



**Michigan
Technological**
University

Data Science Graduate Program Student Handbook

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Welcome!

Welcome to the Data Science Graduate Program at Michigan Technological University. The Data Science program is an interdisciplinary program, meaning it is housed under the Graduate School (not a single department) and the faculty and courses for the program coming from all the Colleges across the University.

The degree you seek will be challenging and give you opportunities to learn new skills, practices, knowledge. The skills and knowledge will be the building blocks of starting a path of lifelong learning in the field of Data Science.

The degree program is a course-based curriculum, but you will get involved in many hands-on, real-world activities and projects in these courses.

I encourage you all to interact with all your fellow students and faculty. Stretch yourself and work with different students; you will have many opportunities to work in teams, reach up and pair with new students building both your technical skills and team-work and professional skills in the process. This is an opportunity to start building your professional network.

The faculty and staff are here to help you succeed. Ask questions, reach out for help. Don't wait until the end of the semester if you need assistance.

This handbook is provided as a document to answer your basic questions. For more information, please refer to the [data science website](#) and reach out to your advisor or Data Science director.

We wish you great success in the Data Science Graduate Program.

Sincerely,

Laura E. Brown
Director, Data Science Graduate Program

Program Governance

The Data Science program is managed by an inter-disciplinary community of scholars and professional staff working together to support this program. Some of the key personnel include:

[Dr. Laura E. Brown](#) - Data Science Program Director

Home Department, College: Computer Science, College of Computing

Office: Rekhi 307, lebrown@mtu.edu

[Dr. Benjamin Ong](#) - Data Science Executive Committee

Home Department, College: Mathematical Sciences, College of Sciences and Arts

Office: Fisher 217, ongbw@mtu.edu

[Dr. Guy Hembroff](#) - Data Science Steering Committee

Home Department, College: Applied Computing, College of Computing

Director: Health Informatics Graduate Program

Office: EERC 311, hembroff@mtu.edu

[Dr. Jeffrey Wall](#) - Data Science Executive Committee

Home Department, College: College of Business

Office: AOB G010, jdwall@mtu.edu

[Dr. Hairong Wei](#) - Data Science Executive Committee

Home Department, College: College of Forest Resources and Environmental Science

Office: Noblet 176, hairong@mtu.edu

[Dr. Jianhui Yue](#) - Data Science Executive Committee

Home Department, College: Computer Science, College of Computing

Office: Rekhi 203, jyue@mtu.edu

Most inquiries can be directed towards Dr. Brown. E-mail is the preferred mode of communication.

Graduate Student Government (<http://gsg.mtu.edu>)

Data Science Representative: Rajath Nagaraj, rnagaral@mtu.edu

Mr. Nagaraj will communicate information regarding travel grants, social activities, opportunities and other important information. He can also be used as a contact to communicate suggestions, complaints, and help to answer questions.

Covid-19 Impacts

The whole world has seen the terrible impact of the covid-19 pandemic on our friends, family, communities, countries, and world. Here at Michigan Tech we have had to adapt to the pandemic as well. The latest news, policies, and plans at Michigan Tech, are updated on the [MTU Flex page](#).

For those who were studying during Spring 2020 and Track A Summer 2020, the following policies impact the program rules governing the program.

- [Proposal 54-20](#) - **Good Academic Standing:** The Graduate School recognizes the additional stressors that graduate students are under due to disruptions caused by COVID-19 are many and are strong contributors to their ability to maintain or return to good academic standing in spring 2020.
 - Graduate students who are on probation after fall 2019 or who have been reinstated for spring 2020 following a suspension can return to good standing after spring 2020 if they satisfy the conditions of good standing as defined by Senate Policy 416.1.
 - Graduate students who are on probation after fall 2019 will not be suspended if they do not return to good standing in spring 2020 as defined by Senate Policy 416.1. These students will remain on probation for their next semester of registration.
 - Graduate students who are in good standing after fall 2019 will not be placed on probation if they do not meet the standards for good standing as defined by Senate Policy 416.1. These students will remain in good standing for their next semester of registration.
 - Graduate students who began at Michigan Tech in spring 2020 do not have an academic standing. These students will be in good standing after spring 2020 regardless of whether they meet the standards for good standing as defined by Senate Policy 416.1.
- [Proposal 59-20](#) - **Pass / Low Pass grades:** Grades will be assigned using the normal grading scheme at the end of the semester. Graduate students will then have seven days after grades are posted to decide if they would like to switch any classes from spring 2020 to pass/fail grades (grades of SCV, LCV, or ECV). A pass grade (SCV) will be assigned for a grade of C or better. A low pass grade (LCV) will be assigned for grades of CD or D. A fail grade (ECV) will be assigned for a grade F. Once a graduate student elects the Pass/Fail option for a course and the final grade is changed, the decision is final and may not be reversed.
 - Considerations for SCV/LCV: The SCV and LCV grades will appear on your transcripts but not contribute to the cumulative GPA. SCV grades may satisfy graduation requirements (see below), but LCV grades can not.
- [Proposal 60-20](#) - **BC/C and SCV grades:** The Graduate School and the Data Science program allows up to six credits of BC, C, or SCV grades to be used toward completion of a graduate degree. An additional three (3) credits of SCV may be allowed to count towards the degree requirements. Courses with an LCV grade will not meet degree requirements (e.g., completing a core or elective requirement), but will not negatively impact your cumulative GPA (like receiving a CD/D would). Recall, your degree completion requires a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.

For those who were studying during Fall 2020, the following policies impact the program.

- [Proposal 30-21](#) - **Extend Time for Completion of Incomplete**: The time to complete an “I”, incomplete grade is extended one year past the end of the course.
- [Proposal 33-21](#) - **Change Date for Withdrawal with a “W”**: Students are allowed to withdraw from a course with a “W” until Friday, December 11th (extended from Friday, Nov. 6th).
- [Proposal 37-21](#) - **Pass/Low Pass/ Fail for Fall 2020**: Grades are assigned using the normal grading process. Students will then have seven days to decide if they would like to switch any classes to Pass/Low Pass/Fail grading.
Students should talk to their advisors and others on campus about the impact of this change: GPA, course credit, academic standing, degree requirements, financial aid, transfer credit, visas, and acceptance into graduate or professional schools.

Impacts of covid-19 on Michigan Tech, will continue into the Spring 2021, pay attention to emails, town halls, the [MTU Flex webpage](#), to learn of the most recent changes.

Getting Started

Listed below are several items to assist you in your orientation at MTU and the Data Science program. Some require your personal attention; others are informational only.

International Programs & Services Office (IPS)

All international students are required to report to [International Programs and Services \(IPS\)](#), Administration Building, Room 200 if you haven't checked in already. Bring your I-20 or DS-2019, passport and visa.

Housing Information

- [On-campus housing information](#)
- [Off-campus housing information](#)

Identification Card (HuskyCard)

All students are required to have a HuskyCard for identification and swipe access to buildings, parking lots, and residence halls if applicable. HuskyCards are issued at the HuskyCard Service Center in the IT Service Center, 1st floor of the Van Pelt and Opie Library. A valid government-issued photo ID is required, such as a driver's license, a state ID or a passport.

Office

Office space is only provided for supported GTA/GA/GRAs if required.

After-hours Access

Swipe card after-hours access to the buildings and computer labs will automatically be provided to all enrolled students. If you have been assigned an office space, you will be notified by email when your key is ready to be picked up at Public Safety & Police Services, 206 MacInnes Drive (building 16 on campus map). You will need your MTU ID card (HuskyCard) to pick up your key. If lost, you will be charged \$100 for a replacement key.

Parking & Transportation

See the [Transportation Services website](#) for detailed information regarding the vehicle registration process, parking fees, and rules/regulations regarding parking. Vehicle registration/parking permit purchase is available [online](#). Bring your vehicle registration and your picture ID to Transportation Services, 100 Administration Building, to pick up your parking permit. During off-hours (4pm-7am weekdays) and all weekend, core campus parking lots and parking meters are open for parking (exception is handicap and designated parking spaces).

Winter Parking Rules

To allow for snow removal, parking is prohibited on campus between 2:00am and 7:00am, from November 1 through April 30 (regardless of if there is/isn't snow on the ground). Exceptions: Campus housing residents may park in their designated lots. Those needing to park on campus overnight can ask for and receive a special overnight parking permit from transportation services. If it is after 5 p.m. on weekdays, on a holiday, or on weekends, contact Public Safety and Police Services for parking permission. If you have car problems and are unable to move your vehicle, contact Transportation Services at 487-1441 during regular business hours (8am-5pm, Monday-Friday), and after hours, holidays, and weekends call Public Safety before the 2:00 a.m. deadline at 487-2216.

Shuttle Service

The University and local community offers multiple shuttle routes for access to campus, campus housing, and city shopping. [Shuttle routes and times information](#) is available.

Covid-19 updates: General shuttle service has been curtailed, although the shopping shuttle remains in operation with changes to reflect health and safety protocols, information is updated at [MTU Flex site](#).

Employment Information

Michigan Tech [Career Services](#) provides information that may assist students in locating employment.

International students ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT

- International students must limit on-campus employment to 20 hours per week while school is in session. Students on J-1 visas must report on-campus employment to IPS.
- You cannot work off-campus without prior approval from IPS.
- You will need to apply for a Social Security Number if you have an on-campus job offer. Bring your job offer letter to IPS for further instructions.

Apply for a Social Security Number (SS# or SSN)

IPS has all the details on [employment options](#). Before accepting any kind of job, contact IPS to find out if your visa allows you to work, and about other forms and requirements that may be required including applying for a Social Security Number. Please request a receipt confirming the SSN application, and return receipt to the graduate school, Admin 411, if you have been hired as a GTA/GRA/GA.

Payroll

GTA/GRA/Fellowship/grader awardees, need to be set up on payroll as soon as possible to avoid a delay in pay. Pay disbursements are issued every two weeks. Direct deposit can be set up online in Banweb under Employees, Pay Information, Direct Deposit allocation.

Fellowship recipients are paid monthly as a non-payroll disbursement. Direct Deposit can be set up for non-payroll payments online in Banweb under Employees, Non-Payroll Direct Deposit Destination.

Degree Information

The Data Science Masters is a course-based program requiring successful completion of 30 approved credits within five years of starting the program. Specifically,

- 12 credits of core courses must be successfully completed
- at least 6 credits of approved electives must be successfully completed
- at most 6 credits of foundational courses may be taken
- 6 - 12 credits of domain electives may be taken.

A passing grade (B or higher) must be obtained in 24 of the above 30 credits; a grade of BC or C may be accepted for the remaining 6 of the 30 credits. Additionally, at least 18 credits must be taken at the graduate level (5xxx and 6xxx).

Core Courses

The following four courses are **required** for the Data Science degree. These courses are offered only once a year. You will need to plan accordingly.

Fall*	UN 5550	Introduction to Data Science
	MA 5790	Predictive Modeling
	BA 5200	Information Systems Management and Data Analytics
Spring	CS 5831	Advanced Data Mining

*Note, many students do not need to take all three core courses in their first Fall semester. UN 5550, Introduction to Data Science is recommended for this first semester, but the choice of the other core course should be discussed with your advisor before the semester begins.

Electives

At least 2 courses must be taken from the list of approved elective courses in Table 1. Note, the options have changed over the years, be sure to select courses given the year you entered the program.

** Class offerings might change without notice. Please refer to the Registrar's schedule of classes for actual class offerings.

Foundational Courses

A maximum of six (6) credit hours of foundational skills course may be applied to the MS in Data Science. These courses will build skills necessary for successful completion of the MS in Data Science. Some students will not need to take these foundational courses and will instead use the domain electives to reach the credit requirements of this program. A list of foundational courses that can be taken towards the data science program is listed on the [data science website](#) and in Table 2 below.

Table 1. List of Elective Courses

Course	Course Offered	Academic Year student joined the program		
		2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021
BA 5740 - Managing Innovation and Technology	Fall	X		
CS 5631 - Data Visualization	Fall, Spring		X	X
CS 5841/EE 5841 - Machine Learning	Spring	X	X	X
CS 5471 - Computer Security	Fall, Spring	X	X	X
FW 5083 - Programming Skills for Bioinformatics	Fall, alt. years	X	X	X
MA 4710 - Regression Analysis	Fall			X
MA 5770 - Bayesian Statistics	Fall, alt. years		X	X
MA 5781 - Time Series Analysis and Forecasting	Spring	X	X	X
MGT 4600 - Management of Technology and Innovation	Fall, Spring		X	X
PH 4395 - Computer Simulation in Physics	Spring	X		
PSY 5210 - Advanced Statistical Analysis and Design I	Fall, alt. years	X	X	X
SAT 5114 - Introduction to AI and Health	Fall		X	X
UN 5390 - Scientific Computing	Fall, Spring	X	X	X

Table 2. List of Foundational Courses

Course	Course Offered
CS 3425 - Introduction to Database Systems	Fall, Spring
FIN 3000 - Principles of Finance	Fall, Spring, Summer
FW 3540 - Introduction to Geographic Information Systems for Natural Resource Management	Spring
MA 3710 - Engineering Statistics	Fall, Spring, Summer
MA 3715 - Biostatistics	Spring
MA 3740 - Statistical Programming and Analysis	Fall, Spring
MIS 3400 - Business Database Management	Spring
MKT 3600 - Marketing Data Analytics	Spring
SAT 3002 - Application Programming Introduction	Fall
SAT 3210 - Database Management	Fall, Summer
SAT 3611 - Infrastructure Service Administration and Security	Fall, Summer

Domain Elective Courses

The [data science website](#) contains an extensive list of domain elective courses that can be taken towards the data science program. Your remaining credits of domain elective courses, 6-12 credits, can be taken towards the data science degree.

Note: If there is a course not on the Domain Elective Course list, a student may petition the Graduate Program Director for its consideration. This petition must be submitted before the start of the semester for consideration.

Home Departments / Advisors

The Data Science program is an interdisciplinary collaboration across the university; Data Science graduate students will have an opportunity to select an advisor and home department that matches their interest/domain background. There will be an opportunity to meet some of the advisors during the data science program orientation. Program orientation for fall admissions typically occur the week before classes begin.

Students will be asked to select and meet with an advisor by the second week of their first semester. Advisors and home departments should typically be selected based on which domain electives you intend to specialize in. For example, if you intend to mostly take courses offered by the Math department as your domain electives, you should consider requesting Dr. Ong as your advisor, and the Math department as your home department. Your advisor should provide academic and career advising. Academic advising entails ensuring that your courses are suitable for your career goals and you have the necessary background to succeed in the courses. Career advising entails providing you a glimpse of what the industry in your domain specialization might look for in potential hires, connecting you with other researchers in their department/college, and potentially connecting you with recruiters.

It is our desire that students are incorporated into the activities of their home department, including the opportunity for GTA assignments within that department, access to common areas and lounges, networking with faculty and other graduate students in that department, attending department seminars.

Changing Advisors / Home Departments

Within the data science program, there should be little cause to request a change of advisors or home departments. The advisors work together as a team, communicating with each other regularly as part of the steering committee.

To request a change of advisor or home department, please send an email, or meet with the graduate program director to initiate the process. The current advisor and the requested advisor should be contacted prior to initiating this process.

Registration / Scheduling

The graduate course catalog is located at the [data science website](#). We recommend that your course schedule be determined in consultation with your advisor, data science director, or a member of the data science executive committee. It is important to set yourself up for success by ensuring that you have a

suitable background to succeed in this interdisciplinary program. There are various foundational courses that can help strengthen your background in statistics, business or computing. All students should take UN5550, Introduction to Data Science, in the Fall of their first year of study.

Information about registration can be found at the [Registrar's website](#). You may register online using the Banweb system or register in person at the Registrar's Office, Room 130 of the Administration Building. Courses can be dropped or added through the first week of class without accruing any late penalty. If you have not paid for your courses by Wednesday of the first week of classes, your courses will be dropped.

Forms and Degree Completion Timelines

An important resource is the [Graduate School's Forms and Deadlines webpage](#). It is the student's responsibility to complete forms and training courses in a timely fashion. Failure to meet submission deadlines could result in delayed completion of a student's graduate degree. NOTE: graduate students must maintain a university cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above to be eligible for graduation.

Tuition Payment

After scheduling courses, go to MyMichiganTech to receive a copy of your schedule and tuition bill. You may pay your student bill online with American Express, MasterCard or Discover (2.3% transaction fee applies) or e-check, or at the Cashier's Office located within the Student Financial Services Center in the Administration Building. Note: Credit/debit card payment not taken at Cashiers Office or by phone.

For supported students only (GTA/GA/GRA): After scheduling courses, go to Banweb to view a copy of your schedule and tuition bill. Computer fees and tuition for up to 9 credits per semester will be paid by the program for fully supported students. You are responsible for the student voted fees such as the Student Activity Fee, and Experience Tech Fee, etc.

Continuous Enrollment

Students must be enrolled every academic-year (fall and spring) semester until they complete their degree. "Completing" a degree means successfully completing all required courses and turning in all required paperwork. Graduate students are not required to register for summer session in order to fulfill the continuous enrollment policy. However, you can enroll in summer semester courses if you desire.

** International students are further required to maintain full-time status for fall and spring semesters, as a condition of their visa. Reduced course-loads are permissible only in certain circumstances. Please refer to [documentation and forms](#) required.

Career Placement

- Use the [career center](#) for help with interviews and resumes. In addition, you should plan on attending the Fall and Spring Career Fairs for finding internships and job leads.
- Students are strongly encouraged to create a [Linkedin account](#) and connect with the Michigan Tech Alumni Group. Social networking can be beneficial for expanding professional associations.

- Part-time on-campus employment opportunities for students may be [available](#). The career center also maintains a list of local jobs aimed at Michigan Tech students:
 - www.career.mtu.edu/students/jobpostings.php
 - www.career.mtu.edu/students/jobresources.php

Internships / Co-ops

Internships and co-ops can provide valuable experience to your data science degree, in addition to expanding your network for future job prospects. To participate in a co-op, students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above, and adhere to [deadlines posted](#). International students should contact IPS to ensure that requirements of their visas are fulfilled.

** Only internships and co-ops that are relevant to your data-science program may be counted towards the academic fulfillment of your data science degree. Students who wish to count co-op experience towards the academic fulfillment of the data science degree should provide the offer letter / job description to the program director for prior approval. If approved, up to three (3) credits of Co-op (UN 5000/ UN 5001 / UN 5002) can be counted towards academic fulfillment of the data science degree as a domain specialization elective.

Enterprise

In the Fall of 2018, we piloted several data science graduate enterprise projects. The enterprise project is intended to be a multi-semester learning experience, working on projects provided by industry. We are still trying to develop a path for data science graduate students to participate meaningfully in Enterprise. This will be updated as more information becomes available.

University Policies

Here are some of the university policies that pertain to the data science program. A full listing of [University policies](#) is found online.

External Transfer Credits

To transfer credits from another university or college to the data science program, please be aware that :

- A maximum of ten [transfer credits](#) can be applied towards the Data Science degree unless special arrangements have been made between Michigan Tech and the second institution. The number of credits accepted depends on an evaluation by the Data Science program and the dean of the Graduate School.
- A grade equivalent of “B” or better must be earned in the course to be transferred.
- The proposed course to be transferred must be pre-approved by the Data Science Executive Committee before the end of the semester **prior** to the semester you intend to take the transfer course, and must be taken at an institution accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The course cannot duplicate courses that have already been taken at Michigan Tech. The student will provide the name of the university, a course number, name, and description, and the **most recent** syllabus for the course. A Michigan Tech faculty member responsible for teaching the required course will be consulted as to whether the proposed course is of equivalent content.

Accelerated MS

The accelerated Masters in Data Science program is open to all high achieving undergraduate students at Michigan Tech. It allows students to double count up to six courses toward both the Bachelor’s and MS degree. Students with an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher can apply for admission to the accelerated MS in Data Science program any time upon attaining junior class standing, but must apply prior to being awarded their bachelor’s degree.

Students should meet with the Data Science program director and their undergraduate advisor to plan what courses may be double-counted and allowed senior rule courses. All courses counted under the senior rule and all double-counted courses applied to the accelerated MS in Data Science degree must have a grade of B or higher.

Senior Rule

Michigan Tech undergraduates may take up to 10 Data-Science approved credits hours in their senior year, and use these credits towards a Data Science Masters degree. A grade of “B” or higher must be attained for these credits to count towards the graduate degree. Note, these credits do not count towards the undergraduate degree, and are independent of double-counted courses.

Re-using Credits

Students may double count up to 10 credits from one other Michigan Tech graduate program toward a Data Science masters degree, with the approval of the Data Science Program Director. Graduate credits earned toward the **completion** of a graduate degree at an institution other than Michigan Tech **cannot** be applied toward this degree program (this is a Michigan Tech policy).

Good Academic Standing and Dismissal

The Data Science Graduate Program follows the [Graduate School policies](#) on Good Academic Standing and Grading Policy.

Academic Grievances / Grade Appeals

Students wishing to appeal a grade assigned by a faculty member at Michigan Tech should follow the procedure described in the [Michigan Tech Policy Statement under Academic Grievances](#).

Policies for Repeating Courses

For the data science degree, up to six (6) credits may be accepted with a B/C or C grade. Overall a 3.0 GPA must always be maintained, failure to do so will result in academic probation.

Required courses can only be repeated once. If a student fails to earn a B or above in a required course after taking the required course twice, the student will be recommended for dismissal from the program. This policy applies even when the course is repeated at another institution.

Helpful Tips

Formatting Papers and Citing Research Material

All of your instructors expect you to properly cite and document sources of information in your work. Different instructors will prefer different formatting styles. Plagiarism is not tolerated and can result in dismissal from the graduate program. Be sure you are familiar with what constitutes a violation. When in doubt, please ASK your instructor or research advisor. A detailed booklet is available that describes Michigan Tech's [academic integrity policy and procedures](#).

Skills and Research Methodology

Although the Data Science Graduate Program is course-based, there will be numerous opportunities to work with professors on current research projects. Take the initiative to engage with faculty in your area of interest. Volunteer to assist with research tasks outside of class, above and beyond class assignments. Learn the methodology being used by the researcher. Be aware that:

- Statistics and quantitative skills are critical for data scientists. Not only should you be able to use a variety of statistical tools, but you also need to be able to understand the theoretical meaning and be adept at interpreting the results in productive and insightful ways.
- Core courses will require familiarity with a number of advanced computer skills. Invest time developing a solid understanding of a computer programming language such as Python, R and SAS. This will allow you to carry out more complex data analyses.
- Writing/communication skills are *essential* to a successful career. Michigan Tech provides assistance to improve your professional writing/communication. You should treat each and every writing/communication assignment as an opportunity to improve your communication skills.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity and honesty are central components of a student's education, and ethical conduct fostered in an academic context will be carried into a student's professional career. Academic integrity is essential in a community of scholars searching and learning to search for truth. Anything less than total commitment to integrity undermines the efforts of the academic community. Both students and faculty are responsible for upholding the academic integrity of the University. For more information about policies related to Academic Integrity, please visit the [Office of Academic and Community Conduct](#).

Appendix: Degree Schedule - Masters in Data Science

(A) Required Coursework - 12 credits

Semester	Course Number	Title	Credits	Grade
	UN 5550	Introduction to Data Science	3	
	MA 5790	Predictive Modeling	3	
	CS 5831	Data Mining	3	
	BA 5200	Information Systems Management	3	

(B) Elective Coursework - Minimum 6 credits

Semester	Course Number	Title	Credits	Grade

(C) Foundational Coursework - Maximum 6 Credits

Semester	Course Number	Title	Credits	Grade

(D) Domain Electives - Maximum 12 credits

Semester	Course Number	Title	Credits	Grade