found right after the “P”.

Important! For information on how to use Forms Tracking Utility (FTU), refer to https://ftu.ais.msu.edu/FTUDocTrain.html

Form Checker

The Form Checker (usually a Grad Secretary) will review the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan and “approve” or “disapprove” the plan depending on accuracy and completeness. If the student has a dual major, two Form Checkers are asked to approve or disapprove.

All the people (based on the GradInfo program ID for the student’s major) in a form checker group receives an email requesting approval/disapproval of the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan in FTU.

The Form Checker clicks on the link in the Approval Request email which takes them to the FTU Dashboard where they will log in using his/her MSU NetID. After login, the Form Checker will find the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan in his/her Pending List and will click on the desired plan.

Once the Form Checker accesses the FTU Routing Slip content, they will review the student’s plan for errors and then proceed to approve or disapprove the plan:
Comment text field with [Approve], [Disapprove] and [Comment Only] buttons

Note: Comments are required for disapproval and optional for approvals. The [Comment Only] button should not be used. Program Checker(s) must disapprove if they want the student to make any change(s) no matter how small.

Student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan

Note: Only one approval is needed per group. However, if the student has a dual major, two Form Checker groups will be notified that they have approvals waiting in FTU.

Approving/Disapproving Student’s Plan

If after reviewing the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan, the Form Checker decides to disapprove the plan, the Form Checker enters a comment in the Comment text field explaining why the student’s plan is being disapproved and then clicks the [Disapprove] button. This action initiates FTU to send a Disapproval email to both the Form Checker(s) and also the student. Because the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan was disapproved, the plan is then reset to a “Disapproved and returned to draft” status.

However, if the plan is approved by the Form Checker(s), then an email is created and sent to Committee members informing them that a student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan needs his/her approval/disapproval in FTU.
Committee

After the Form Checker has approved the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan, GradPlan will then email the student’s selected Committee members that the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan is waiting for approval. All the Committee members are notified simultaneously by email requesting approval/disapproval of the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan in FTU.

If the Committee member is a non-MSU Committee member with a Community ID, they will find the students receive the special email helping them use MSU’s Community ID:

1. Student’s name
2. URL link to the FTU Dashboard
3. Information and contact details for MSU Community ID.

The Committee member then clicks on the link within the email which takes them to the FTU Dashboard where they will log in using his/her MSU NetID or in the case of a non-MSU person, their Community ID login and password. After login, the Committee member will find the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan in his/her Pending List and will click on the desired plan to review the student’s plan for errors and then approve or disapprove the plan.
Comment text field with [Approve], [Disapprove] and [Comment Only] buttons

**Note:** Comments are required for disapproval and optional for approvals. The [Comment Only] button should not be used.

Student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan

**Approving/Disapproving Student’s Plan**

If after reviewing the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan, one of the Committee members decides to disapprove the plan, that Committee member enters a comment in the Comment text field explaining why the student’s plan is being disapproved and then clicks the [Disapprove] button. This action initiates FTU to send a Disapproval email to the Form Checker(s), the student and the Committee Chair(s) and Dissertation Director(s). Because the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan was disapproved, the plan is then reset to a “Disapproved and returned to draft” status.

However, if the plan is approved by all Committee members, then an email is created and sent to the **Program Signer** group informing them that a plan resides in FTU and requesting their approval or disapproval.

**Program Signer**

After all committee members approve the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan, FTU will then email all members of the Program Signer group that the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan is waiting for approval by a Program Signer (often a director). The Program Signer then will review the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan and “approve” or “disapprove” the plan depending on accuracy and completeness. If the student has a dual major, two Program Signers are asked to approve or disapprove the student’s plans.

The Program Signer (based on the GradInfo program ID for the student’s major) receives an email requesting approval/disapproval of the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan in FTU.
The Program Signer clicks on the link in the Approval Request email which takes them to the FTU Dashboard where they will log in using his/her MSU NetID. After login, the Program Signer will find the students Ph.D. Degree Plan in his/her Pending List and will click on the desired plan.

Once the Program Signer accesses the FTU Routing Slip content, they will review the student’s plan for errors and then proceed to approve or disapprove the plan:

1. Comment text field with [Approve], [Disapprove] and [Comment Only] buttons

Note: Comments are required for disapproval and optional for approvals. The [Comment Only] button should not be used.

2. Student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan

Note: Only one approval is needed per group. However, if the student has a dual major, two Program Signers will be notified that they have approvals waiting in FTU.
Approving/Disapproving Student’s Plan

If after reviewing the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan, the Program Signer decides to disapprove the plan, the Program Signer enters a comment in the Comment text field explaining why the student’s plan is being disapproved and then clicks the [Disapprove] button. This action initiates FTU to send a Disapproval email to the Form Checker(s), the student and Committee chair(s) and/or Dissertation Director (if applicable).

However, if the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan is approved, then an email is initiated and sent to the College Signer group members informing them that a plan resides in FTU and is requesting his/her approval or disapproval.

College Signer

After the Program Signer approves the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan, then the College Signer (often deans or associate deans) who are associated with the college that is responsible for the student’s major in Student Information Systems (SIS), will review the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan and “approve” or “disapprove” the plan depending on accuracy and completeness. If the student has a dual major, and it is a different college, two College Signers are emailed for their approval/disapproval. However, only one person needs to sign for each college.

The College Signer receives an email requesting approval/disapproval of the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan in FTU, the College Signer clicks on the link in the Approval Request email which takes them to the FTU Dashboard where they will log in using his/her MSU NetID. After login, the College Signer will find the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan in his/her Pending List and will click on the desired plan.

Once the Program Signer accesses the FTU routing slip content, they will review the student’s plan for errors and then proceed to approve or disapprove the plan:
Comment text field with [Approve], [Disapprove] and [Comment Only] buttons

Note: Comments are required for disapproval and optional for approvals. The [Comment Only] button should not be used.

Student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan

Approving/Disapproving Student’s Plan

If after reviewing the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan, the College Signer decides to disapprove the plan, the College Signer enters a comment in the Comment text field explaining why the student’s plan is being disapproved and then clicks the [Disapprove] button. This action initiates FTU to send a Disapproval email to the Form Checker(s), the student and Committee Chair(s) and/or Dissertation Director (if applicable).

Dual Major Request/Graduate School Approval

If a student has requested a dual major, and the two Form Checkers, the two Program Signers and the two College Signers have all approved the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan, then an email is sent to the Grad School Signer for his/her approval/disapproval.

If after reviewing the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan, the Grad School Signer decides to disapprove the plan; the Grad School Signer enters a comment in the Comment text field explaining why the student’s plan is being disapproved and then clicks the [Disapprove] button. This action initiates FTU to send a Disapproval email to the Form Checker(s), Committee Chair(s) and/or Dissertation Director(s) and also the student. Because the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan was disapproved, the plan is then reset to a “Disapproved and returned to draft” status.
Approval Completion

When the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan is approved, then an email regarding the approval of the student’s plan is sent to the Form Checkers, the student, and all Committee members informing them that the student’s plan has been approved. In addition, the student will receive the following emails:

- Email regarding research/scholarship integrity.
- Email regarding Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) if the student indicated on his/her Ph.D. Degree Plan that they will be using animals in his/her research.
- Email regarding Institutional Review Board (IRB) if the student indicated on his/her Ph.D. Degree Plan that they will be using human subjects in his/her research.

The approval of the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan initiates the plan’s status to become the “Official” plan and supersedes any previous draft plans made earlier.
Approval Process Determined by Committee Chair(s)

The Approval Process Determined by Committee Chair(s) happens when a student submits a plan (after having an official Ph.D. Degree Plan) due to changes/revisions or when any of the following criteria are met:

- There is not a new dual major request from the previous official plan.
- There is not a dual removal request from the previous official plan.
- There is not a change in committee members from the previous official plan.

When the student submits his/her plan, a routing slip is created in FTU and will follow the following approval process:

Form Checker

The Form Checker (usually a Grad Secretary) will review the student’s revision of the Ph.D. Degree Plan and “approve” or “disapprove” the plan depending on accuracy and completeness. All the people (based on the GradInfo program ID for the student’s major) in a form check group receive an email requesting approval/disapproval of the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan in FTU.

The Form Checker clicks on the link in the Approval Request email which takes them to the FTU Dashboard where they will log in using his/her MSU NetID. After login, the Form Checker will find the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan in their Pending List and will click on the desired plan.
Once the Form Checker accesses the FTU routing slip content, they will review the student’s plan for errors and then proceed to approve or disapprove the plan:

1. Comment text field with [Approve], [Disapprove] and [Comment Only] buttons

Note: Comments are required for disapproval and optional for approvals. The [Comment Only] button should not be used.

2. Student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan

**Approving/Disapproving Student’s Plan**

If after reviewing the student’s revised Ph.D. Degree Plan, the Form Checker decides to disapprove the plan; the Form Checker enters a comment in the Comment text field explaining why the student’s plan is being disapproved and then clicks the [Disapprove] button. This action initiates FTU to send a Disapproval email to both the Form Checker and also the student. Because the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan was disapproved, the plan is then reset to a “Disapproved and returned to draft” status.

However, if the plan is approved, then an email automatically is created and sent to the Committee chair(s) and/or the Dissertation Director informing them that a plan needs their approval or disapproval in FTU.
Committee Chair(s) and/or Dissertation Director(s)

After the Form Checker approves the student’s revised Ph.D. Degree Plan, then the Committee Chair(s) and/or Dissertation Director(s) is sent an email requesting their review of the student’s revised Ph.D. Degree Plan.

The Committee Chair(s) and/or Dissertation Director(s) clicks on the link in the Approval Request email which takes them to the FTU Dashboard where they will log in using their MSU NetID. After login, the Committee Chair(s) and/or Dissertation Director(s) will find the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan in their Pending List and will click on the desired plan. Once the Committee Chair(s) and/or Dissertation Director(s) access the FTU routing slip content, they will review the student’s plan changes /revisions.

**Significant or Minor Change Routing**

Before approving the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan, the Committee Chair(s) and/or Dissertation Director(s) will decide if the changes are either “Significant” or “Minor” by selecting the one of the radio-buttons within the content of the Ph.D. Degree Plan - “Route as significant change (all approvers sign)” or “Route as minor change (only chair(s) and dissertation director(s) approve)” and then clicking the [Submit routing] button.

**Approving/Disapproving Student’s Plan**

If after reviewing the student’s revised Ph.D. Degree Plan, the Committee Chair(s) and/or Dissertation Director(s) decides to disapprove the plan; the Committee Chair(s) and/or Dissertation Director(s) then enters a comment in the Comment text field explaining why the student’s plan is being disapproved and then clicks the [Disapprove] button. This action initiates FTU to send a Disapproval email to the Form Checker, Committee Chair(s) and/or Dissertation Director(s) and also the student. Because the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan was disapproved, the plan is then reset to a “Disapproved and returned to draft” status.
However, if the plan is approved, the Committee Chair(s) and/or Dissertation Director(s) will then decide if the changes are considered to be “Significant” or “Minor”.

The final result (“Significant” change or “Minor” change) is determined based on the last Committee Chair or Dissertation Director to click the [Submit routing] button:

- If the last change submitted was “Route as significant change (all approvers sign)” - then all of the remaining Committee Members, Program Signer and College Signer will need to approve/disapprove the student’s revised plan as outlined in the Full Approval Process (refer to Full Approval Process).

- If the last change submitted was “Route as minor change (only chair(s) and dissertation director(s) approve)” - then the plan is approved. Only the student, the Chair(s) and the Form Checker will be notified by email that there was a change to the student’s official plan.

Once the student’s revised Ph.D. Degree Plan (with “Minor” change) is approved, then an email regarding the approval of the student’s plan is sent to the Form Checkers, the student, the Committee Chair(s) and the Dissertation Director(s) informing them that the plan has been approved. This initiates the student’s Ph.D. Degree Plan status to become the “Official” plan and supersedes any previous draft plans made earlier.