Welcome to Great Plains IDEA

We’re glad you’re here! As a Great Plains IDEA student, it is your responsibility to become familiar with the information in this handbook and the applicable policies and procedures of your home institution. You are encouraged to read and retain this student handbook.

Michigan State University offers a MA in Family and Community Services, MA in Youth Development, two Graduate Certificates in Youth Development and a BA in Early Care and Education.

Student Responsibilities & Expectations

- Read and retain this student handbook
- Learn the policies and procedures of your home institution
- Follow scholarly codes of ethics in course work, research and professional activities

About Great Plains IDEA

The Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (IDEA) is a partnership of 20 public university members providing access to the best educational opportunities by collaboratively developing and delivering high-quality online academic programs. Great Plains IDEA is an academic alliance that offers fully-online graduate programs in high demand professional fields.

Student Success Center

The Great Plains IDEA Student Success Center is the online hub of resources to support your academic and student experience. Students can access partner university Learning Management Systems, libraries and email systems from the Great Plains IDEA Symbaloo. The Success Center integrates articles and tools regarding time management, writing and research information, and financial and career resources. We encourage you to bookmark this page so you can easily return to this information throughout your program.

Terminology to Know

- Home Institution –the university where the student applied and was admitted. Students enroll, pay tuition and receive their degree* from the home institution. (*Degree/Certificate titles vary by institution. Consult each institution for the title as it will appear on the diploma)
- **Teaching Institution** – the university where the faculty member teaching a course is located.
- **Campus Coordinator** – the person available to assist students through Great Plains IDEA processes.
- **Academic Advisor/Major Professor** – the faculty member/staff person assigned to assist the student in academic decisions (e.g., course sequence, program planning, etc.)
- **Supervisory Committee (graduate students only)** – the group of faculty designated to serve as guides in the completion of the student’s program of study and culminating experience. Students should work with their academic advisor/major professor to determine the process for creating a committee at their home institution.
- **Enrollment Information Exchange Date** – the day when priority registration for program students ends and the day when non-program students may be moved from the wait list to class rosters as space allows.
- **Wait List** – the process used for enrolling students into courses when a course reaches capacity before the first day of class AND after the enrollment information exchange date. The wait list is used after the enrollment information exchange date as a way to ensure students from all institutions receive an equal/first-come, first-serve chance at enrollment.

**Student Processes and Forms**

**Student Acknowledgment Form**

Students participating in Great Plains IDEA courses are required to sign and submit a Student Acknowledgment Form to be kept on file at the home institution. This form allows the exchange of information between the partnering institutions. All information is shared through a secure, web-based database. Campus Coordinators initiate the Student Acknowledgment Form process with newly admitted students. A sample form can be found in the appendices to this handbook and on the Great Plains IDEA website.

**Title IX Mandatory Training for Students**

Students are required to complete Title IX training provided by their home institution. Consult with your Campus Coordinator for instructions regarding this training.

**Communication**

**Contact Information**

Students must notify their home institution Campus Coordinator of any changes in contact information, including: email address, phone number(s), mailing address, etc.

**Email**

Your email address is the primary method of communication between you and your instructors and your home institution. Your home institution will provide you with an email account. **It is strongly recommended that you use your home institution email account as your link between you and your home institution.** Often other
accounts hinder communication because messages may be filtered as spam. The following are common issues and suggestions related to email:

- If you change your email address make sure you update your Campus Coordinator.
- **Check your Spam and Junk Mail folder for course messages.**
- Include a subject line in all email correspondence, especially mail sent to Campus Coordinators and instructors. We receive a high volume of mail, and sometimes a lot of junk, so are likely to delete message if there is no subject, especially if we do not recognize the email address/name.
- When taking courses through this program, communication is a shared responsibility. You should plan to check email regularly for messages from your instructor(s) and home institution. We recommend a *minimum* of twice per week.

**Enrollment**

Students enroll in courses at their home institution according to the enrollment dates set at their university. Course names and numbers vary by institution. Each course has a corresponding course information sheet posted on the Great Plains IDEA website prior to enrollment for the upcoming term: Human Sciences course information sheets and AG*IDEA course information sheets. The course information sheet contains instructor contact information, textbook information and course access information. The anticipated rotation of courses is available on the website as well. Human Sciences course matrix and AG*IDEA course matrix.

**Wait List**

The Great Plains IDEA maintains a wait list to be used when a course reaches capacity prior to the enrollment deadline. If you need to be added to the wait list you should contact your Campus Coordinator.

**Course Information Sheets**

The Great Plains IDEA website houses course information sheets for each Great Plains IDEA class offered (excluding independent study, thesis, and practicum). Course information sheets are designed to provide a quick reference for course materials and instructor information. Course information sheets are not the official syllabi for the course and are subject to change as additional course information becomes available.

**Course Access**

Students access courses through the Course Management Systems (CMS)/Learning Management System (LMS) at the teaching institution for a given course. This platform serves as the virtual classroom environment. Campus Coordinators will facilitate access to the CMS/LMS for non-home institution students. Students should expect to receive an email from the teaching institution at least five business days before the first day of class. Students who have not received course access instructions from the teaching institution five days before the first day of class should contact their home institution Campus Coordinator.
Library Access

Great Plains IDEA students will have access to the online library system of their home institution. Students may receive access to the library resources at the teaching institution if the instructor expects students to utilize such resources.

Drop and Refund Information

If you need to drop a course, you must notify your home institution Campus Coordinator, the teaching institution Campus Coordinator and the instructor of the course. Refunds are based on the policies of the student’s home institution.

Program of Study (graduate students only)

Students will file a program/plan of study according to the policies and procedures of their home institution. Academic advisors and/or Campus Coordinators can provide additional information about the requirements for the home institution. Degree and course titles vary by institution.

Graduation/Degree Completion

At least two semesters before your anticipated graduation you should contact your academic adviser and your Campus Coordinator. These individuals will provide institution-specific information for degree completion requirements. Institutions may require additional exams/projects in order to complete.

Graduate School Policies (graduate students only)

Students are expected to adhere to the policies of the Graduate School at their home institution. It is the responsibility of the student to become familiar with these policies.

Grades

Students build their transcript at the home institution. Student transcripts are housed by the student’s home institution. Grades for a course are determined by the instructor of the course. The home institution will determine the translation for a course grade from a teaching institution that uses a different grading system using the Great Plains IDEA Grade Translation Matrix.

Incomplete Grades

An incomplete grade may be issued by the instructor of a course. If an incomplete grade is issued, the student will work with the instructor and the teaching institution Campus Coordinator to file an incomplete grade form with their home institution. The incomplete form outlines the expectations for completion of the course.
**Academic Integrity**

Everyone within the Great Plains IDEA is responsible for and affected by the cooperative commitment to academic integrity. Academic integrity is defined as doing and taking credit for one’s own work.

Instructors are expected to use reasonably practical means of preventing and detecting academic dishonesty. Students are encouraged to share the responsibility for the academic integrity of the Great Plains IDEA by reporting incidents of academic dishonesty to the graduate administrator at their home institution. Any student found responsible for having engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to academic penalty and/or disciplinary action. Examples of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to) cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized possession or disposition of academic materials, falsification, and facilitation of cases of academic dishonesty.

In the case of academic misconduct, the members of the consortium agree to the following procedures.

1. Teaching faculty members have the authority to determine academic assessment of the work where there has been academic misconduct within their classes and other instructional contexts. The academic assessment will be based on the academic standards stated in the course syllabus, catalogues, handbooks and other materials notifying students of academic requirements. The procedure for appeal of the academic assessment in the course shall follow the policies and procedures of the teaching institution.

2. The instructor is responsible for notifying the program administrator (chair, head, director) at the teaching institution of the misconduct and course sanction. The program administrator is responsible for notifying the dean for graduate or undergraduate studies or other appropriate administrator at the teaching institution who will in turn notify his/her counterpart at the student’s home institution.

**Grade Appeals**

Grade appeals for all courses will be handled by the teaching institution. Students will not have access to the grade appeal process at their home institution unless it is also the teaching institution for the relevant course.

**Complaint and Grievance Processes**

The Great Plains IDEA community is committed to resolving student concerns in a timely and effective manner. It is hoped that differences can be resolved through an informal communication process that promotes open expression in a climate of courtesy, sensitivity and mutual respect. If a resolution is not reached, formal grievance processes are available at all participating institutions.

*Informal Complaint Process:* When a student is concerned about the actions of an instructor in a course or other faculty decisions regarding the student’s program, the first step toward resolution is communication directly with the instructor/faculty member as soon as possible. It is expected that the instructor/faculty member will respond promptly.
If the concern is not resolved, the student should contact the department chair at their home institution.

**Formal Grievance Process:** A grievance means a dispute concerning some aspect of academic involvement arising from an administrative or faculty decision that the student claims is unjust or is in violation of his or her rights. Grievances under this procedure include disputes over grades, course requirements, graduation or degree program requirements, and thesis and dissertation committee and/or advisor decisions. When a student wishes to file a formal grievance, the following process will be in effect:

1. **Grievances regarding grade appeals, course requirements or other action of an instructor of a course:**
   Students will file the grievance and follow all procedures at the teaching institution. The teaching institution will inform the Great Plains IDEA representative at the student’s home institution that a grievance has been initiated. A formal grievance should be filed in a timely manner, or a student may relinquish the right to pursue the grievance. Time limits for filing a grievance may vary by institution. If filing a faculty or course requirement grievance, the student may contact the Campus Coordinator at the teaching institution for assistance in locating policies and contact information at that institution.

2. **Grievances regarding graduation, program requirements, thesis/dissertation committee and advisor decisions:**

   Disputes involving graduation or degree program requirements, thesis and dissertation committee and/or advisor decisions will follow the procedures of the home institution. It is the student’s responsibility to become familiar with all home institution policies and procedures governing the degree program. Campus Coordinators at each institution are able to assist students in locating the campus grievance policy, and finding contact information for the appropriate parties.

**Cost and Student Financial Assistance**

**The Common Price**
Great Plains IDEA courses are offered at a Common Price per credit hour. The Common Price is reviewed and established annually by the Great Plains IDEA Financial Officers team and approved by the Cabinet. The Common Price may be adjusted on an annual basis. The Common Price may be higher or lower than regular tuition at the home institution. The Common Price includes all fees, distance delivery costs, and other such “add-ons” common for distance education. No additional fees shall be charged by any participating institution. Textbooks and other material and administrative costs (such as late enrollment fees) are allowed.

If there is an onsite component of a course, e.g. field experience and/or laboratory experience, included in the curriculum, any additional fees and travel-associated expenses incurred in attending the required onsite experience will be the full responsibility of the student and must be fully disclosed to the student prior to their course selection and enrollment.
Student Financial Assistance

Students may be eligible for financial assistance through their home institution. Consult your home institution’s Office of Financial Assistance for details about how to apply. Campus Coordinators can provide contact information if needed.

Disability Support Services

Disability support services play an important role in the success of students with disabilities. However, the traditional service model does not fit the needs of a distance education student taking courses at multiple schools at the same time. The offices at participating institutions need to work together in order to serve students in this new educational paradigm.

Obtaining disability accommodation and services is a student driven process. This is also a confidential process. Campus Coordinators do not need to be informed of a disability or the need for services unless you, the student, chooses to share that information. Since the goal of Great Plains IDEA is to have one point of entry and ease of student access, to be eligible for accommodations in a course, students must request those accommodations by registering with their home institution disability support services office. Requests for accommodations must be completed for each course and repeated each semester.

Students sign a release of information when registering with the disability office. If the student takes a course at another institution, the student’s home disability office sends the release form with an accommodation letter to the teaching institution’s disability office. The letter gives basic information about the disability. Should more information be needed, such as actual documentation, the home institution can forward appropriate documents to the teaching institution. The teaching institution disability office provides the accommodation according to its processes and procedures which may be different than those of the home institution.

Faculty may NOT independently provide accommodations. And because students request accommodations each semester (for the classes they choose), it is possible that the same student may have an accommodation one semester, but not the next. Faculty are encouraged to work with their institution’s disability support office for more information or assistance.

Students can obtain information about disability support services in many locations. The Great Plains IDEA website has contact information for each member institution’s disability support services office. Each course information sheet includes contact information also. Students may choose to request contact information from Campus Coordinators as well.

Students should remain in contact with their home institution’s Disability Support Services office throughout the program.
Student Surveys

Great Plains IDEA is committed to continual program improvement. In order to gain a better understanding of the views and experiences of students and to provide feedback to program faculty students will receive the following surveys from the Lead Institution:

- New Student Survey
- Course withdrawal survey (only for students withdrawing from a course)
- Program Completion Survey

All surveys have been reviewed and approved by the Kansas State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Surveys are voluntary and responses are anonymous. Survey data are aggregated, analyzed and reports are provided to the Great Plains IDEA Cabinet, Boards of Directors and program faculty.

Academic Advisor

Your academic advisor is the faculty member/staff person assigned to assist you in your academic decision. You should consult your academic advisor for assistance with the following:

- Course planning and selection (including elective approval)
- Transfer credit questions
- Plan your internship/practicum work (if applicable)
- Help with research interests

Campus Coordinator

Campus Coordinators are available to help students navigate their home institution and to provide assistance to students taking classes from their institution. Coordinators serve as a first point of reference for general questions and the following information:

- Enrollment processes (contact your academic adviser for course selection)
- General policy information at your home institution
- General Great Plains IDEA information and policies
- Assistance with the Learning Management System
- General questions

Anti-virus Software

Students are strongly encouraged to install and maintain anti-virus software on the devices used in this academic program.
Appendix A
STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM
GREAT PLAINS INTERACTIVE DISTANCE EDUCATION ALLIANCE (GREAT PLAINS IDEA)

The Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (Great Plains IDEA) sponsors multi-institution, online degree and certificate programs (gpidea.org). Students are provided with high quality instruction by faculty from multiple Great Plains IDEA partner universities. After admission to the partner institution of their choice, students enroll in courses sponsored by Great Plains IDEA directly through their home institution. Credits earned are counted at the home institution as regular, not transfer, credits.

Student Information Exchange. To register a student in a class, the home university enters student information into a secure Great Plains IDEA database. The information includes the student’s home institution, student identification number, name, address, phone number, e-mail address, date of birth, gender, ethnicity, citizenship, military status, academic history and Great Plains IDEA academic records. Teaching institutions access this information for course enrollment and grade reporting. A limited number of member university employees are granted access to the database on a need-to-know basis. Great Plains IDEA does not share student information with outside parties.

Common Price. Great Plains IDEA courses are offered at a Common Price per credit hour. The Great Plains IDEA Financial Officers Functional Team reviews the Common Price annually and makes a recommendation to the Great Plains IDEA Cabinet for approval. The Common Price includes regular tuition and any course, program, facilities or student services fees as well as distance delivery costs. This does not include additional administrative fees incurred by the student, for example, application fees, late enrollment or late payment fees. The Common Price may be higher or lower than regular tuition at the home institution.

Degree Titles. The degree or certificate title printed on the diploma and/or the transcript is determined by each institution and may be different than the Great Plains IDEA title for the academic program. Students should consult their home institution for the title as it will appear on the diploma or certificate.

Grade Appeals. Grade appeals for all courses will be handled by the teaching institution. Students will not have access to the grade appeal process at their home institution unless it is also the teaching institution for the relevant course.

Academic Integrity. Academic dishonesty undermines the educational experience offered through Great Plains IDEA, lowers morale by engendering a skeptical attitude about the quality of education and negatively affects the relationship between students and instructors. Students are expected to understand and abide by the academic integrity policy found in the Great Plains IDEA policy and procedure manual. Teaching faculty members have the prerogative for determining the penalty for academic misconduct in their classes. The procedure for determining the penalty and the process of appeal for the academic penalty will follow the policies and procedures of the teaching institution. The student’s home institution may administer remedial action and institutional sanctions using its policies and procedures. Appeal of these additional sanctions will be adjudicated at the home institution.

- I understand ________________________________ (home university name) will disclose my personal information in the manner outlined above and hereby consent to said release/use of education records under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- I understand the purpose of sharing student-specific information among my home and teaching universities.
- I understand the Common Price may be higher or lower than the standard tuition at my home institution.
- I agree to substitute the grade appeal process at the teaching institution for my home institution’s process.
- I have read and understand the academic integrity policy of Great Plains IDEA and I agree to abide by this policy.

__________________________________________________________________________

(Electronic Signature) __________________________  (Date mo/dd/yy)____________________

(Print Last Name) ____________________________ (Print MI) ____________________________

(Print First Name) __________________________

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