# Michigan Tech Graduate School logo

# Advisor Recommendation Form

Complete and save this form in **MS Word only**. Google docs and/or other programs do not work properly.

## Submission instructions

1. **Graduate Students and Advisor(s)**: The advisor(s) and student should meet, discuss, and come to a consensus about the workload expectations, communications preferences, and mentoring plan before filling out this form. Once they have come to a consensus, they will complete the fields highlighted in blue.
2. **Graduate Students:** Submit this form to [their Graduate Program](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/prospective/directors/) by their second semester to select an advisor. To select a new advisor or add a co-advisor, submit this form again.
3. **Graduate Programs**: Complete the fields highlighted in yellow. Verify the form meets your requirements and upload the form to the Graduate School.

* To open hyperlinks in this form, press the control key and click on them.
* More information on advising and mentoring is available for [students](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/resources-for/students/advising-mentoring) and [faculty](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/resources-for/faculty-staff/advising-mentoring).
* It is recommended that the advisor and student utilize the [Individual Development Plan (IDP)](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/resources-for/students/advising-mentoring/idp/) every year. The IDP is intended to establish **how** the goals in this plan will be accomplished.
* Both the advisor and student should keep a copy of this document for their records.

## Enter Graduate Student Information

Name: Connor O’Loughlin Degree Program: Biological Sciences

M-number: M35035278 Degree Option: PhD

## Recommend Advisor(s)

Every graduate student must have one advisor or two co-advisors that meet the [Graduate School requirements](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/policies-procedures/requirements/advisor/). Type the advisor name(s), along with the semester and year you begin working with them. The remaining columns are for Graduate School use only.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Advisor Name | Semester | Year | M # | Grad Fac Status | Affiliation |
| Trista Vick-Majors | Fall | 2025 |  |  |  |
| Enter Co-advisor’s name | Semester. | YYYY |  |  |  |

## Close Personal Relationship Management (Graduate Program completes this section)

1. Answer the following question about [close, personal relationships](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/policies-procedures/academic/independence/) between the advisor(s) and members of the committee:  
   Do any advisor(s) or committee members have a close, personal relationship? Choose
2. Indicate your approval by typing your name below (if possible). Uploading the form to the Graduate School indicates your approval even if the form fields are not available  
   Name of Approver: Grad Prog Dir, Dep Chair, Dean CoB, Dean CFRES Date: Enter a date.

## Funding Acknowledgment

Describe potential funding sources to support the graduate student towards degree completion. Advisors are encouraged to support their graduate students to apply for funding (like NSF GRFP, MSGC, KCP FFF, FINNEST etc.).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Is this a potential funding source? | Briefly describe funding source(s) |
| Student | Maybe | Michigan Sea Grant Graduate Student Research Fellowship (Applied for years 2025-2027) |
| Advisor | Yes | MISG funded research project |
| Graduate Program | Yes | GTA |

## Graduate student-specific Advising Plan

### Program Milestones

Enter the projected semester and year to achieve the milestones associated with the graduate degree program. The IDP can be used to elaborate on the timeline for the degree.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| MS Degree Milestone | Projected Semester to be completed | PhD Degree Milestone | Projected Semester to be completed |
| Coursework | Semester — YYYY | Coursework | Fall — 2025 |
| Final Oral Exam | Semester — YYYY | Qualifying Exam | Spring — 2026 |
|  |  | Research Proposal Exam | Spring — 2026 |
|  |  | Final Oral Exam | Spring — 2029 |

### Workload Expectations

The [Graduate School expects](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/policies-procedures/academic/credits/) 31.5 hours/week of academic work/study for full time enrollment and 20 hours/week of work for [full time assistantships](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/financial/assistantships/#workload).

### Describe your consensus on a typical work week in the research group

Working hours are described below. A typical work week varies depending on where a student is at in their program, but would  
typically include a mix of lab work, possibly field work, data analysis and writing, reading primary literature, and attending individual  
and lab meetings, and department events such as seminar. Working location is flexible, with the understanding that lab work is  
completed on site, and extended periods of working off campus (more than 2 days) will be communicated to the advisor.

### Describe your consensus on the typical working hours of your research group

Business hours are typically 8am-5pm, M-F (except [University holidays](https://www.mtu.edu/hr/supervisors-admins/payroll/calendars/)). Your group’s working hours may differ.

Typical working hours are between 9am-6pm. After hours or weekend work may be necessary when fieldwork or sampling  
processing requires. When work runs late after hours, a later start in the morning is fine.

### Describe your consensus on typical research meetings

Lab meeting happens once a week for an hour in the GLRC conference room (or other appropriate room). The day and time is set  
each semester with consideration for the schedules of all lab group members. Dr. Vick-Majors sets agenda on a shared document,  
and starts with individual updates from each group member. Individual meetings are usually weekly, but are at the student’s  
discretion and ranges between 30 minutes to 1 hour depending on the student’s needs. Individual meetings are in the Dr. Vick-  
Majors office. The student will create the agenda before the meeting, and Dr. Vick-Majors can add things as needed.

### Describe your consensus on the typical response time for reviewing written work

For major items such as journal articles or thesis chapters, plan on giving Dr. Vick-Majors two weeks to complete a review and  
provide meaningful feedback. Dr. Vick-Majors will communicate with the student if the work has been provided at a time when it is  
not possible to meet the two week window. If a deadline is involved, we will of course work with the dealine. For applications such  
as proposal or fellowship applications, which have a deadline, at least a month ahead is preferable, to allow time to iterate on the  
document and discuss the application. For smaller items like conference abstracts, a draft should be circulated (generally) two  
weeks prior to the deadline, to provide ample time for iterating on the draft. For these smaller items, Dr. Vick-Majors will usually  
provide comments within two working days, and the student will respond to the comments with a new draft within two working days.

### Describe your consensus on accommodations for life responsibilities

In case of emergency, I will contact Dr. Vick-Majors as soon as possible to discuss rescheduling. I drive to campus each day, but in the event of a mechanical issue, I live close enough to campus that walking is a viable option. In case of extreme weather, working from home is preferred. For standard appointments such as medical appointments, visits to mechanics, or drivers license renewals, the student can schedule these as needed and only needs to communicate such abscences if they will impact work responsibilities.

### Describe your consensus on the time off process/practice for the group

Accomodations for life responsibilities are listed above. In the case of sickness or life events lasting more than 1-2 days, this should  
be communicated to Dr. Vick-Majors. Im the case of shorter term sickness or life events that overlap with lab responsibilities (e.g.  
lab meetings, known sample processing) should be communicated regardless of length of time. For religious or cultural  
observances, students are encouraged to take up to a day off and can do so without question up to twice per academic year, as  
long as no lab responsibilities are missed (e.g. lab meetings, necessary sample receiving that cannot be rescheduled). If more time  
is requested to meet the observance, this should be requested and discussed with Dr. Vick-Majors.

### Communication Preferences

* In the chart below, discuss your shared communication preferences. Click on the agreed methods to place a ✔ in each agreed method. An 🗴 indicates a mode that is not to be used.
* MTU email is highly recommended as the primary mode of official communication.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Mode** | MTU Email | Phone | SMS/Text | Zoom,  Webex, etc. | Google Chat, Slack, Whatsapp, etc. | Other:  Specify |
| **Working Hours** | ✔ |  |  |  |  |  |
| **After Hours** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## Graduate student-specific Mentoring Plan

Describe mentorship activities envisioned for the graduate student in the context of the following areas. The use of the [MiTechIDP](https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/resources-for/students/advising-mentoring/idp/) (or similar) is highly recommended to establish details of mentorship roles and expectations. We encourage reviewing the [Academic Audit](http://degree.mtu.edu/Dashboard/) together to view and plan degree milestones.

Graduate student’s current career goal:Government agency or national lab

Meeting frequency to discuss career goal:Once a year

### Career Counseling

Dr. Vick-Majors can provide guidance regarding strategies to build a CV that will be effective for the desired career path,  
acknowledging that her experience is primarily with academia. Dr. Vick-Majors can also suggest and help make connections with  
others working in the field, or in non-academic jobs, who may be helpful resources. In addition, Dr. Vick-Majors encourages all  
students in the lab to join student research communities (e.g. professional societies or interest-based networks), which can also  
provide important insights and connections, as well as supplement professional development.

### Research Proposals, Publications, and Presentations

Publications: Publishing is essential for most career paths; even if a student chooses to follow a non-academic career path, writing  
and presenting data of publication quality is a valuable skill. It is also a requirement that the types of funded research students will  
participate in be shared with the community through publications. My expectation is that PhD students produce at least 3 first-author  
publications. Students pursuing a Masters’ degree will be expected to first-author at least one journal paper submission. I expect  
publications to be written throughout the training program (not only at the end). For PhD students, I expect at least one paper to be  
submitted before defending with two others nearing submission and a timeline for planned submission. I also encourage and expect  
my advisees to be working on manuscripts that may be tangential to their thesis, whether as first author or contributing to  
collaborative projects in the lab or with external collaborators.  
Authorship: Barring unusual circumstances, it is my policy that advisees are first-author on all work for which they took the lead on  
data collection and preparation of the initial draft of the manuscript. Authorship arrangements should be discussed at the onset of a  
project and be re-visited as soon as its apparent that data will result in a publication. I expect all students to prepare figures and  
write the results of interpretation of their data. In general, authorship arrangements will be discussed primarily between the first  
author and myself (or whomever is the corresponding author). I will dedicate time to reading and editing manuscripts, abstracts for  
meetings, grant proposals, etc.  
For conferences and presentations, students should present internally or externally one time per year. PhD student should present  
at external meetings at least 2-3 times during their program. Master students should present at external meetings at least once.

### Teaching and Mentoring

Ph.D students are generally expected to work as a teaching assistant at some point during their program. The length of time varies  
based on student career goals, interests, and funding sources. The advisor does not oversee teaching assistantships, however can  
direct students towards resources for teaching best practices such as the course FW6980 (Graduate Teaching) or BL3990 (Bio Sci  
Teaching Experience). Courses such as department seminar are useful for moedling the communication of information, and the  
required course “The Scientific Profession” requires students to lead a class session, providing them with hands on experience and  
feedback.

### Collaboration with personnel from different disciplines

Dr. Vick-Majors encourages all students in the lab to join student research communities which can provide important connections  
outside of Tech. Dr. Vick-Majors will also include students in project related meetings where they can interact with PI’s from  
elsewhere, and encourage student participation in conference sessions that will connect them to other scientists.

### Essential Trainings and Professional Practices

All students are required to take the BL course, “The Scientific Profession”. In addition, lab specific trainings are  
provided on safety and specific skills related to lab standard operating procedures. These are all found in Google  
Drive. Students and the advisor also review the lab document “Advising Philosophy and Graduate Student  
Expectations”, which is freely available on the lab website www.whereverthereswater.org.

## Acknowledgments – click on each to acknowledge

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Commitment | Advisor |
| I acknowledge that I am primarily responsible to advise, and/or mentor, and/or provide other sources and/or resources thereof, for my graduate student’s development on their chosen professional path. |  |
| I recognize the possibility of conflicts of interest between the goals/milestones of my research program and the progress of my graduate student towards the completion of their degree. I pledge to not allow my goals to interfere with my graduate student’s goals. |  |
| I pledge to provide a safe and welcoming environment for my graduate student. |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Commitment | Student |
| I acknowledge that I am primarily responsible for the completion of my degree, including fulfilling the requirements of the Graduate School and the Graduate Program, and submitting required forms and items. |  |
| I pledge to consult my advisor and seek other sources and/or resources for mentorship, in a timely manner to grow and develop myself according to my chosen professional path. |  |
| I pledge to maintain a safe and welcoming environment in the research group. |  |

We pledge that this advising and mentoring plan shall be reviewed Once a year

This plan remains in effect until it is canceled, updated, or the graduate student completes the degree. It is recommended that the graduate student and advisor keep their own written notes on other details as necessary.

Connor O’Loughlin 8/25/25 Trista Vick-Majors 8/27/25

Graduate Student Type Name and Date Advisor Type Name and Date