

Ranching Systems Degree Student Application

2026 Graduation Cohort

2023 Application Period: October 2nd – October 16th, 2023

*The **Ranching Systems Degree at Montana State University** is a **limited enrollment program** with the goal of providing the high-quality, individually tailored educational opportunities to prepare students with the diverse array of skills in livestock production, rangeland ecology, business management and human resources needed by today's ranch managers.*

This application is open to sophomore students who have a minimum of 36 credits (including currently enrolled classes) of courses related to the Ranching Systems Degree plan and have a current GPA of 2.75 or better.

Submit applications via email to the program lead in pdf file format. Applications must be received before midnight of the final due date. Send completed applications to Rachel Frost, frost@montana.edu

Application materials:

- Cover Letter, introducing yourself and describing your background (both on and off-ranch experience), and explaining why you are interested in the Dan Scott Ranch Management Program. Describe how a bachelor's degree in Ranching Systems fits your career plans for the future.
- Résumé – limit to 2 pages
- Answers to the essay questions below
- 2 letters of recommendation from non-relatives, (at least 1 letter should be from a previous employer/supervisor)
- Current transcripts (these can be unofficial)
- Skills Sheet (attached)

Essay Questions

Please limit your answers to no more than a single page for each question, double spaced in a 12- point font.

- ESSAY QUESTION: The key requirements for entry to agriculture are an unquestionable work ethic and an unquenchable desire to learn. How will you demonstrate both of these characteristics to the Program Lead and your host ranch?
- ESSAY QUESTION: In your opinion, what are the two most important professional skills that a ranch manager should possess? What are your strengths and weaknesses relative to these skills and how will this degree program grow your strengths and help you address and overcome your weaknesses?
- ESSAY QUESTION: In your opinion, what are the two most important short-term (e.g. 2 years) and the two most important long-term (e.g. 10-20 years) issues / challenges facing the ranching industry in the US?
- ESSAY QUESTION: Acceptance into the DSRMP includes two summer sessions as an intern on a working ranch. Describe your plan for getting the most out of this internship. How will you manage your time and advocate for your learning experience?

Timelines for application process

- **October 2nd, 2023** - Applications open for admittance to Ranching Systems Program (2026 Cohort)
- **October 16th, 2023** – Applications due for Ranching Systems Program by 11:59 PM.

- **October 31, 2023** - Applicants screened as qualified or not-qualified based on their application portfolio, and GPA. Applicants reviewed by the DSRMP Steering Committee and dates set for interviews.
- **November 2023** (early in the month) - qualified applicants have video interview with Program Leader and Steering Committee
- **December 1, 2023** - applicants receive notification of acceptance
- **January - April 2023** – Host ranches review applications, phone interview students, and student visits the ranch. Students receive preliminary training in basic agriculture safety practices, leadership, and personal communication. Mentor orientation conducted virtually.
- **April 2023** – Students and ranches agree to site specific learning objectives and sign internship MOU.
- **May 2023** – Students begin internship.

How are students placed at host ranches?

- Host ranches have the option to interview students for selection as an intern.
- As much as possible, we will accommodate the needs of individual students and host ranches when pairing interns with locations.
- We aspire to place students in locations where they will be stretched in their knowledge and experiences. When possible, students will be placed on host ranches that have different goals, management strategies, and resources than operations where they have worked previously. We presume students would prefer to be placed on a working ranch that offers maximum potential for expanding their experience and knowledge, rather than limit their learning opportunity in favor of a specific geographic preference.

Dismissal from the Program

Students may be dismissed from the DSRMP prior to graduation for the following reasons:

- Failure to maintain a GPA of 2.75 (*With the exception of personal or family tragedy*)
- Academic misconduct as defined by MSU Student Conduct Code
- Engaging in any illegal activities while a DSRMP student
- Failing an internship course

Montana State University Diversity Statement

Montana State University is committed to creating a culture of intellectual and personal growth. Because learning is enhanced when topics are examined from diverse perspectives and because individuals possess unique outlooks which reflect the world around us, Montana State University is dedicated to creating an inclusive community that embraces a rich mix in the composition of its student body, staff and faculty. The distinction in viewpoints that comes from differences in race, gender, age, language, socioeconomic status, religion, political affiliation and geographical background are appreciated and valued at MSU as important aspects of the campus community at every level and in every sector of the campus.

To this end, MSU welcomes international students and faculty and enthusiastically seeks engagement with peers from around the globe to expand our depth of understanding and share in the discovery of knowledge. MSU has an especially strong commitment to Native Peoples and actively engages in the development of social and educational initiatives to preserve the cultural integrity of all American Indian students, faculty and staff. MSU strives to advance the ideals of human worth and dignity for all by facilitating open discussion, supporting rational resolution of conflict and encouraging on-going examination of values.

Montana State University Discrimination Policy Statement

Montana State University's campuses are committed to providing an environment that emphasizes the dignity and worth of every member of its community and that is free from harassment and discrimination based upon race, color, religion, national origin, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran's status, sex, age, political ideas, marital or family status, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. Such an environment is necessary to a healthy learning, working, and living atmosphere because discrimination and harassment undermine human dignity and the positive connection among all people at our University. Acts of discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and retaliation will be addressed consistent with this policy.