MICHIGAN STATE
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GradPlan

Faculty Guide

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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.

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Introduction

Degree Plans. These plans can also be viewed in GradInfo system. In addition, GradPlan replaces the Report of the Guidance Committee (Note: In Phase ǁ, GradPlan will replace the Record of Comprehensive Exam, the Dissertation Final Defense form, and the Degree Certification form). Before a Ph.D. Degree Plan becomes official, the Graduate secretaries (who have the role of "**Form Checker**") must review the plans for essential elements. Committee members will approve plans (and revisions) electronically. In Phase ǁ of GradPlan, final acceptance of the dissertation by the Graduate School and the degree certification by the department, college and Office of the Registrar will all be approved and stored electronically.

This brief guide will step you, a Committee member and/or Guidance Committee Chair, through the 100% electronic approval process for doctorial student's Ph.D. Degree Plan.

The electronic routing of Ph.D. Degree Plans to be approved is done using a program called Forms Tracking Utility or "FTU". Faculty members serving on guidance committees have access to FTU. You don't need to do anything to get access approval!

There are two options for approvals: "**Full**" approval for which the entire guidance committee membership must sign-off and approve and "**Committee Chair(s)**" approval that may be done by the guidance committee chair(s) without the rest of the committee.

Full Approval

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.

- There is a change in courses for students in participating colleges from the previous official plan.

If none of the above criteria are met, or

1. After the student fills out the Ph.D. Degree Plan using GradPlan and submits it to start the approval flow, before any committee is asked to approve, a Form Checker, normally the graduate secretary, will review the student's plan.

2. GradPlan sends an email to you (as a Committee member) indicating that the student's Ph.D. Degree Plan is waiting for approval.

Note: All the committee members are notified simultaneously by email requesting approval/disapproval of the student's Ph.D. Degree Plan in FTU.
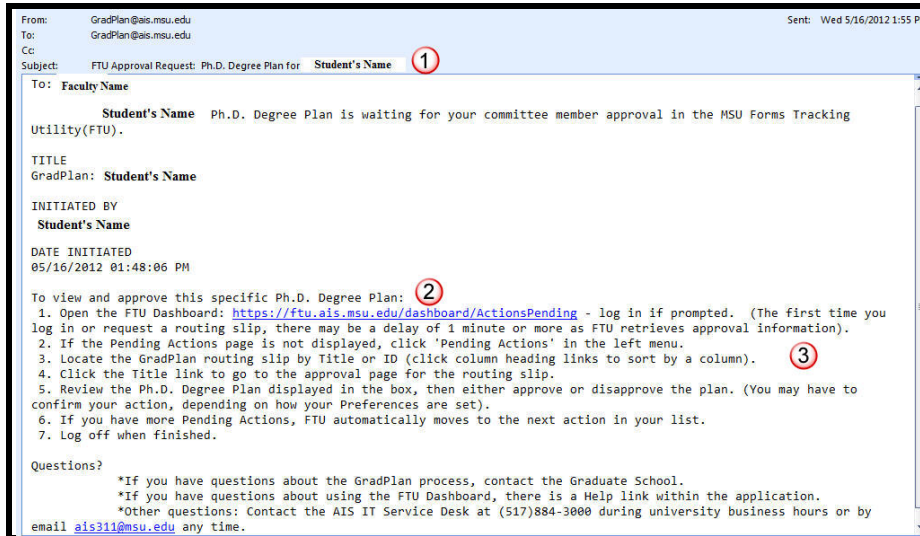
① Student's name

② URL link to the FTU Dashboard

③ Information of how to view and approve/disapprove the Ph.D. Degree Plan.

3. Click on the link ② within the email which will take you to the FTU Dashboard where you will log in using your MSU NetID or in the case of a non-MSU person, your Community ID login and password. After login, you will find the student's Ph.D. Degree Plan in your Pending Actions List and will click on the title of the desired plan to review the student's plan for errors and then approve or disapprove the plan.

Important! If the student's Ph.D. Degree Plan is a **Full Approval**, continue to Step 3. If the student's Ph.D. Degree Plan is an **Approval Process Determined by Committee Chair(s)**, proceed to Step 5.

4. If after reviewing the student's Ph.D. Degree Plan you decide to disapprove the plan, you must enter a comment in the Comment text field explaining why the student's plan is being disapproved and then click the **[Disapprove]** button. However, if you and all the other committee members approve the plan, the **Program Signer** group (often the Department Chair) will be asked to approve or disapprove. If the Program Signer approves the student's Ph.D. Degree Plan, then the **College Signer** (often deans or associate deans) will review the student's Ph.D. Degree Plan and "approve" or "disapprove" the plan depending on accuracy and completeness.

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 for your review.

Disapproved plans will be set to "Disapproved and return to draft status" with email notifications sent to the student and Form Checkers. Once the student has revised the plan and resubmitted it, the graduate secretary will again be alerted to check the plan, and then it again comes back to the committee members for approval.

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<u>Approval Process Determined by Committee Chair(s)</u>

5. If a student has an approved plan and has made a change which might be minor, the plan will be sent to the Form Checker and then to only the Committee Chair(s) and/or Dissertation Director(s). As a Chair or a Dissertation Director, before approving the student's Ph.D. Degree Plan, you will need to decide if the changes to the plan are either "Significant" or "Minor" by selecting the one of the radio-buttons within the content of the student's 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.

Note: ① To help in the case of more than one Chair and/or Dissertation Director(s), **CHANGE LOG** will display the name(s) of the Committee member(s) who determined the change as either "Significant" or "Minor". If there is a disagreement, please communicate directly with other Committee member(s).

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

*   If the route selected 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.
*   If the route selected submitted was **"Route as minor change (only chair(s) and dissertation director(s) approve)"** - then the plan is already approved. Once the student's revised Ph.D. Degree Plan (with "Minor" change) is approved, 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.

Approving/Disapproving Student's Plan

If after reviewing the student's revised Ph.D. Degree Plan, the Committee Chair(s) a decides to disapprove the plan; the Committee Chair(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, there is no need to log whether it is a "Significant" or "Minor" change; the plan is then reset to a "Disapproved and returned to draft" status.