Welcome!

Welcome to the MSMRA program at Texas State University! The faculty and staff of the McCoy College of Business and especially the Department of Marketing are excited to have you join us and hope you find your time in the MSMRA program challenging, gratifying, and successful. It is difficult to get accepted into graduate school so while your graduate academic career is only beginning you have a lot to be proud of already.

This handbook is designed to provide you with essential information regarding policies, procedures, and expectations that will enable you to succeed as an MSMRA student. There is a tendency to skim through information contained in a handbook like this. We get it—this isn’t exactly edge-of-your-seat material. It is, however, very important to your success in the McCoy MSMRA program. **You are responsible for understanding and adhering to these policies.** If you are in doubt about how a policy or procedure applies to your specific situation, seek clarification from the appropriate McCoy faculty or staff member.

**This is your guidebook to your graduate education at Texas State.** Please take notes, highlight, flag pages, draw awesome pictures and make this book your own. We promise that the more familiar you are with applicable policies and procedures the more enjoyable—and smooth—your time at McCoy will be.

About McCoy

Texas State University’s college of business was originally established in 1958. In 2004 it was named in honor of Emmett and Miriam McCoy, whose transformational donation of $20 million marked the largest gift in the 105-year history of Texas State University. The gift was the impetus for establishing the McCoy College Development Foundation, which provides funding for endowed chairs and distinguished professorships, undergraduate and graduate scholarships, and faculty, student, and program development.

McCoy College provides a curriculum that focuses on developing skills in oral and written communication, critical thinking, and teamwork. This blending of content and application has been shaped by our faculty and endorsed by our colleagues in the business community as the best way to prepare a diverse student population for successful business careers as responsible global citizens. The MSMRA Program provides a curriculum that will help better prepare students to be marketing professionals in an environment that heavily relies on data and analytics.

All McCoy College degree programs are accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the highest accreditation available to schools of business at colleges and universities. Fewer than 5 percent of business schools worldwide have earned this distinguished hallmark of excellence so you are among the best in business!
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Tools and Resources—General Information, Policies, and Procedures

As a Texas State student, you have many resources at your fingertips. Below is information on where to find important dates, policies, and forms university-wide. Please refer to these and search the Texas State website before reaching out so you are familiar with processes and able to streamline solutions.

All students are subject to both university and McCoy College policies and procedures. This document is designed to give you information on some common issues but please familiarize yourself with all other university policies not covered here.

Administrative Issues

Catsweb is the most important aspect of the Texas State website (www.txstate.edu) for students. Please search Catsweb for an answer to your question before e-mailing questions to faculty and staff. It has information on:

- **Enrollment and Registration**: registration and class schedule, access periods, class offerings, course catalog, academic calendar, Registrar’s Office website
- **Financial Aid**: deadlines and applications, work study opportunities, financial aid website
- **Billing and Payments**: payment history, tuition and fee rates, student balance, direct deposit sign up, Student Business Services website, emergency and short-term loan information
- **Academic Records**: official and unofficial transcripts, enrollment verification, degree audits, applying for graduation
- **Online Services**: activating net ID/e-mail, password recovery, TRACS
- **General campus information**: parking, dining, faculty/staff directory, campus maps, bookstore
- **Help and tutorials** for topics listed above

Graduate Financial Aid

All graduate business students enrolled in a minimum of six hours that count toward their degree in the fall and spring semesters are eligible to apply for scholarships and fellowships. Students will be considered for available scholarships and fellowships through both the McCoy College of Business and the Graduate College by submitting one application to the Graduate College. **Applications are due by February 1 each year.**

To expedite your financial aid processing, after you register for courses every semester, generate your degree audit in Catsweb. If you see any courses showing as “open electives” or otherwise not counting toward your degree, e-mail the MSMRA Academic Advisor immediately with the specific course, your student ID number, and a screen shot or PDF of your degree audit.

Students are encouraged to contact the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office at 512-245-2315 or financialaid@txstate.edu to check eligibility and apply for federal financial aid as well but
should be aware that only courses that count toward their degree will be considered for financial aid.

Many companies offer tuition reimbursement. It is each student’s responsibility to provide their company with the appropriate documentation. Many companies require a grade report and/or verification of enrollment, which can be generated in Catsweb after semester grades are posted — typically a week after finals are over. The Academic Calendar, found on the Registrar’s website, gives specifics of the exact date official grades post each semester. If your company requires a specific type of documentation and you are having trouble obtaining it, please contact the McCoy Dean’s Office and they will be happy to assist you.

**Transfer Credits**

It may be possible to transfer in up to six (6) hours of business focused elective classes from Texas State that are not already on the approved MSMRA graduate elective list with prior approval. The proposed transfer elective must fall within the scope of the MSMRA degree.

The class must be approved by the MSMRA Academic Advisor before the student enrolls in a course outside of the approved MSMRA electives. Core courses, non-approved classes from other departments, and any course that has been or will be applied to a completed degree will not be approved for transfer credit.

A more extensive approval process is required if a student wishes to complete classes at another AACSB-accredited university. This is reserved for situations that cannot be avoided such as moving due to a work transfer or military service obligations. The 6-hour maximum and elective nature of the classes still applies.

**Policy on Taking a Semester Off**

While students are encouraged to enroll in classes each semester, we understand that sometimes circumstances require that they must take time off. Students are able to sit out for less than one year with no penalty; however, they will need to fill out an “Update Application Form”, available by searching the Graduate College website, when returning to the program. It should be submitted to the Graduate College to reactivate their status before they are able to enroll in classes for the next term. Also, it is recommended that students fill out the Leave of Absence Form if they plan to sit out a semester.

If a student does not enroll in classes for one year or more, they will need to submit a new application online and pay the associated application fee to begin taking courses again. Depending on the recency of enrollment, the application itself may be sufficient—the student may not need to resubmit recommendations, essays, and other accompanying documents that were required for the original application.
It is important to note that Graduate College policy requires that the entire program be completed within six years from the date a student first enrolls in the MSMR A program, regardless of any time not enrolled.

Academic Status

Good Standing
All graduate students must maintain a cumulative graduate GPA of at least 3.0 to remain in good standing with the university.

Probation
If an individual’s GPA falls below 3.0, they will be placed on academic probation the following semester. They have one semester to increase their GPA to at least a 3.0. Students who find themselves on probation should expect to be contacted by their Graduate Academic Advisor. This is not because they are in trouble; rather, it is to touch base, make sure they are comfortable with their schedule and course load moving forward, and to create a solid plan and expectations for the following semester.

The safest way for a student to ensure that their GPA is sufficiently raised is to retake the class(es) for which they earned a poor grade. By retaking a class, the original grade is replaced by the new one, so they are much more likely to get back in good academic standing. It is important to note that due to rotational nature of MSMRA course offerings, it will not always be possible to retake all of the classes the following semester at all. If it is a non-marketing class, it may mean traveling to Round Rock if the class is not offered in San Marcos that semester.

A student may, depending on their exact situation, choose to forego repeating a class and continue on in the program with the goal of earning high grades in subsequent classes. The issue with this approach is that the original low grade that caused the probation status remains on your transcript, making it more difficult to raise the GPA.

Suspension
If a student fails to bring their GPA to a 3.0 or higher during the probationary semester they will be placed on academic suspension from the program and required to sit out for six months. A meeting with the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs will be required before they may enroll in classes again. This isn’t a “trip to the principal’s office”—we’re just concerned when a student struggles academically and if they are going to return after academic suspension, we want to fully understand what happened and have a plan in place to increase their chances of success.

3 C Policy
Any student enrolled in a graduate degree program in the McCoy College of Business Administration can earn no more than two grades of C or lower. Even if the grade of C or lower was replaced with a
higher grade as a result of repeating the course, the original grade counts as a “strike” under this policy. Upon earning the third C (or lower), the student is automatically placed on academic suspension and permanently dismissed from their degree program without any possibility of readmission to their program or another degree program in McCoy College. The 3 C Policy takes precedence over probationary status. So, if a student earns a third C or lower, they are automatically dismissed from their program permanently; even if probation does not occur.

**Conditional Admittance**
If a student is admitted conditionally it is a good idea to decrease external commitments as much as possible in order to focus on doing well in the first nine (9) hours of coursework. Please note that all nine hours do **not** need to be taken in the first semester, so if a student prefers to start out slowly, they can (provided there are no other conflicts such as financial aid eligibility or visa requirements for international students). Conditional admittance requires that the student make an A or B in the first three classes, **not a B average**; an A and a C do **not** cancel each other out in this case. Example: Student makes one A, one B, and one C in their first nine hours of coursework. Conditions are not met because a C was earned even though they have an overall 3.0. Students admitted to the program under conditional status who fail to make an A or a B in each of their first three (3) courses will not be allowed to continue in the program.

**The importance of starting out strong for conditionally admitted students cannot be overstated.**
We highly encourage students in this situation to take either one or two classes per semester until they satisfy the requirements. After successfully completing the first nine (9) hours with either an A or a B in each class the conditional status/requirement drops off completely. There is also no lasting record or indication of initial conditional status on your transcript.

**Course Load**
It is important for every student to know that they must remain enrolled half time (at least six hours) in every term to be considered for federal financial aid.

**Long Semesters (Fall and Spring)**
Most MSMRA students who are working full-time find that a course load of six hours (two classes) in the long semesters is manageable. Students who are working part-time or not working at all usually take nine hours (three classes) in the long semesters. Sometimes a student may take twelve hours in the long semester. To be considered a full-time student for financial aid and visa purposes, an individual must take at least nine hours per long semester.
**Summer Courses**
Summers are optional for all MSMRA students except for taking the MKT 5350 class. Taking summer classes will also make each student’s program duration shorter. Summer class format will differ from fall and spring.

Summer course options are primarily elective classes and MKT 5350. It is recommended that MKT 5350 be taken the last summer you are in the program. Summer schedules will be sent out several weeks before registration opens.

**International Students**
Most international students are required by their visa constraints to maintain full-time status in the long semesters. It is critical that the terms of the visa be followed exactly to avoid any serious issues. To ensure there are no problems, international students should contact the Texas State University International Office (512-245-7966; international@txstate.edu) with questions.

It is strongly suggested that international students register for classes at the earliest possible opportunity. If they are unable to register because a class is full, there are limited options and they may be stuck taking unnecessary classes to remain in good academic standing—a situation that is both time-intensive and costly.

**Alternative Locations**
Please be aware that students may be required or encouraged to attend various commitments at alternative locations such as their non-primary campus or off-site businesses. This includes but is not limited to professional development events and client or project meetings. These alternative location requirements are not especially burdensome for most students, but you do need to be aware of the requirement to attend some functions/meetings off campus.

**Academic Advising**
It is important that every student include their student ID number in the subject line of e-mails to allow staff to look up their file and provide relevant information. Even questions that may seem general in nature require this; differences in degree plans, catalog years, etc. can have a large impact on answers.

To schedule advising or request course overrides, visit www.mccoy.txstate.edu > Current Students>Graduate Programs>Student Resources>Academic Advising> [choose your program and fill out the form]. You will receive a timely response but during high demand times, such as the beginning of registration, allow at least two business days for responses.

**Degree Plans**
It is strongly recommended that students set up an advising appointment with the Graduate Academic Advisor in their first semester and any time they have questions about their degree plan.
It is critical for students to follow their degree plan and take the courses they need as recommended since they are offered on rotation and availability may be limited.

If for any reason a student needs to change their plan it is highly recommended that they contact the Graduate Academic Advisor to get the most accurate information available and ensure the plan will not alter future semesters. This will help avoid any class conflicts and graduation delays.

Please keep in mind that a variety of factors affect individual situations so what works for one person may not work for another, even if the situations seem very similar. Please do not rely on peers’ advice—contact the Graduate Academic Advisor with any advising or class scheduling questions to avoid confusion. Fellow students often have the best intentions in offering advice, but it may not always be correct or applicable to your specific situation.

**Declaring a Graduate Minor**

Students may choose to add a graduate minor in addition to the required 30 hours of coursework of the MSMRA degree from the list here [https://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/minors.html](https://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/minors.html). To officially declare the minor and have it added to their degree audit, a student needs to fill out the change of minor form ([http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/Change_Minor.pdf](http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/docs/Change_Minor.pdf)) and submit it to the Graduate College (gradcollege@txstate.edu). Be sure to visit with the MSMRA Academic Advisor before adding a Minor.

**Scheduling Classes**

It is recommended that students follow the schedule guideline given to them to guarantee that classes are offered when they need them. If they must deviate from the recommended schedule, please see the MSMRA graduate academic advisor. Elective courses are offered on rotations so if a student sees an elective they want to take, see the academic advisor to discuss how the recommended schedule may be adjusted if it is offered in a different semester than that recommended for electives in the schedule guideline.

See the approved graduate electives from which students need to choose two, unless they are taking the thesis option. There is no guarantee that any given course will be taught in a certain time frame so please use that as a general guide, not a set list from which to choose electives you are firm on taking.

A list of all available classes within McCoy for the upcoming semester will be e-mailed to students a few weeks before registration begins to help with planning. This is a courtesy provided by the department and information is up to date at the time of creation of the document but subject to change without notice. Always check Catsweb for the most updated location, professor, and course details.

When taking electives outside of the college and on the approved elective list, students may need special approval for those courses from the department in which the classes are offered.
All elective courses **not on** the approved list require special approval both internally from the MSMRA Academic Advisor and from the department in which they are offered. Students may find a department’s contact information by searching the department name on the main Texas State website. Internal approval should be secured before external approval is sought. The course would need to relate to the MSMRA degree.

**Career Advising**

Every student is required to meet with the McCoy Graduate Career Specialist in their final semester. However, it is encouraged that students meet with her prior to the final semester if you need help with:

- Creating a customized cover letter
- Building and editing your resume
- Formal, informal, or virtual interview preparation
- Creating job and internship search strategies

You should expect to hear from the McCoy graduate team regarding scheduling that meeting in your final semester.

**Professional Development Seminars**

Professional development is a critical component of each student’s education and the format of our program puts students in charge of selecting events that are most relevant to their career and interests. It is required of most graduate programs in the McCoy College of Business.

**Twelve (12) Professional Development Units (PDUs) are required in order to graduate.** These events will cover a wide variety of topics and provide students with skills not necessarily acquired in the classroom, but which have proven valuable in graduate-level careers. Each event will clearly state how many units it is worth.

Attendance will be taken at each event and it is the student’s responsibility to ensure they are checked in to receive credit. Credit for attendance will be entered into the McCoy Graduate Student Association (MGSA) Canvas gradebook within two days of each event; it is each student’s responsibility to keep track of how many units they have completed and how many they still need before the requirement is met. While students must meet the minimum professional development criteria to graduate, everyone is welcome to earn more than 12 units if they so choose.

As an ever-evolving part of the McCoy College Graduate Programs, we are always open to suggested professional development topics from students. If you have a topic you would love to see offered in a future semester or want to recommend a potential speaker, please e-mail it to the MBA Graduate Academic Advisor, Brittany Naylor, at bnaylor@txstate.edu.
Best Practices
The McCoy MSMRA program courses may have less structure than students may have experienced during their time as an undergraduate. While this may take a little getting used to, it allows for more chances to explore issues, discuss with peers and faculty, and innovate.

Expectations
Each student is expected to 1) Communicate with faculty, peers, and staff about issues they may encounter as early as possible, 2) Come to class and meetings on time, prepared, and ready to discuss the topic(s) at hand, and 3) Participate fully in class, online forums or discussions, and group meetings.

How to Excel
In short: Do your best. Over the years we have encountered graduate students who dash into class at the last minute, do the bare minimum on homework and group projects, and don’t attend social or professional development events. While it may be technically possible to complete graduate school in this manner it is likely your knowledge, skill sets, and professional network will be subpar compared to an MSMRA student who always did their best, made an effort to attend professional development and networking activities, and prioritized their education. You will get out of this program what you put in.

Professionalism
Students should communicate with all faculty, staff, peers, and clients in a professional manner. This includes but is not limited to verbal, written, and electronic communication. Please consider the tone, factual information, and format of every single email you send. A good rule of thumb is to not send an email when you are upset or frustrated; save it as a draft and come back to it in an hour. You’ll be surprised what sounded appropriate at the time no longer seems like a message you want to be associated with. It is also a good practice to not complete the recipients email address line until message is complete to avoiding accidentally sending an incomplete message.

Remember that you represent not just yourself and your peers, but all McCoy graduates (and for that matter, all Texas State graduates). Think about how hard you will work to earn your MSMRA. Now think about someone with “McCoy MSMRA” on their resume or business card acting immature and foolish in a professional setting. That person drags down the entire brand. Don’t be that person.

Students are not required to dress in professional clothing for regular class periods, but professional dress is highly encouraged for presentations, client meetings, or professional development activities. When in doubt, dress up.
Pay attention to details in all communications. While the most common instance of this will be related to courses, it also applies to communication from university administration. The Registrar’s Office, Graduate College, Student Business Services, and Financial Aid departments all send out relevant information on various deadlines. If, for example, a student misses the deadline to apply for graduation in their final semester, they will not be allowed to graduate until the following term. That may sound a little extreme, but it is surprising how often that exact situation occurs.

Be respectful of others. You may not agree with every opinion you hear in graduate school, but you should always be professional. Likewise, learn to appreciate criticism from peers, professors, and staff. Don’t take it personally when your work or opinions are critiqued.

**McCoy Graduate Student Association**

The McCoy Graduate Student Association, or MGSA, is a group comprised of current business graduate students, faculty, administrators, and McCoy alumni across all graduate business programs in the College of Business. The MGSA typically meet several times a semester for social events, community service activities, and professional development opportunities. Leadership opportunities within the MGSA (officers and committee chairs) are available at both the San Marcos and Round Rock campuses and are a great way to shape the organization while building solid resume material. Matt Painter, MBA Program Director, serves as the Faculty Advisor to the organization. Please contact him via e-mail, mpainter@txstate.edu, if you are interested in serving as an officer or committee member/chair.

The Texas State American Marketing Association (AMA) is another student group to consider joining. The Texas State AMA is a collegiate chapter. AMA also has professional chapters for working professionals. As a collegiate member, you can also join a professional chapter.

**Study Abroad**

We sometimes get asked about study abroad. Unfortunately, due to the requirements of the MSMRA Program, a study abroad program is not offered.
**MSMRA Internships**

Students pursuing the MSMRA may choose to complete an internship for course credit to earn three hours of elective credit toward their degree. The course associated with this credit is MKT 5398. The job duties of the internships must very clearly relate to the MSMRA degree. Approval and inquiries should go to the MSMRA Program Coordinator to determine eligibility to ensure graduate-level job duties. Students must have established a minimum 3.0 GPA and completed 12 or more hours of course work to be considered for an internship.

Once enrolled in the internship class, students will be required to complete 200 hours of work and submit weekly reports describing any projects they are working on and what they are learning. At the end of the semester the student will receive an evaluation from their supervisor and submit a more in-depth final paper with insights on the final project and everything they have learned.

**Communication**

With a good understanding of these policies and excellent communication there are very few questions or issues that we cannot work through together. Where things typically go sideways, however, is when questions or issues are communicated poorly and/or at the last minute—or after the fact. We are here to help, and we pride ourselves on great customer service. But good communication is critical.

Please set up your Texas State e-mail account immediately. You MUST pay attention to your Texas State e-mail or you will miss critical pieces of communication from both the university and the McCoy College of Business.

Newsletters are e-mailed to your Texas State e-mail account frequently. We include important academic and professional development dates, news about MGSA socials, program updates, and other news that is specific to the McCoy graduate programs. Take a few minutes and read through the entire document.

In addition to e-mail we communicate extensively through our Facebook group. The official McCoy Graduate Student Association group is [https://www.facebook.com/groups/McCoyGSA/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/McCoyGSA/). If you have not already, please “like” the page and request to join the group. While we won’t clutter your newsfeed, we will provide updates and event invitations that you might otherwise miss.

**E-mail signatures:** Each semester we encounter students who—unintentionally or otherwise—represent themselves as already holding an MSMRA degree when in fact they are a student. It is
completely acceptable to represent yourself as an “MSMRA Student.” It is misleading to have your signature or LinkedIn profile say: “Your Name, MSMRA” as this indicates you already hold that degree. Beginning the first day of your final semester it is appropriate to change your signature to say “MSMRA Candidate” rather than MSMRA student.

Also, unless you are an employee of Texas State University, please make sure your signature line clearly states your status as a student and not simply “Texas State University” as sometimes this can be misconstrued.

**Exit Exam**
The Texas State Graduate College requires all master’s students to pass a comprehensive examination which “could consist of the completion of a capstone course, defense of a thesis, or an actual written or oral exam. All MSMRA students are required to take a comprehensive exam during their last semester. The date will be announced at the beginning of every semester. The exam will be an essay exam that will include one essay question from each of the core MSMRA marketing courses (not including MKT 5321). Students must score at least 80% on the exam to pass. There will be a retake exam administered approximately two weeks after the first exam is given to allow for those who did not pass the first time to retake the exam. All paperwork verifying passing grades will be submitted to the Graduate College by the Dean’s Office and noted in the student’s file.
**Contact Information**
Marketing Department Office (McCoy Hall 424): 512-245-7428

Dr. Enrique Becerra – Marketing Department Chair
[Email Address]

Dr. Gail Zank – MSMRA Program Director and Academic Advisor
[Email Address]

Mrs. Cheryl Contreras – Administrative Assistant III
[Email Address]

Ms. Jannette Prado — Administrative Assistant II
[Email Address]
Contact Information
Dean’s Office (McCoy Hall 530): 512-245-3591

Dr. Bill Chittenden – Associate Dean of McCoy Graduate Programs
chittenden@txstate.edu

Mr. Matthew Painter – MBA Program Director and MGSA Advisor
mpainter@txstate.edu

Mrs. Brittany Naylor – MBA Graduate Academic Advisor
bnaylor@txstate.edu

Ms. Michelle Redepenning—Graduate Career Specialist
mr1049@txstate.edu

Mrs. Christina Vaughan—Administrative Assistant
cvaughan@txstate.edu
Master of Science in Marketing Research and Analysis (MSMRA) Curriculum

I. REQUIRED COURSES: (24 hours)

B A 5352: Developing the Financial Perspective of the Firm
MKT 5321: Marketing Management
MKT 5322: Marketing Research Methods
MKT 5323: Qualitative Research in Marketing
MKT 5340: Digital Marketing
MKT 5345: Marketing Analytics
MKT 5350: Strategic Marketing Analysis and Planning
QMST 5334: Statistical Methods for Business

II. GRADUATE ELECTIVES: Select 6 hours from:

___ ACC 5361: Accounting Analysis for Managerial Decision Making
___ CIS 5355: Database Management Systems
___ CIS 5358: IT Systems Project Management
___ CIS 5360: E-commerce: Strategies, Technologies, and Applications
___ CIS 5370: Enterprise Resource Planning
___ FIN 5387: Managerial Finance
___ MC 5308: Seminar in Advertising and Public Relations
___ MGT 5310: Organizational Change Management
___ MGT 5311: Process Improvement Management in Organizations
___ MGT 5321: Supply Chain Management
___ MGT 5325: Managing Business Creativity
___ MKT 5330: International Marketing (MC)
___ MKT 5331: Integrated Marketing Communications
___ MKT 5335: Services Marketing
___ MKT 5395: Independent Study in Marketing
___ MKT 5397: Directed Studies
___ MKT 5398: Internship in Marketing
___ MKT 5399: Thesis (note thesis hours will only be taken by those completing the thesis option
___ PSY 5321: Multivariate Statistics
___ QMST 5335: Forecasting and Simulation
___ QMST 5336: Analytics
___ QMST 5343: Data Mining

REQUIRED COURSES: 24 hours
GRADUATE ELECTIVES: 6 hours

______________________________
TOTAL MSMRA: 30 HOURS

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Master of Science in Marketing Research and Analysis
Recommended Schedule of Classes

12 hours per semester (complete in one calendar year)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
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<tr>
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<td>MKT 5350</td>
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<tr>
<td>MKT 5340</td>
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9 hours per semester (complete in 1 ½ years)

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<td>BA 5352</td>
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<td>MKT 5340</td>
<td>MKT 5345</td>
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6 hours per semester

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<td>Elective</td>
<td>MKT 5340</td>
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<td>Elective if still remaining</td>
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