MTSA Graduate Program Handbook

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2. Link to Graduate School Policy Handbook Web Page:

   These guidelines supplement the current version of the Clemson University Graduate School Policy Handbook:

   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.

   Graduate School Forms  https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/forms.html
   Graduate School Deadlines https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/deadlines.html

3. Overview of program

   The Master of Transportation Safety Administration (MTSA) is a recently approved two-year, 30-credit-hour online interdisciplinary transportation (road) safety curriculum designed to develop professionals skilled at administering and managing road safety programs involving the complex interactions of the human-vehicle-road system. This program utilizes many Clemson courses across multiple departments and colleges, modified for high quality online delivery.

   The MTSA degree specifically targets the needs of employees of corporations and government agencies involved in road safety, such as the US Department of Transportation and its various agencies (such as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, etc.); the Centers for Disease Control (CDC); state and local Departments of Transportation (DOTs); State Highway Safety Offices (SHSO); State Injury Prevention Offices; State Highway Patrols and local law
enforcement agencies responsible for traffic law enforcement; State Driver and Vehicle Services agencies; Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Councils of Government; State Emergency Medical Services/Emergency Response; safety advocacy groups (such as MADD and Safe Kids); road safety research institutes; professional associations (such as the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, the Governor’s Highway Safety Association, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, etc.); and other national, state and local transportation related groups. The MTSA also targets the needs of those professionals working in road safety in similar organizations in other countries where transportation safety is a significant issue.

The Clemson MTSA is the first graduate program of its type in the United States.

We are accepting applications for our first program cohort, to start in the fall of 2019.

4. Approved locations, modalities of delivery. The MTSA is offered as a fully online program. Some courses are also offered live on campus (with content streamed online).

5. Cohort information. The first courses in MTSA are being offered in the fall 2019 semester.

6. Basic program metrics- typical time to degree. The MTSA is designed to be completed within two years (4 semesters, 2 summers). 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 include:
   • MTSA 8000 Introduction to Road Safety
   • CE 8150 Transportation Safety Engineering
   • MTSA 8420 Road Safety Culture
   • MTSA 8300 Road Safety Management

An example of 6 courses in a thematic cluster that addresses the needs of many transportation safety administrators includes:
   • HRD 8450 Needs Assessment
   • ME 6930 Traffic Safety
   • COMM 8560 Trends in Public Relations
   • PADM 8220 Public Policy Process
   • IE 6910 Human Factors in Transportation
   • ENGL 8400 Digital Creativity

7. Apply Online:  www.applyweb.com/clemsong/index.ftl
For More Information, contact Dr. Kim E. Alexander, Executive Director, Clemson University’s Institute for Global Road Safety and Security (IGRSS) kalxndr@clemson.edu or contact Dr. Bruce Rafert, MTSA Program Coordinator, Professor Emeritus, Clemson University’s Institute for Global Road Safety and Security, MTSAapply@clemson.edu.

8. The MTSA has a Technical Advisory Committee, composed of national experts.

9. Admission requirements:
   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.

10. The application package must include each of the items above no later than 45 days prior to the start of the term you wish to enter. The MTSA Program has rolling admissions, and accepts students for the Spring, Summer and Fall semesters. Applications are considered year-round for all semesters.

11. Explanation of any program-specific fees/equipment unique to program. The MTSA program uses standard Clemson Fees.

12. Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA) are sometimes available, but typically require on-campus residency. A few recruitment fellowships and other merit-based scholarships are also available to be awarded on a competitive basis. Prospective advisors should
inform interested students of these opportunities as appropriate. Applicants already working in the transportation safety field should check with their employer regarding whether their agency has a tuition reimbursement program and how they might participate in that program.

13. Minimum degree requirements, including but not limited to: credit hours required. A minimum of 30 credits are required.

14. Program of study. See 8 above.


16. Time limits (same as graduate school policy).

17. Residency requirement (there is no residency requirement).

18. Foreign language requirement. None.

19. Details of forming or modifying an advisory committee (see Graduate School handbook).


21. Comprehensive exam details and expectations and options. NA.

22. Expectations for thesis/dissertation. NA

   All MTSA students are expected to display high standards of professionalism, as appropriate to their current or future workplaces (e.g., State or Federal DOTs, private sector/corporate/NGO employers. Participation in professional meetings at state and national levels is strongly encouraged. The advisor should lead the student to seek travel funds from external sources. Students should affiliate with appropriate professional societies, e.g. TRB, AASHTO, NAWHSL, ITE, etc.

24. Annual review of progress. Each student’s progress is assessed on the 12 and 6 month thereafter points from the term they begin the program. Factors to be included in that assessment are (1) completion and mastery of the material in core courses, (2) progress toward completion of the thematic core, (3) student performance metrics (e.g., minimal grade point) are sufficient for graduation.
25. All students are expected to maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher at all points in their program. Dismissal from the program may occur in accord with the policy in the Graduate School Handbook.

26. Some courses have attendance policies pertaining to participation in Case Studies or group projects.

27. Other

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

b. **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](#)
   - [Internet Etiquette: Netiquette Guidelines for the Online Classroom](#)
   - [Netiquette for Online Classes](#)

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 active 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 other people's privacy 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.

28. 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.

29. Ombudsman. 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:

1. We base our practice on confidentiality.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. We foster communication about the philosophy and function of the ombudsman’s office with the people we serve.
7. 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.
8. We keep professionally current and competent by pursuing continuing education and training relevant to the ombudsman profession.
9. 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
101 Clemson House
Clemson University
Clemson, SC 29634
Telephone: 864-656-4353
Email address: amonyel@clemson.edu