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General Information

This student handbook has been prepared as a guide for graduate students in the Clemson University Master of Transportation Safety Administration (MTSA) program and includes regulations, procedures, and pertinent information on the degree program. All graduate students should also review the Clemson University policies concerning sexual and racial harassment, fair treatment and nondiscrimination of the handicapped, and research ethics. Students should become familiar with the information presented in this document as well as the Clemson University Graduate Policies & Procedures Academic Year.

The policies and procedures of the Graduate School have been established to ensure that a consistent set of standards are followed from the admissions process all the way through to the awarding of degrees for every Graduate School program. It is very important that each student familiarize himself or herself with all Graduate School and departmental requirements and information pertaining to the student’s program of study. Should there be discrepancies between the information presented in these two documents, the Clemson University Graduate Policies & Procedures prevails over this and other departmental student handbooks.

Please also refer to the following documents found on the Clemson University Graduate School website:

- Graduate School Forms
- Graduate School Deadlines

Overview of the Program

Road safety is emerging as a distinct scientific discipline and preparation of professionals for road safety management is vital to our road safety future. Clemson University is leading the way with an innovative, one-of-a-kind experience to professionals and students throughout the country and throughout the world. Launched in 2019, the new Master of Transportation Safety Administration (MTSA) program at Clemson University is the first of its kind in the United States.

Through MTSA, Clemson University’s goal is to create a pipeline of leaders equipped with the knowledge and skills required to play critical roles in the creation and management of high-quality, innovative road safety programs. Graduates will be transformed into lifesavers and changemakers helping to save lives and build safer communities throughout the world.

The Need: Demand estimates by the Transportation Research Board (TRB) indicate that as many as 100,000 professionals in the United States alone who contribute to the road
safety workforce need safety-related knowledge and training (TRB Special Report 289: Building the Road Safety Profession in the Public Sector). A much larger demand for this graduate degree program can be anticipated by widening the reach to include an international audience or a different emphasis (e.g., commercial motor vehicle, public transit, or railroad).

**Addressing the Need Through Innovation:** Clemson’s MTSA degree program addresses the need for a road safety workforce capable of deploying evidence-based strategies and best practices supported by ongoing research. This workforce is expected to graduate with an ability to address the complex transportation safety issues that our society will face in the next 10-20 years from a variety of perspectives. This unique graduate degree program is a two-year, non-thesis, 30-credit hour, online interdisciplinary transportation safety curriculum designed to develop professionals skilled in administering and managing road safety programs involving the complex interactions of the human-vehicle-road system.

MTSA has been developed in coordination with a [Technical Advisory Committee](#) (TAC) of prominent national leaders with tremendous expertise in the field of road safety. TAC members bring the latest industry perspectives to the program and will be offering periodic guest lectures. They represent behavioral safety programs; infrastructure programs; injury prevention; driver and vehicle services; commercial motor vehicle safety; and private industry. MTSA involves faculty from eight Clemson colleges due to the highly interdisciplinary nature of the transportation safety administration field. These faculty represent disciplines that must work collaboratively to reduce traffic crashes, injuries and fatalities.

The curriculum incorporates all the E’s of road safety, including behavioral safety, infrastructure/traffic safety engineering, enforcement, emergency management, education, planning and design, health, injury prevention, communications, marketing, public policy, driver and vehicle services, and finance/grants management. It engages students in activities related to current national and international issues and best practices in road safety and aligns with the core competencies identified in *National Cooperative Highway Research Program* (NCHRP) Research Results Digest 302.

The MTSA program encourages candidates from numerous professional backgrounds to apply. For instance, MTSA students can represent education enforcement, emergency management, education, planning and design, public health, injury prevention, communications and marketing, public policy, driver and vehicle services, and transportation finance and grants administration. MTSA addresses the needs of employees of state highway safety offices; the private sector; advocacy groups; safety-related nonprofits and professional associations; and government agencies focused on road safety at local, state, regional, federal and international levels.
Program Points of Contact

Dr. Kim E. Alexander, Clinical Associate Professor, kalxndr@clemson.edu
Dr. Philip Pidgeon, Clinical Associate Professor, ppidgeo@clemson.edu
Ms. Terecia Wilson, Professor of Practice, tereciw@clemson.edu
Mr. Michael R. Posey, Marketing & Engagement Strategist, mposey@clemson.edu

Support Services

At the beginning of each semester the MTSA program holds new student technology training workshops and advising sessions. The date and time will be sent via email to all admitted students. All new students are required to attend one of these sessions. During training/advising new students will be encouraged to formulate a plan of study. Individual advising will be offered. MTSA faculty and leadership are available on a continuous basis to answer questions and offer guidance. Formal advising can always be scheduled per individual requests. Open, online advising will also be offered prior and during registration for all students. An example Plan of Study is provided in the Degree Requirements section.

The following is a list of campus resources and services available to graduate students:
- Clemson Computing and Technology (864) 656-3494
- Enrolled Student Services (864) 656-2174
- Graduate Admissions (864) 656-3195
- Graduate School (864) 656-4172
- Registration Services (864) 656-2305
- Student Financial Services (864) 656-5592
- Veteran’s Affairs (864) 336-3494
- International Affairs (864) 656-3614

Admission Requirements

MTSA Program has rolling admissions and accepts students for the Spring, Summer and Fall semesters. Applications are considered year-round for all semesters.

The Clemson MTSA program is designed and dedicated to serving working professionals. Therefore, the MTSA admissions committee considers four primary pieces of a student’s MTSA application. First, we consider an applicant’s professional experience, as discussed in their personal statement and GRE waiver (where relevant). Second, grades and courses taken at the undergraduate and/or graduate level are evaluated. Third, letters of reference are extremely important in evaluating the academic and professional experience of the student. Finally, GRE test scores are waived for applicants who can demonstrate 2 or more years of employment in a transportation safety setting (demonstrated from one reference from your current employer).
All students applying to the MTSA program must have an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university upon entry into the program. Any applicant who is concerned about varying from normal expectations is encouraged to discuss options with the MTSA staff as soon as possible. All applicants will be officially notified of admission decisions by the Graduate School at Clemson University.

All applications to the MTSA are made online, using the link www.applyweb.com/clemsong/index.ftl. Each applicant is required to submit the following materials as part of the online application:

- Transcripts showing a bachelor’s degree from a nationally accredited college or university (initially, informal transcripts or Xerox copies of originals may be utilized).
- A Statement of Purpose
- A current CV
- Three Professional references
- GRE test scores are waived for applicants who can demonstrate 2 or more years of employment in a transportation safety setting (demonstrated from one reference from your current employer).
- Students from countries where English is not the native language must provide IELTS scores.

Degree Requirements

MTSA is designed to be completed within two years (4 semesters, 2 summers), but students can spread course work over a longer period as their professional obligations dictate. The MTSA courses include four 3-credit core courses, and six additional 3-credit courses which are chosen to form a thematic cluster customized to fill the needs of individual students. Core courses:

- MTSA 8000 Introduction to Road Safety
- CE 8150 Transportation Safety Engineering
- MTSA 8420 Road Safety Culture
- MTSA 8300 Road Safety Management

The remaining six courses will be offered as a thematic cluster that addresses the needs of many transportation safety administrators. These could include, but are not limited to, those listed below. See MTSA website for additional courses.

- Needs Assessment
- Traffic Safety
- Trends in Public Relations
- Public Policy Process
- Human Factors in Transportation
- Digital Creativity
- Enforcement
- Internship
Apply Online

All applications to the MTSA are made online, using the link www.applyweb.com/clemson/index.ftl. For more information, contact Dr. Kim E. Alexander, Executive Director, Clemson University’s Institute for Global Road Safety and Security (IGRSS) at MTSAapply@clemson.edu

Email

Upon acceptance to Clemson University, you will receive information about your user ID and password from the Graduate School. Email is the most common mode used by the department and the university to communicate with you. Please check your e-mail regularly.

Online Conduct

Appropriate online academic conduct means maintaining a safe learning environment based on mutual respect and civility. Remember that in an online class it is common for a very substantial portion of your grade to be a function of how well you perform in online discussion areas and other “classroom participation” activities. Your ability to communicate clearly and properly in an online class can be every bit as important to your success as how you perform on multiple choice tests and written assignments.

Watch these short videos:

- Make the Most of Your Virtual Communications, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lh1fi2dOhbl
- Internet Etiquette: Netiquette Guidelines for the Online Classroom
- Netiquette for Online Classes, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6Sh6Hdsf0I&t=82s

All participants in Clemson courses are expected to behave professionally by adhering to these standards of conduct:

- Be present during the video-conferencing with camera and microphone active and in suitable business attire.
- Be courteous and respectful of the instructors and fellow classmates (e.g., show an attentive, alert, business-like presence on camera).
- Never transmit or promote content known to be illegal.
- Respect the privacy of others as well as your own.
- Forgive other people's mistakes.
- Never use harassing, threatening, embarrassing, or abusive language or actions.
In general, there are two basic guidelines:

- Don’t waste people’s time.
- Don’t say anything to a person online that you wouldn’t say to face-to-face.

More specific guidelines for proper behavior in an online learning course are listed below.

- Avoid Flaming - using derogatory, obscene, or inappropriate language. This can either be on a discussion board or in e-mail.
- Don’t SHOUT. Use of all capital letters and exclamation marks indicates SHOUTING.
- Avoid grammatical and spelling errors by using Spelling and Grammar checker tools when they are available.
- Do a quick check of the discussion board or course site before posting or e-mailing questions to see if the question you are about to ask or the article you just read and were about to post has already been posted.
- Keep your posts on-topic and on the proper board. Keeping messages on topic will help with the organization and readability.
- Share expert knowledge. Post resources on how you found information.
- Avoid sending large attachments through e-mail unless someone has specifically asked for it.
- When replying to an e-mail message, don’t “Reply to All” unless it’s necessary. Also, only attach the portion of the original e-mail that you are responding to. Do not attach the entire message when it’s not necessary.

Online communication that fails to meet these standards of conduct will be removed from the course. Repeated misconduct may result in being blocked from online discussions, receiving a grade penalty, or being dismissed from the course. Such misconduct in the online environment may also be reported to officials for appropriate action in accordance with University policy. If you ever encounter inappropriate content in our course, please contact me with your concerns.

Counseling Services

The demands of graduate school can sometimes seem overwhelming. If you feel you could benefit from talking to a counselor – about grad school stress or any other issue – you may be eligible to receive services from the Counseling and Psychological Services Program (CAPS), located in Redfern Health Center. To learn about their current programs, visit the CAPS website at https://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/student-health/caps/ or call them at (864) 656-2451.
Ombudsman for Faculty and Graduate Students

The ombudsman is an independent, confidential resource that provides assistance to faculty, graduate students and post docs in resolving problems, complaints and conflicts when normal processes and procedures have not worked satisfactorily. The Ombudsman’s Office serves as a central information source on policies, procedures and regulations affecting faculty, graduate students, and post docs. The office refers individuals to persons able to resolve problems or handle appeals at the lowest possible level. Where appropriate, the ombudsman can facilitate and/or mediate communication between parties who find themselves in a dispute.

What Is the Role of the Ombudsman?
The ombudsman strives to ensure that faculty, graduate students and post docs receive fair and equitable treatment within the University system. He provides an independent point of view in an informal and confidential environment. The ombudsman will not identify you or discuss your personal concerns with anyone without your permission. Private confidential meetings can be arranged at your convenience. All communications will be treated with strict confidentiality. The ombudsman works toward resolutions based on principles of fairness. He is neither an advocate for faculty, administration, or students, nor an agent of the University, but is an advocate of fair processes.

What Services does the Ombudsman provide?
The Office of the Ombudsman provides fair and impartial counseling to faculty members, graduate students and post docs by:

1. Addressing problems and concerns, identifying and evaluating options to reach resolutions
2. Providing available resources within the University that may be of assistance
3. Serving as a neutral party in conflict resolution
4. Opening lines of communication through mediation
5. Recommending changes in University policies and procedures when necessary

How Does the Ombudsman Help?
The Office of the Ombudsman is available to assist faculty members, graduate students and post docs who:

1. Have a problem or concern relating to the University and need guidance in resolving the issue
2. Need information about policies or procedures at Clemson
3. Need someone to mediate between individuals or within the University
4. Think that the University has made an error in a particular case
5. Feel like a victim of harassment or discrimination
6. Are unsure about which University policies, procedure or regulations apply to certain situations
7. Have a specific academic problem that cannot be resolved by following regular University procedures
8. Feel that he/she has been unfairly or inequitably treated
9. Have a problem that requires someone to negotiate a solution or to help facilitate communication between parties
10. Feel that a University policy, procedure or regulation has been applied unfairly or erroneously

**Code of Ethics**
The ombudsman, as a designated neutral, has the responsibility of maintaining strict confidentiality concerning matters that are brought to his attention unless given permission to do otherwise. The only exceptions, at the sole discretion of the ombudsman, are where there appears to be imminent threat of serious harm. The ombudsman must take all reasonable steps to protect any records and files pertaining to confidential discussions from inspection by all other persons, including management.

The ombudsman will not testify in any formal judicial or administrative hearing about concerns brought to his attention. When making recommendations, the ombudsman has the responsibility to suggest actions or policies that will be equitable to all parties.

**Standards of Practice**
The Clemson University ombudsman adheres to the Ombudsman Association Code of Ethics:

- We base our practice on confidentiality.
- We assert that there is a privilege with respect to communications with the ombudsman, and we resist testifying in an informal process inside or outside the organization.
- We exercise discretion whether to act upon a concern of an individual contacting the office. An ombudsman may initiate action on a problem he or she perceives directly.
- We are designated neutrals and remain independent of ordinary line and staff structures. We serve no additional role (within an organization where we serve as ombudsman) which would compromise this neutrality.
- We remain an informal and off-the-record resource. Formal investigations for the purpose of adjudication should be done by others. In the event that an ombudsman accepts a request to conduct a formal investigation, a memo should be written to file noting this action as an exception to the ombudsman role. Such investigations should not be considered privileged.
- We foster communication about the philosophy and function of the ombudsman’s office with the people we serve.
- We provide feedback on trends, issues, policies and practices without breaching confidentiality or anonymity. We identify new problems, and we provide support for responsible systems change.
- We keep professionally current and competent by pursuing continuing education and training relevant to the ombudsman profession.
• We will endeavor to be worthy of the trust placed in us.

The Office of the Ombudsman welcomes constructive suggestions of ways to better serve the faculty, graduate students and post docs at Clemson University. If we can be of service to you, please feel free to contact our office.

**Assistance for Students and Staff**

**Graduate Students:** Any complaint should first be taken to the faculty or staff member involved to reach a resolution. If no resolution is reached, the graduate student should consult with the department chair and the dean who will hear the complaint and act as a referee. The ombudsman, student, dean of the college, department chair and the involved faculty or staff member should make every effort to reach a solution. If a resolution cannot be made, the student should then consult with the dean of the Graduate School. Graduate students should talk with the associate dean responsible for academic grievances if mediation is necessary. The Graduate School is located in E-106 Martin Hall, and the telephone number is (864) 656-4172.

**How Can the Ombudsman be contacted?**
Concerns can be directed to the university ombudsman by letter, walk-in, appointment or telephone:
R. Gordon Halfacre
Member of the Ombudsman Association
University Ombudsman for Faculty and Graduate Students
201 West Cherry Road
Seneca, SC 29678
Telephone: 864-656-4353
Email address: glendad@clemson.edu

**Non-Discrimination**

Clemson University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, veteran’s status, genetic information or protected activity (e.g., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in any complaint process, etc.) in employment, educational programs and activities, admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sexual harassment and sexual violence as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Please refer to the [Notice of Non-Discrimination](#) policy. Alesia Smith serves as Clemson’s Title IX Coordinator and may be reached at alesias@clemson.edu or (864) 656-3181.

**Student Accessibility Services**

Clemson University values the diversity of our student body as a strength and a critical component of our dynamic community. Students with disabilities or temporary
injuries/conditions may require accommodations due to barriers in the structure of facilities, course design, technology used for curricular purposes, or other campus resources. Students who experience a barrier to full access to this class should let the professor know and make an appointment to meet with a staff member in Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible. You can make an appointment by calling 864-656-6848, by emailing studentaccess@lists.clemson.edu, or by visiting Suite 239 in the Academic Success Center building. Appointments are strongly encouraged – drop-ins will be seen if at all possible, but there could be a significant wait due to scheduled appointments. Students who receive Academic Access Letters are strongly encouraged to request, obtain and present these to their professors as early in the semester as possible so that accommodations can be made in a timely manner. It is the student’s responsibility to follow this process each semester. You can access further policies and procedures at www.clemson.edu/academics/studentaccess/.

Academic Support Services

Students may access a variety of academic support services to enhance your learning in the online classroom. Here are links to services available:

- Academic Success Center
- The Writing Center
- Clemson Library
- CCIT (Tech Support)
- CCIT (Tech Support) email: ithelp@clemson.edu
- Academic Advising
- Registrar

Emergency Contact

University email is considered an official communication. Students are required to monitor their university email (see Email Communications Policy) thus establishing this as a convenient method for official communication to students.