2021 -2022

STUDENT HANDBOOK

COLUMBIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

Addendum

Columbia Southern University made the following amendments to policy, institutional, and/or programmatic information. Students are encouraged to contact their academic advisor with questions.

21-22.1 Addendum – September 3, 2021

21-22.1 | Textbook and Course Material Policy | Effective Immediately
This policy has been updated.

Student Handbook | Effective July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022
21982 University Lane (Shipping) | P.O. Box 3110 (Mailing) | Orange Beach, AL 36561
Main Phone: 800.977.8449, 251.981.3771 | Main Fax: 251.981.3815
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Policy Disclaimer
At CSU, we are committed to ensuring that our students are kept informed of the latest principles, theories, and applications pertaining to their studies. However, CSU reserves the right to make changes, as deemed appropriate and without prior notification, in our course offerings, curricula, academic policies, and other rules and regulations affecting students.

Message from the President

Dear Students,

Columbia Southern University was founded on strong family values, a tenet that has held true since its founding in 1993 and one that we proudly pass on to our employees. By keeping relationships at the core of our organization, a culture of caring and respect evolves naturally.

As your president, my goal is to ensure that those same values are shared with you. I want to make sure that you have every resource, every tool, and every support system that you need to be successful in your education. That includes fundamental parts of our mission like providing a student-centered faculty, affordable, flexible distance education programs and providing exceptional academic and support services.



Ken Styron, M.B.A.
President, Columbia Southern University

The *Student Handbook* has been assembled to provide departmental information, policies and procedures that will be important to your success as a CSU student. Utilizing this handbook as an active resource will enhance your knowledge of institutional expectations, define policies and expound on procedures needed to complete course and program assignments.

It is an invaluable tool that is available to you throughout your academic career with CSU. By familiarizing yourself with the *Student Handbook* and the additional resources available to you—the Success Center, your academic advisor, the CSU library and more—you will be more, than prepared to accomplish this goal. Just ask any of our 54,000 CSU graduates.

You can succeed, and you will. We believe in you.



Ken Styron
President

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About Columbia Southern University

Mission Statement

Columbia Southern University is a private institution that provides diverse learning experiences and affordable, flexible distance education programs at the certificate, undergraduate, and graduate levels to a global student body, delivered by qualified, student-centered faculty committed to teaching and student learning. The University is dedicated to providing exceptional academic and student support services.

Core Values

As we change lives for the better, we live by these values:

Organizational Health

We foster a family culture that provides a stable and enjoyable work environment of care and respect with open and clear communication.

Humility

We model a leadership style that is modest, humble, operationally oriented, and hands-on. No job is beneath us, and we work as a close team to accomplish our mission.

Exceptional Service

We focus on providing exceptional service through student-centered support services that are personal, responsive, and geared toward assisting students in achieving their educational goals.

Flexibility

We embrace change, work hard, and relentlessly strive to continuously improve.

Excellence

We are a first-class organization that places a high value on quality, accreditation, and doing what is right.

Relationships

We focus on building long-term relationships with industries, governmental agencies, students, alumni, and members of the community.

Vision

The Vision of Columbia Southern University is to change and improve lives through higher education by enabling students to maximize their professional and personal potential.

Institutional Goals

Student Experience and Success

Deliver an exceptional student experience through proactive support services, quality academic engagement, and a clear pathway to program completion.

Institutional and Academic Quality

To provide high-quality, industry-relevant academic programs that are driven and assessed by qualified faculty, while maintaining appropriate accreditation and regulatory compliance.

Organizational Health and Operations

To foster an environment of care and respect that promotes faculty and staff engagement while ensuring effective management of resources and operations.

Relationships and Enrollment Growth

To enrich the quality of University relationships using strategies that guide and promote enrollment growth.

History

CSU has always maintained a student-first philosophy by providing educational opportunities through distance learning to nontraditional students. This vision originated from the founder of CSU, Robert Mayes, Sr. He established a family-oriented culture of caring and respect among staff and faculty, which continues to this day.

His experience in developing and presenting training programs in environmental compliance and occupational safety for small businesses led to the establishment of two certificate programs in the field, and later, the founding of CSU in 1993.

To fill the void of formal online degree programs for safety and environmental managers, two bachelor's degree programs were developed in the areas of occupational safety and health and environmental management.

In 1996, online programs beyond the safety and environmental career fields were developed and included business administration, computer science, criminal justice administration and health administration. Achieving accreditation had been a goal for CSU since its inception, and that goal became a reality on January 15, 2001, when the Distance Education and Training Council granted national accreditation to CSU.

In 2002, several approvals and affiliation agreements with state schools were achieved along with receiving Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) and Veterans Affairs approval.

In 2003, CSU expanded its international offerings by being one of the first U.S. universities to offer a hybrid (online and classroom) degree program in Vietnam.
The opportunity to earn a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree was offered in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

Between 2002 and 2004, CSU expanded its degree offerings to include associate degrees and six new bachelor's degrees, and also launched the Learning Partnership program. The Learning Partnership program provides opportunities for businesses, municipalities, organizations and corporations to partner with CSU and receive benefits such as tuition discounts, application fee waivers, and later scholarship opportunities, for employees/members and their spouses and children.

As growth continued, CSU moved into a new facility in 2005 on Canal Road in Orange Beach, Alabama. However, this news was soon overshadowed by great sadness to CSU as Robert Mayes, Sr., passed away after a lengthy illness on September 26, 2005. He was succeeded as president by his son, Robert Mayes, Jr.

In 2006, CSU continued to grow as CSU's student body reached 6,700 active students. Soon, additional staff members were added, and CSU's 1-year old facility began to rapidly approach capacity. In addition, CSU was reaccredited by the Distance Education and Training Council with very high praise from the accreditation team. CSU was also honored by being selected among the first group of colleges and universities to be accepted into the Air Force Academic Institution Portal and into the U.S. Army's Centralized Tuition Assistance Management (CTAM) program, ArmyIgnitED (formerly GoArmyEd).

In 2008, CSU received approval by the U.S. Department of Education to offer Federal Student Aid. In the same year, CSU broke ground on a new 67,000-square-foot building which opened in 2009.

On January 8, 2010, Waldorf University (formerly Waldorf College), a private undergraduate liberal arts college in Iowa, was purchased and became CSU's sister college. CSU's active student count at the end of 2010 was 25,291. In 2011, CSU's program in Vietnam became the first distance learning program to be accredited by the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training.

In 2012, the corporate structure of the organization was changed so that a parent company, Columbia Southern Education Group (CSEG), would own CSU and Waldorf College.

In 2014, CSU was named one of the Best Companies to Work for in Alabama by Business Alabama magazine.

In May 2018, CSU's Chief of Staff, Ken Styron, transitioned into the role of president when Robert Mayes, Jr., stepped down to focus on his role as chief executive officer of Columbia Southern Education Group.

Today, CSU continues to focus on building long-term relationships while providing an exceptional student experience, affordable tuition, and a flexible learning format to more than 29,000 students. CSU boasts a faculty and staff of 1,000 who diligently focus on continually improving CSU's academic programs, services, and operations while maintaining an exceptional standard of customer service.

Board of Trustees

Columbia Southern University is governed by a nine to fifteen-member Board of Trustees, which establishes the mission and determines the general policies and affairs of the university. The Articles of Incorporation and the By-laws of Columbia Southern University clearly define the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the Board.

For additional information, please visit the Board of Trustees section of the website.

Administration & Academic Officers

Columbia Southern University employs qualified administrative and academic officers who effectively lead the institution through expertise, experience, and competence. These foundational leaders of the CSU community are actively engaged in accomplishing the mission of the university through a combination of credentials and expertise associated with their positions. For additional information, please visit the **About CSU Leadership** section of the website or the **University Catalog**.

Accreditation

Columbia Southern University is accredited by the **Distance Education Accrediting Commission** (DEAC). The DEAC is listed by the U.S. Department of Education as an accrediting agency and is recognized by the **Council for Higher Education Accreditation** (CHEA). CHEA is a nonprofit organization serving as a national advocate for self-regulation of academic quality through accreditation.

Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC)
1101 17th Street NW, Suite 808
Washington, D.C. 20036
Phone: (202) 234-5100
Fax: (202) 332-1386
www.deac.org
info@deac.org

Higher Education Related Membership

CSU is an institutional member of the American Council on Education (ACE), a major higher education coordinating body that influences public policy through advocacy, research, and program initiatives. ACE membership is open to accredited, degree-granting colleges and universities, and higher education associations within the United States.

State Authorization and Licensure

CSU is licensed by the Alabama Community College System - Private School Licensing Division pursuant to the Alabama Private School License Law, Code of Alabama, Title 16-46-1 through 10. For additional information, please visit the **State Authorization** section of the website.

NC-SARA

CSU is approved by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education to participate in the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA). NC-SARA is a voluntary, regional approach to state oversight of postsecondary distance education. As a member of NC-SARA, CSU only needs home state authorization to offer distance education to students residing in any other SARA member state. To view a list of NC-SARA states and institutions, please visit **NC-SARA**.

Registering a Complaint with CSU

CSU is committed to providing high-quality educational and related services for students. From time to time, students may have questions concerning administrative policies or operations. CSU encourages students to notify the institution when there is cause for concern in academic and non-academic matters. For more information on registering a complaint with CSU, please visit the **Student Resolution** section of the website.

Registering a Complaint with External Agencies

Students are encouraged to proceed through the institution's complaint process before filing an external complaint. Students who wish to file a complaint with an external agency may review submission instructions by visiting the **Registering A Complaint** section of the CSU website.

Registering a Complaint with the Accrediting Agency

Students may file a complaint with the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC) by using the DEAC Online Complaint Form or submitting a written complaint to the following address:

Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC)
1101 17th Street NW, Suite 808
Washington, D.C. 20036
Phone: (202) 234-5100
Fax: (202) 332-1386
www.deac.org
info@deac.org

To view the process and form for DEAC, please visit the **Complaint Process** section of DEAC's website.

Complaint Contact Information for State Agencies

Students may file a complaint with the Private School Licensure Division (PSL) of the Alabama Community College System by submitting the **Online School Complaint**. Students may view the **Procedures for Submitting Complaints** with PSL.

Students who reside in a SARA member-state may appeal their complaint to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE), which oversees SARA institutions in Alabama for review after exhausting CSU's internal grievance process. ACHE's contact information for complaints is as follows:
Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE)
NC-SARA State Portal Agency
P.O. Box 3020000
Montgomery, AL 36130-2000
ACHE Student Complaint PDF

For additional information regarding filing a complaint with a state agency, please visit the External Complaint Process section of the CSU website.

Registering a Complaint with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Students may file a complaint by following the VA Complaint Policy, which states, "Any complaint against the school should be routed through the VA GI Bill® Feedback System by going to: **http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/Feedback.asp**. The VA will then follow up through the appropriate channels to investigate the complaint and resolve it satisfactorily."

> *GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government Web site at **https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill**.*

The Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure Compliance Statement

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act is the federal law, originally known as the Campus Security Act, which requires colleges

and universities across the United States to disclose information about crime on and around their campuses.

CSU's Annual Campus Security Report includes statistics for the previous 3 years concerning reported crimes that occurred on-campus, in certain off-campus buildings, on property owned or controlled by CSU, and on public property within, or immediately adjacent to and accessible from, the campus. The report also includes institutional policies concerning campus security (e.g. policies concerning sexual assault) and other matters. A link to a copy of the report is included below.

View the complete **Annual Security Report** online.

Student Records

Student records, including financial and academic records, are kept indefinitely.

University Catalog and Student Handbook

The University Catalog is the official document on policies and academic information.

The Student Handbook is the official, comprehensive guide on student information, procedures, and a quick reference to official policies included within the University Catalog. Additionally, the handbook outlines available support services for student success, academic guidance, and the responsibilities, expectations, and rights of students.

Student Resources

Scope of the Student Handbook

The policies and procedures contained in the Student Handbook are applicable to all members of the CSU community, including students, staff, faculty, and administration.

The Student Handbook is the official, comprehensive guide on student information, procedures, and a quick reference to official policies included within the University Catalog. Additionally, the handbook outlines available support services for student success, academic guidance, and the responsibilities, expectations, and rights of students.

The university conducts on-going benchmarking with similar institutions to provide the most relevant, useful information for the Student Handbook. The university reserves the right to revise or update any provision of the Student Handbook with or without notice. The current edition of the Student Handbook supersedes all previous editions.

CSU Service Pledge

At CSU, students will find our staff ready to assist them. We pride ourselves on providing a high level of personalized service and for going "the extra mile." We will work hard to solve any problems or issues that arise. If a student ever feels he/she did not receive this level of service, please let us know. In return, students are expected to be courteous and professional in their communications with CSU staff and faculty. Abusive language and rude behavior will be considered ethical misconduct.

Hours of Operation and Contact Information

Address
Columbia Southern University
21982 University Lane (Shipping)
P.O. Box 3110 (Mailing)
Orange Beach, AL 36561

Main Telephone Number	800.977.8449
Local Telephone Number	251.981.3771
Main Fax Number	251.981.3815

Main Business Hours (CST)

Monday-Thursday	8AM to 5PM
Friday	8AM to 3PM

Department Information

Academic Advising Center

Hours: M – Th 8AM to 6PM Fri 8AM to 5PM
Email: Students should contact the academic advisor listed in the student portal.
Phone: 877.977.8449

The Academic Advising Center at Columbia Southern University develops strong relationships with students through coaching and mentoring on a consistent basis. Advisors guide students in their pursuit of educational goals through personal and purposeful advising strategies.

Academic advisors always strive to offer exceptional customer service and act as the student's central point of contact. Their goal is to establish a solid relationship with students that is built on mutual respect, trust, and open communication. Advisors encourage students to identify personal strengths and weaknesses, so that they can reach their full potential as a successful college student by listening and empowering them to make the right choices regarding their education and future.

Admissions

Hours: M – Th 8AM to 6PM Fri 8AM to 5PM
Email: admissions@columbiasouthern.edu
Phone: 877.347.6050
Fax: 251.224.0540

Admissions counselors help students every step of the way, from submitting an application to enrolling in their first course. Students have the flexibility they need to fit education into their busy schedules. Courses are designed to accommodate anyone who is balancing school with other life commitments.

Bookstore

Hours: M – Fri 8AM to 5PM
Email: bookstore@columbiasouthern.edu
Phone: 877.323.4474
Web: http://bookstore.columbiasouthern.edu

The Bookstore operations include shipping textbooks to students, processing incoming and outgoing mail for the

university, as well as managing the online bookstore and physical store located on the CSU campus in Orange Beach, Alabama.

Career Services

Hours: M – Th 8AM to 5PM Fri 8AM to 3PM
Email: careerservices@columbiasouthern.edu
Phone: 877.297.6192

Columbia Southern University Career Services promotes student success by providing quality programs, services and resources that empower students to explore, define, prepare for and pursue their career aspirations. Services are provided to all students and alumni at no additional charge and include assistance with:

- Career exploration & assessment
- Professional correspondence review
- Employer/job market research
- Job search strategies
- Interview preparation/mock interviewing
- Networking techniques
- Personal online branding
- Direct access to employers across the globe via CareerQuest

Career Services provides general information and support to students and alumni to assist in the achievement of career related goals. Career Services is neither a placement office nor a resume writing service. Please allow two to three business days for correspondence to be reviewed.

Community and Alumni Relations

Hours: M – Th 8AM to 5PM Fri 8AM to 3PM
Email: CSU-Community-Alumni-Relations@columbiasouthern.edu

The mission of Community and Alumni Relations is to promote and foster connectivity by engaging and promoting relationships between students, alumni, staff and faculty and the broader community. We encourage personal and professional development and career success by instilling pride and loyalty in CSU through innovative engagement. Community and Alumni Relations provides support through the following:

- Connecting with students in clubs and organizations
- Assisting with career goals
- Planning social networking events for students, alumni and key relationships identified by Columbia Southern University.
- Building a network of ambassadors to represent the university
- Connect with CSU Alumni in the Facebook Chapters.

Continuing Education

Hours: M – Th 8AM to 5PM Fri 8AM to 3PM
Email: ContinuingEd@columbiasouthern.edu
Phone: 800.313.1992

The Continuing Education Department offers trainings, workshops, conferences, and professional development opportunities beyond a student's degree program. Courses are offered online and face-to-face across the nation. For more information and a current list of available courses, please visit https://www.columbiasouthern.edu/online-degree/continuing-education.

CSU Library

Hours: M – Th 8AM to 8PM Fri 8AM to 6PM
Email: library@columbiasouthern.edu
Phone: 877.268.8046
Chat: 24/7, 365 Days per Year
Web: www.columbiasouthern.edu/library

Located strictly online, the collection contains a variety of electronic formats including books, journals, newspapers and more. Access to online resources is available 24/7. The CSU Library is staffed with professional librarians available to assist students with each step of their research journey. To better assist students in an online environment there are multiple avenues for library instruction: phone, email, and chat.

CSU librarians provide research assistance during business hours.

Chat service is provided 24/7. Students who visit CSU's campus are also welcome to schedule an in-person consultation.

Learning Partnerships

Hours: M – Th 8AM to 5PM Fri 8AM to 3PM
Email: learningpartners@columbiasouthern.edu
Phone: 800.344.5021

CSU provides flexible degree and certificate programs designed to move adult learners forward in their careers. We work closely with over 3,800 companies and organizations to provide their employees or members with our educational programs. A student who is an employee or member of an active Learning Partnership is eligible to receive a tuition discount. Spouses and children are also eligible.

Military Support Group

Hours: M – Th 8AM to 5PM Fri 8AM to 3PM
Email: militarysupportgroup@columbiasouthern.edu
Phone: 888.394.5738
Web: https://www.columbiasouthern.edu/military/overview/military-support-services

CSU's Military Support Group can answer any questions students may have before enrolling in courses. Every day, the support group interacts with military members who are pursuing academic and professional goals. The support group regularly fields questions regarding Veterans Affairs, military discounts, course structure, and degree programs. It is important to our team that service members receive the proper support and respect as they move forward in completing their degrees.

Office of Disability Services

Hours: M – Th 8AM to 5PM Fri 8AM to 3PM
Email: disabilityservices@columbiasouthern.edu
Phone: 888.785.3005
Web: http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/disability-services

Consistent with the mandates of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, the mission of the Office of Disability Services (ODS) is to ensure an accessible learning experience in which students with disabilities have equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services, and activities.

Individuals with disabilities who need to request accommodations should contact the Office of Disability Services at disabilityservices@columbiasouthern.edu or 888-785-3005. For more information, please visit the Office of Disability Services section of the website.

Temporary Health Situations

Accommodation requests for temporary disabilities are considered on a case-by case basis. Students must provide documentation of the disability and register with the Office of Disability Services.

Accommodation Complaints and 504/ADA Grievances
Students should direct any complaints regarding accommodations or disability-related services to the disability services coordinator in the Office of Disability Services at disabilityservices@columbiasouthern.edu or 888-785-3005. To submit a CSU 504/ADA grievance or to report a university accessibility concern, please email ADAgrievances@columbiasouthern.edu.

Office of Financial Aid

Hours: M – Fri 8AM to 5PM
Email: financialaid@columbiasouthern.edu
Phone: 877.316.8396
Fax: 251.224.0590

The Office of Financial Aid is responsible for awarding Federal Financial Aid to qualifying students. To be eligible for Federal Student Aid, students must be admitted to the university and meet Federal eligibility criteria. Federal Student Aid (FSA) offers federal grant and loan programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education. For detailed information regarding Federal Student Aid including eligibility, procedures for applying, awarding FSA and loan counseling, students should access the Office of Financial Aid website at https://www.columbiasouthern.edu/tuition-financing/federal-student-aid.

Office of the Registrar

Hours: M – Fri 8AM to 5PM
Email: registrar@columbiasouthern.edu
Phone: 877.316.0219
Fax: 251.224.0575

The Office of the Registrar maintains student records and monitors FERPA compliance. Additional responsibilities include evaluating traditional and non-traditional transfer credit, assessing academic requirements and conferring degrees, and processing student requests.

The Office of the Registrar provides student support through the following teams:

- The Evaluation Team provides support by maximizing transfer credit while meeting accreditation and state requirements.
- The Degree Auditor Team completes audits for students nearing graduation to verify the student has completed all graduation requirements. Degree Auditors also receive and process Commencement registrations.
- The Registrar Support Team responds to student requests, monitors students on probation and suspension, processes transcript requests, receives official transcripts, monitors conditional and temporary students, as well as keep all student records current.

Student Accounts

Hours: M – Fri 8AM to 5PM
Email: studentaccounts@columbiasouthern.edu
Phone: 877.323.4472
Fax: 251.224.0570

Student Accounts is comprised of Enrollments, Accounting, and Collections services. The department is responsible for enrolling students into course(s), submitting certifications and drops for VA students, disbursing financial aid refunds, any other refunds, receipts, invoicing/billing, collections, grad audit approvals, and accounts receivable.

Office of Student Resolution and Conduct

Hours:	**M – Th** 8AM to 5PM	**Fri** 8AM to 3PM	
Email:	studentresolution@columbiasouthern.edu		
Phone:	800-977-8449 ext. 6527		

The Office of Student Resolution and Conduct (OSRC) assists students in resolving issues related to their student experience through advocacy, communication, and administrative support. OSRC seeks to effectively enrich students' learning experiences at the university while augmenting a positive learning environment. The team supports our student body through administration of student complaints and academic integrity issues, and coordination of student conduct processes, which allows for a fair, unbiased assessment.

Student Support Center

Hours:	**M – Th** 8AM to 6PM	**Fri** 8AM to 5PM	
Email:	students@columbiasouthern.edu		
Phone:	877.323.4471		
Fax:	251.224.0550		

The Student Support Center serves as point of contact for general student inquiries. Specialists provide assistance with a wide range of questions related to CSU policies, courses, graduation, and much more. Student support specialists are available to assist students via telephone, email, and chat.

Student support specialists work diligently to ensure that students remain enrolled throughout their educational career. CSU understands the busy lifestyles of our students and that is why the Student Support Center offers reminders and enrollment assistance to keep students on track with their degree plans.

Success Center – Math and Writing Centers

Hours:	**M – Th** 8AM to 5PM	**Fri** 8AM to 3PM	
Email:	teamsucceed@columbiasouthern.edu		
Phone:	877.875.0533		

The Math and Writing Centers provide services to students that will aid in their success throughout their academic careers. The Math and Writing Centers have resources readily available for students, regardless of the degree they are seeking. They provide the following services:

- Academic support in math and writing via phone and email
- Academic assistance referrals
- Learning styles and study skills development that will enhance learning
- Learning and instructional resources such as individualized recorded lessons and interactive tutorials covering math, writing, APA, and basic course concepts
- Individualized math or writing sessions utilizing interactive technology

Writing Center Guidelines

The Columbia Southern University Writing Center works in tandem with faculty in order to promote students' growth as writers so that they can work independently and confidently on these skills as a student, as well as after graduation in a professional setting. In an effort to work more efficiently and effectively with students and faculty, the Writing Center has developed guidelines to facilitate an understanding of how assistance is given. These guidelines communicate the mission and philosophy of the Writing Center, as well as submission guidelines.

Through these guidelines, the Writing Center wants to explain that the amount of work to be reviewed must have limits placed on it to ensure that the quality of feedback is at its highest level and so that Writing Specialists' time is evenly distributed amongst the student population. Providing this information to students will bring clarity to the ways that the Writing Center is able to assist students with their writing. The Writing Center is hoping to emphasize the Writing Specialists' roles as collaborators who help facilitate the writing process so students can better understand how to function independently as writers in the post-collegiate realm.

For more information regarding the Writing Center, please review the Writing Center Guidelines.

Technical Support

Hours:	**Mon – Fri**	8AM to 8PM
	Saturday	10AM to 7PM
	Sunday	Closed
Extended Hours*:	**Sunday**	10AM to 7PM
**3 Days Prior to Term End Dates*	**Monday**	8AM to 11PM
	Tuesday	8AM to 11PM
Email:	techsupport@columbiasouthern.edu	
Phone:	877.399.1063	

Technical Support provides support services for Blackboard and any associated 3rd party applications. Students encountering technical difficulty with their courses are encouraged to contact the CSU Helpdesk.

2021 - 2022 Observed Holidays

University offices are closed annually in observance of the following holidays:

Holiday	Date(s) Closed
Independence Day	July 5, 2021
Labor Day	September 6, 2021
Veterans Day	November 11, 2021
Thanksgiving	November 24-26, 2021
Christmas	December 23-27, 2021
New Year's Day	December 31, 2021
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	January 17, 2022
Fat Tuesday (Mardi Gras)	March 1, 2022
Good Friday	April 15, 2022
Memorial Day	May 30, 2022

Current hours of operation and contact information may also be viewed on the university website:
http://columbiasouthern.edu/about-csu/contact

myCSU Student Portal

The myCSU Student Portal is the gateway to the university. The portal provides students with access to their information and resources at any time. Some of the main features available to students include the ability to:

- log in to blackboard to access and submit coursework;
- view course grades;
- submit course enrollments;
- view degree-specific information such as a Comprehensive Degree Report;
- verify course start and end dates;
- access Learning Resources provided through the Success Center and the CSU Library; and
- access Technical Support resources such as tutorials and Frequently Asked Questions.

Students may access the portal by visiting
http://mycsu.columbiasouthern.edu

Additional Resources

Term Course Schedule

Students enrolled in the Term learning option can access the **Term Course Schedule** to view courses available in a specific term. Students who are unable to find a specific course in the schedule should work with their academic advisor for an alternative course. Navigate to the Term Course Schedule to view courses.

Full Course Listing

The following link is provided for a listing of all courses offered at CSU: **Full Course Listing**. For questions pertaining to courses or prerequisites, students should speak with their academic advisor.

EasyEnroll

Columbia Southern University (CSU) provides an EasyEnroll service to students upon admission to the University. EasyEnroll ensures that the next enrollment, as advised and approved for the degree program in which the student is enrolled, is able to be submitted and processed in a timely manner. The service is provided as a means of convenience, allowing students to progress through their degree program smoothly toward graduation.

EasyEnroll is automatically provided to non-active military Term students upon enrollment, and is offered for all other students in any learning option to select, if they choose. All students are also provided the option to discontinue the use of EasyEnroll at any time. An initial advising session is recommended for all incoming students upon admission to discuss an individualized degree completion plan and learn the benefits of using the EasyEnroll service effectively

University Catalog

The University Catalog is an important academic and institutional resource for new and existing students. The catalog provides information on degree program requirements, course information, tuition, fees, financial assistance, admission policies, policies, and other valuable information.

CSU Grading Rubric

The CSU Grading Rubric is established for all assignments including written response, discussion board, and research projects. Grading rubrics are located within each course in Blackboard.

Citation Guide

The **Citation Guide** provides students with an overview of APA formatting. It includes examples of in-text and reference citations as well as instructions for how to format formal papers. In addition, the guide provides a sample of an essay and research paper and information on library resources.

Citation Guide Tutorial

A tutorial was created as a companion to the CSU Citation Guide. It provides the information found in the guide in a different format for auditory learners. By clicking on the link, students can watch and hear a presentation on this material.

CareerQuest

CareerQuest is a comprehensive tool that will allow students and alumni to set up a profile, choose their privacy settings, gain access to Career Services resources, set up an

appointment to speak with a Career Development Coach, keep all career related documents organized and housed in one area, research companies, set preferences and save searches for a strategized job search, post resumes for employer viewing, access the global job bank, and apply for jobs.

Additional tutorials and resources can be found by accessing the **Learning Resources** tab within the myCSU Student Portal.

Communication Guidelines

CSU understands the importance of establishing timely and effective communication to all university constituents. Communication between the university and its students directly impacts the overall student experience. To promote a positive student experience through communication, CSU has created several mediums to disseminate student and/or university information, as well as connect with students daily. These mediums include the myCSU Student Portal, Blackboard, the CSU website, the *Student Handbook*, the *University Catalog*, the *Communicator*, social media, postal mail, email, online chat, telephone, and SMS text.

CSU staff may proactively reach out to students, primarily via telephone, email, and/or SMS to discuss any information needed to complete a request, follow up on an inquiry, offer encouragement and support, or simply check in to ensure all resources are available. For quality purposes, CSU may monitor and/or record these communications. By completing the Enrollment Agreement form, students and/or their representatives are consenting to such monitoring and/or recording of such communications. Students are expected to maintain updated contact information on file with the university. Requests to update contact information may be submitted under My Account in the myCSU Student Portal.

Note: Any name change will require submission of official supporting documents, such as a marriage certificate, divorce decree, driver's license, Social Security card, passport, or court documented name change. Documents can be emailed to registrar@columbiasouthern.edu.

Student communication, whether verbal or electronic, should be conducted in a professional and courteous manner, and is subject to all applicable university policies, including Student Rights and Responsibilities and Student Code of Conduct policies. Additionally, response time to student inquiries by staff and faculty is 2 business days and 2 calendar days, respectively. The following information is provided regarding the mediums utilized at CSU.

myCSU Student Portal

The myCSU Student Portal is provided as a resource for students throughout their time at CSU. The portal is one of the most important mediums to communicate academic information, as well as any university announcements that may impact students. Students have direct access to information related to their courses, account, and other resources that will promote success along their educational journey at CSU.

Learning Management System

CSU utilizes Blackboard as the Learning Management System (LMS) for the delivery of all program courses. Within Blackboard, academic announcements that may impact the course or future courses are posted for students. Students may also choose to subscribe to email notifications concerning functionality of university systems through the homepage of Blackboard.

CSU Website

The website offers information related to support services, programs, course descriptions, and payment options. New services, events, resources, and student success stories are also communicated through the website.

CSU Student Handbook and Catalog

The *Student Handbook* and *University Catalog* are two important documents that should be utilized by students on a daily basis. Both of these documents are highly referenced throughout correspondence with CSU staff and faculty because they are guides to information related to the student experience. The *Student Handbook* outlines policies, guidelines, resources, and university contact information; whereas the *University Catalog* outlines program requirements, course descriptions, admission policies, tuition and fees, financial assistance, and much more. The *Student Handbook* and *University Catalog* may be found on the website or the myCSU Student Portal.

CSU Communicator

The *Columbia Southern University Communicator* was established as an avenue for the university to connect with students and alumni through various articles and updates related to university services, programs, student spotlights, and policies. It is the central method used to communicate important university news with students and should be referenced often. The *Columbia Southern University Communicator* is emailed once a month, featuring an article from the CSU president, university news, and other great articles that encourage and motivate students to continue striving for success. Students may subscribe to the blog by accessing the *Columbia Southern University Communicator* through the myCSU Student Portal.

Social Media Communication

CSU may utilize various social media platforms to communicate new services, closure announcements, or general announcements to students. Platforms include,

Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, and the *Columbia Southern University Communicator*. Students may also collaborate with one another through the closed CSU group page on Facebook.

Postal Mail Communication

While most communication at CSU occurs electronically, there are a few instances in which CSU may send postcards or letters to students via postal mail. This form of communication may be utilized for students who do not have current phone or email contact information on file.

Email Communication

CSU considers email as the official form of communication with students. The expectations of using email to communicate with CSU may be reviewed within the Technology Policies of the Student Handbook.

Online Chat Communication

- Students may contact CSU by use of the chat feature on the CSU website and the myCSU Student Portal. Opting to receive a chat transcript of the instant message conversation via email is available at the time of submitting a chat request.
- Students may also contact the CSU Online Library via live chat service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by visiting the CSU website.

Telephone Communication

CSU staff and students may utilize telephone communication to discuss any pertinent academic or financial information, such as enrollments, grades, assignments, courses, degree program requirements, and tuition options.

SMS Text Messaging

CSU has incorporated SMS text messaging as a method of communication between CSU and students. Text messages are sent in the circumstances outlined below.

- Reminders (e.g., registration deadlines, upcoming course end dates, and advising session appointments)
- Intervention (e.g., scheduling advising sessions, checking in to offer student/academic resources, or offer other types of academic support and encouragement)
- Student Support (e.g., answer general student support questions regarding the student's academic experience)
- Students have the option to receive text messages by opting in at the time of enrollment or at any point during their time at CSU by going to the myCSU Student Portal or contacting a representative at the university. The following information is provided regarding text messaging:
    - Text messages will not be sent to students who have not subscribed to receive messages.
    - The university does not use SMS text to advertise university-based events or new services.
    - Students may unsubscribe from texting at any point by responding "STOP" to a received message from CSU or through the myCSU Student Portal.

Student Communication Tips

- Be clear and concise when communicating inquiries, concerns, or requests.
- Communicate with professionalism and diplomacy.
- Close emails with your full name and some form of identification (e.g., student ID number or last four digits of your Social Security number [SSN]).
- For identification purposes, be prepared to provide a secondary form of identification when contacting the university (e.g., student ID number, last four digits of your SSN, date of birth, address).
- Create a separate email folder to keep all CSU correspondence for reference or create another email account just for CSU correspondence.
- Read and review all email communications from CSU to ensure important information is not missed.
- Speak clearly and slowly when leaving a voicemail, and include a brief reason for the call along with a phone number and time to return the voicemail.

Technical Requirements

Curricula at CSU is delivered completely online using the Blackboard learning management system. CSU students must have access to the internet and an appropriate individual (non-shared) e-mail account to complete a program of study at CSU. If personal internet service is unavailable, students are encouraged to contact local libraries, schools, or public businesses to locate access to the internet. The course syllabus, study guides, and examinations are all provided within the online course.

Computer Requirements

Operating System (OS)

Windows 7 or later; Mac OSX10.6 or later. For more information on OS/browser compatibility, visit help.blackboard.com.

Internet Connection

Minimum download speeds of 300Kbps,
Minimum upload speed of 300Kbps

Software

Students must have software capable of creating, editing, and saving Microsoft Office document files (.doc, .docx), Microsoft Excel spreadsheet files (.xls, .xlsx), and Microsoft PowerPoint presentation files (.ppt, .pptx). Students may access a 30-day trial version and/or purchase the required Microsoft software at https://products.office.com/en-us/try

Plug-ins

Java, Acrobat Reader, and Quick Time

Internet Browser

A list of certified and compatible browsers can be found at the following site: Browser Support | Blackboard Help

Tuition, Fees, & Financial Assistance

Tuition Rates

Education Level	Cost Per Credit Hour
Undergraduate	$235.00
Masters †	$325.00
Doctoral	$420.00

Rates are per credit hour. Most courses are 3 credit hours. Tuition and fees are payable in U.S. funds. For a complete list of payments options, visit the **Payment Options** section of the website. Tuition rates are subject to change. For the most current tuition information, visit the **Tuition and Financing** section of the website.

CSU Learning Partners receive a tuition discount that is applied to the full tuition rate. For current Learning Partner tuition rates, please visit the Tuition and Financing section of the website.

†The tuition rate for master's courses per credit hour is $250 for all active-duty military members using Military Tuition Assistance; this is not applicable for CSU Learning Partners. The lower rate is offered to keep the tuition rate at the U.S. Department of Defense cap of $250.

Student Fees

Fees are charged when services are rendered.

Fee	Amount
Application - Domestic	$0
Application - International	$0
CSU Library Fee[1] *(One-Time Fee)*	$35
CSU Library *(DBA Students)*	$50
Petition to Graduate	$100

Additional Fees

Fee	Amount
Bachelor to Associate Degree Request	$100
Change of Concentration	$25
Change of Program	$35
CSU Official Transcript	$15
Degree to Certificate Request	$50
In-Program Re-Evaluation	$25
Priority Evaluation	$25
Registration Fee[2] *(One-Time Fee)*	20%
Remote Proctor Now[3]	$19
Replacement Diploma/Certificate	$25
Return Check	$25
Subsequent Evaluations	$35
Term Late Enrollment	$50
Commencement Ceremony *Includes four (4) guests*	$145
Additional Guests – Fee Per Person	$25

1 Waived for all active-duty U.S. service members.
2 All students who drop/withdraw from a course after the drop date (7 calendar days) will be charged a one-time registration fee (maximum of $200 per degree program.)
3 Fee to utilize Remote Proctor Now will be paid to Software Secure.

Proctoring Fees

Additional fees may apply for students utilizing the standard proctoring option. Fees incurred by the use of proctoring services are the responsibility of the student.

Rush/Ancillary Fees

Additional fees apply for rush services and are sometimes subject to carrier rates.

Shipping and Handling Fees

Fees and shipping and handling charges are nonrefundable and are subject to change.

Course Extension / Incomplete Fees

LifePace Learning Extensions	Amount
15 day	$25
30 day	$50
60 day	$100
Term and Veterans Flexible Enrollment Incomplete	
30 day	$50

Automatic Credit Card Payment Plan

Automatic Credit Card Payment Plan information applies to all online learning options: LifePace Learning, Term, and Veterans Flexible Enrollment. CSU offers an automatic credit card payment plan for students paying out-of-pocket. This plan allows students to spread tuition payments over time by having them automatically charged to a credit card on a pre-set schedule. Whether students would like to pay weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or in full, CSU offers this special payment plan that gives students the power of choice. Using a scheduled automatic credit card payment option can help students fit education into their budget. It is important to

note that regardless of the automatic payment schedule selected, the first payment will be charged the day that the enrollment is processed.

To be eligible for this plan, the student must:

- have declared an undergraduate or graduate degree as their academic goal,
- use a credit card as payment, and
- have an acceptable credit history with CSU (new students automatically qualify if the first tuition payment is approved).

Corporate Billing

Tuition is billed to the corporation responsible for funding an employee's tuition. Approved company or government vouchers or purchase orders must accompany Enrollment Agreements.

Military Educational Benefits

CSU is approved to offer Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits through Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES). In most cases, these benefits cover the entire cost of a program. Students approved for these educational benefits are to pursue tuition payment through required official documents. Students using VA benefits must enroll in the Term or Veterans Flexible Enrollment options.

The following links are for informational purposes as students pursue these benefits.

- **Military Tuition Assistance**
- **Veterans Affairs Benefits**
- **DANTES Tuition Assistance**
- **VA Flex Payment Plan**

VA students may place a $99 down-payment for the first and/or second enrollment. Tuition must be paid in full prior to the third enrollment. This VA Flex Payment Plan is not available for Federal Student Aid, Tuition Assistance, Chapter 31, Chapter 33, or if receiving any other form of financial assistance.

Types of Federal Student Aid Available

To be eligible for Federal Student Aid (FSA), students must be admitted to the university and meet the eligibility requirements as outlined by the U.S. Department of Education. FSA offers federal grant and loan programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education. CSU participates in the following grant and loan programs:

Federal Grant Program

- Pell Grants

Federal Direct Loan Program

- Direct Subsidized Loans
- Direct Unsubsidized Loans
- Direct PLUS Loans

For detailed information regarding FSA including eligibility, procedures for applying, awarding FSA, and loan counseling, students should access the Office of Financial Aid section of the website.

Tuition Assistance/DANTES

Tuition assistance is available to active duty, active Guard/ Reserve, and military and civilian personnel of the Army National Guard through the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES). Tuition assistance covers the majority of tuition costs for most active duty service members. Each branch of service has established an annual cap for tuition assistance.

Check with your installation education center for more information concerning how to apply for tuition assistance. Reserve component members are also eligible for tuition assistance under this policy. However, each service component has established specific guidelines, limits, and policies for its members that may be different than the typical active duty policy. Before registering for any courses, Reserve members should check with their local education services officer for specific information about the limits of their tuition assistance coverage.

If you are in the military and would like to learn more about DANTES, call (850) 452-1111 or visit the website at **http://www.dantes.doded.mil**.

VA Benefits

Students using VA benefits should enroll through the Veterans Flexible Enrollment option. Tuition is due at the time of registration unless benefits are paid directly to CSU. In order for CSU to process a registration for students utilizing VA/GI Bill® benefits, all required forms must be submitted to VA and CSU. This helps ensure that benefits are paid in a timely manner. For information on the forms required to be submitted to VA, visit the Veterans Online Application website at https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/apply.asp.

Most Commonly Required Forms

Form	Use
VA Form 22-1990	Application for Education Benefits
VA Form 22-5490	Application for Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance

VA Form 22-1995	Application for Change of Program or Place of Training
VA Form 22-5495	Application for Change of Program or Place of Training, Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance

In addition to the aforementioned forms, students that have been discharged also need to submit DD Form 214. If you have additional questions regarding VA/GI Bill® benefits, please contact the CSU Admissions Department.

Disclosure For Students Utilizing VA Benefits: In accordance with Title 38 US Code 3679 subsection (e), CSU adopts the following additional provisions for any students using the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Post 9/11 G.I. Bill (Chapter 33), or Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Chapter 31) benefits, while payment to the institution is pending from the VA.

CSU will not:

- prevent the student's enrollment;
- assess a late penalty fee to;
- require student secure alternative or additional funding;
- deny their access to any resources (access to classes, libraries, or other institutional facilities) available to other students who have satisfied their tuition and fee bills to the institution.

However, to qualify for this provision, such students may be required to provide Chapter 33 Certificate of Eligibility (or its equivalent) or for Chapter 31, VA VR&E's contract with the school on VA Form 28-1905 by the first day of class.

Air University Associate-to-Baccalaureate Cooperative (AU-ABC)

CSU is proud to participate in the Air University Associate-to-Baccalaureate Cooperative (AU-ABC). This initiative allows an Airman with a specific Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree to transfer a minimum of 60 semester hours into an approved bachelor's degree program. Offered in a completely online format, this program guarantees that the CCAF graduate would require no more than 60 semester hours to complete the bachelor's degree with CSU. Please visit the CSU website for additional information.

Financial Assistance

To participate in the AU-ABC program, registrants must be active duty Air Force, Air Force Reserve, or Air National Guard. However, degree requirements can be completed after a member retires or separates from the service. For more information, including available degree programs, please visit the Air Force Virtual Education Center on the Air Force Portal.

Scholarships

At CSU, we recognize the importance of a quality education and are dedicated to helping you find a way to achieve your higher education goals.

Several scholarships are available, such as the:

- Robert G. Mayes Memorial Scholarship
- Hero Behind the Hero Scholarship
- Learning Partner Scholarship

Students should complete the online application for the scholarship they wish to be considered for. Applying does not guarantee that a scholarship will be awarded. Scholarships have varying deadlines and application requirements. Actual award criteria are established annually based on the availability of scholarship funds. For detailed information, please visit the CSU Scholarships section of the website.

CSU Partner Scholarships

For detailed information, please visit the CSU Partner Scholarships section of the website.

We also encourage students to submit a Free Application for Financial Student Aid to determine additional resources that may be available to help fund their education.

Online Learning Options

CSU understands that balancing work, family, and education can be challenging. That is why we offer convenient online learning options that work for busy adults. For more information, visit the Online Learning Options section of the website or go directly to:

Enrollment Status Requirements

Term Programs

Students must be enrolled at least half-time in order to be eligible to receive FSA. If a student's enrollment status changes during the first week of classes, or a student does not begin attendance in all courses, the amount of FSA awarded is recalculated. Please refer to the chart below for enrollment status classifications.

	Credit Hours		
	Associate & Bachelor	MS & MBA	DBA
Full-Time	6 +	3 +	2 +*
Half-Time	3	N/A	1

**DBA students may to take up to 6 credit hours of major coursework simultaneously.*

Tuition Refund Policy

LifePace Learning, Term, and Veterans Flexible Enrollment

Students who wish to drop/withdraw (see **Official Course Drop/Withdrawal Policy**) from a course or withdraw from their program are encouraged to complete the **Official Course Drop/Withdrawal Form** located in the myCSU Student Portal; however, students may withdraw in any manner by contacting the Office of the Registrar. Any refunds due will be issued within 30 calendar days. All students who drop/withdraw from a course after the drop date (7 calendar days) will be charged a one-time 20% registration fee (maximum of $200 per degree program). The remaining tuition will be refunded based on the course start date and the tuition percentage amounts listed below.

Note: Refunds may be reduced by the cost of the textbook (see Textbook and Course Material Policy).

Table 1 displays the percentage of tuition returned to the student minus the application and/or registration fee after the listed time frames.

Table 1 – Percent Return

*Percent return is effective after the timeframe.

Time Frame*	Percentage Returned to Student
1st week	80%
2nd week	60%
3rd week	40%
4th week	20%
5th week	0%

Sample Refund Calculation: The following tables pertain to the sample refund calculation. Table 2 denotes the institutional charges. Table 3 is a sample refund calculation.

Table 2 – Institutional Charges

CSU Institutional Charge	Amount
Tuition (3-Credit Undergraduate Course)	$705
One-Time Registration Fee – 20%	$141

Table 3 – Sample Refund Calculation

*Student requests to drop course after the first week (i.e., in Week 2) and after the 7-day cancellation period from the time of enrollment:

CSU Institutional Charge	Eligible Refund
Tuition (3-Credit Undergraduate Course)	$705
One-Time Registration Fee – 20%	($141)
Net Remaining Tuition	$564
Refund Percentage	80%
Eligible Refund	$564 * 80% = $451.20

Note: Refunds may be reduced by the cost of the textbook (see Textbook and Course Material Policy).

State of California, Student Tuition Recovery Fund (STRF)

If you are a California resident, please review the following disclosure. The State of California established the Student Tuition Recovery Fund (STRF) to relieve or mitigate economic loss suffered by a student in an educational program at a qualifying institution, who is or was a California resident while enrolled or was enrolled in a residency program, if the student enrolled in the institution, prepaid tuition, and suffered an economic loss. Unless relieved of the obligation to do so, you must pay the state-imposed assessment for the STRF, or it must be paid on your behalf, if you are a student in an educational program, who is a California resident, or are enrolled in a residency program, and prepay all or part of your tuition. You are not eligible for protection from the STRF and you are not required to pay the STRF assessment, if you are not a California resident, or are not enrolled in a residency program.

It is important that you keep copies of your enrollment agreement, financial aid documents, receipts, or any other information that documents the amount paid to the school. Questions regarding the STRF may be directed to:

Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education
2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 400 Sacramento, CA 95833
(916) 431-6959 or (888) 370-7589

To be eligible for STRF, you must be a California resident or be enrolled in a residency program, have prepaid tuition, have paid or deemed to have paid the STRF assessment, and suffered an economic loss as a result of any of the following:

1. The institution, a location of the institution, or an educational program offered by the institution was closed or discontinued, and you did not choose to participate in a teach-out plan approved by the Bureau or did not complete a chosen teach-out plan approved by the Bureau.
2. You were enrolled at an institution or a location of the institution within the 120 day period before the closure of the institution or location of the institution, or you were enrolled in an educational program within the 120 day period before the program was discontinued.
3. You were enrolled at an institution or a location of the institution more than 120 days before the closure of the institution or location of the institution, in an educational program offered by the institution as to which the Bureau

determined there was a significant decline in the quality or value of the program more than 120 days before closure.

4. The institution has been ordered to pay a refund by the Bureau but has failed to do so.
5. The institution has failed to pay or reimburse loan proceeds under a federal student loan program as required by law or has failed to pay or reimburse proceeds received by the institution in excess of tuition and other costs.
6. You have been awarded restitution, a refund, or other monetary award by an arbitrator or court based on a violation of this chapter by an institution or representative of an institution but have been unable to collect the award from the institution.
7. You sought legal counsel that resulted in the cancellation of one or more of your student loans and have an invoice for services rendered and evidence of the cancellation of the student loan or loans.

To qualify for STRF reimbursement, the application must be received within 4 years from the date of the action or event that made the student eligible for recovery from STRF.

A student whose loan is revived by a loan holder or debt collector after a period of non-collection may, at any time, file a written application for recovery from STRF for the debt that would have otherwise been eligible for recovery. If it has been more than 4 years since the action or event that made the student eligible, the student must have filed a written application for recovery within the original 4-year period, unless the period has been extended by another act of law. However, no claim can be paid to any student without a social security number or a taxpayer identification number.

In-Program Requests

Associate Degree Request for Bachelor Students

While completing coursework toward a bachelor's degree, students can earn the necessary credits to satisfy the requirements of an associate degree. Interested students should submit the **Associate Degree Request for Bachelor Students Form** located in the myCSU Student Portal.

Changing Degree Programs

Students who wish to change degree programs or concentrations, or be re-evaluated for a revised curriculum, must complete the Program Change/Re-Evaluation Request Form found in the myCSU Student Portal. Associated fees are listed below and subject to change:

Change Degree Program	$35
In-Program Re-Evaluation	$25
(update to newest curriculum available for same degree)	
Concentration Change	$25
Transient Student to Degree-Seeking Student	$0
Non-Degree Seeking to Degree-Seeking Student	$0

Official post-secondary transcripts must be on file for all transfer credit decisions to be considered official. Once received, the student's file will be reviewed and the student will receive a new applicant evaluation report detailing any remaining courses in the new program. Additionally, this report will indicate if any previously taken CSU courses will apply. The new evaluation will be subject to current CSU Catalog requirements.

Note: New policies and tuition rates may apply.

Course Transfer Request

Students who wish to transfer courses completed at another institution into their program of study at CSU should submit the **Program Change/Re-Evaluation Request Form.**

Transfer Requirements:

- Official transcripts should be requested from each institution in which a course is being considered for transfer; the Course Transfer Request will not be processed until all official documents are received by the Office of the Registrar
- Courses being considered must have similar content to those offered at CSU
- Credits must have been earned at a post-secondary institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or equivalent
- Graduate courses must have earned a "B" (3.0) or better to be accepted as transfer credit
- When submitting a military transcript such as Joint Services Transcript (JST) or other military record, please support your request by entering the ACE Guide Number on the request form

Degree to Certificate Transfer Request

While completing coursework toward a degree, students may earn the necessary credits to satisfy the requirements of a certificate program. Interested students should submit the **Degree to Certificate Transfer Request Form** located in the myCSU Student Portal. Students will be issued a certificate of completion after all requirements have been met.

Graduation

Students within 12 hours of satisfying program requirements are encouraged to file a **Petition for Graduation** form. Once submitted, an official audit of the student record is performed which includes, but is not limited to, number of credits earned, financial standing, and official transcript record.

A transcript bearing the university seal and signature of the registrar is the official copy of the student's permanent academic record. Students will receive one official transcript at the time of graduation. Additional transcripts may be ordered by submitting the Official Transcript Request form.

Students who need to verify that they have graduated or are scheduled to graduate due to an upcoming promotion board, school admission, or other work-related circumstance may request a Letter of Pending Graduation from the Office of the Registrar by submitting the request to Registrar@columbiasouthern.edu

Note: Students enrolled in the DBA program should refer to the DBA Graduation Requirements Policy.

Diploma and Transcript

After degree conferral, students will receive their official transcript within five business days and their diploma within six weeks.

Commencement Ceremony

Each year CSU hosts a commencement ceremony for students who have completed their programs. CSU encourages all graduates to attend the commencement exercise and accompanying activities. The fees for the ceremony and regalia (cap, gown, and tassel) vary from year to year. Students are responsible for all travel arrangements and accommodations. Students interested in participating in the ceremony should visit the CSU website for additional information.

Requesting a Transcript

Once a student has completed the first three-credit hour course, and course tuition has been received, the student may request an official CSU transcript. Only transfer credit submitted to the university via official documents is included on the CSU transcript. Unofficial transfer credit is not notated on the CSU transcript. A CSU transcript may be requested by using the Official Transcript Request form and a transcript fee applies. Financial obligations to CSU must be met before the transcript can be released. Please allow 7-10 business days for processing. The record is mailed as a sealed official transcript to the institution or person indicated on the Transcript Request Form. An unofficial transcript may be emailed or faxed if indicated on the request form. Please note, the transcript processing fee only applies to the official transcript.

Returning Students

Students not in an active status with the university, or those formally withdrawn from the institution must submit a Re-Enrollment Application.

Upon submission of the Re-Enrollment Application, submission of official transcripts not previously received by the university is required. Students may opt to use the Transcript Request Service for assistance in obtaining official documents. Students re-admitted to the university are subject to the current University Catalog, including academic policies, tuition rates, and program requirements. Once all documentation is received by the university, an applicant evaluation report is issued to the student. Students who are in receipt of an applicant evaluation report may register for courses. Students should seek academic advisement prior to enrolling.

Returning Graduates

Students returning for a subsequent degree program should submit a Re-Enrollment Application. A graduation audit must be passed for the previous program. Additional official transcripts/documents not previously submitted may be requested through the CSU Transcript Request Service. CSU cannot order copies of CLEP scores or international transcripts. Returning students are required to have an evaluation of credit completed prior to beginning their next degree program with CSU.

Academic Policies

Academic Course Load Policy

Columbia Southern University considers a full-time course load in a ten-week period to be six credit hours for undergraduate and three credit hours for graduate. Graduate and undergraduate students in good standing may take up to six credits per enrollment period.

Course Load Allowance

To request a course load allowance beyond six credit hours, the student must work closely with their assigned Academic Advisor to develop a plan that will lead to success. Upon submission of each enrollment request, the Academic Advisor may approve the overload for a maximum of nine concurrent credit hours. Courses in which a student has requested additional time beyond the original course end date (grade of I is recorded) are also considered. A student who requests a course load allowance must meet the following requirements:

- Successfully complete at least 12 credit hours (undergraduate), or 6 credit hours (graduate) at CSU in current degree program
- Establish a minimum GPA of 3.0
- Adhere to CSU's Institutional Academic Progress Policy

Exceptions to the policy require approval from the student's Academic Program Director. The Dean of the College determines course load allowance appeal decisions.

Accelerated Pathways

Students enrolled in accelerated pathways may enroll in 9 credits at the time of initial enrollment. To remain enrolled in an accelerated program, students are required to maintain satisfactory academic progress as described in the Institutional Academic Progress Policy.

Note: Students enrolled in the DBA program should refer to the DBA Academic Course Load Policy.

Academic Credit Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the assignment of semester credit hours awarded for all courses at CSU.

Semester credit hours at CSU are equivalent to commonly accepted and traditionally defined units of academic measurement. Each course at CSU is measured by achievement of established course learning outcomes and the amount of time a typical student should spend to accomplish these outcomes. Specifically, a one (1) semester credit hour requires a minimum of 45 hours of student work with one-third of the time (15 hours) focused on academic engagement and two-thirds of the time (30 hours) focused on student preparation. For a three semester credit hour course, a minimum of 135 hours of student work is required divided between 45 hours of academic engagement and 90 hours of student preparation.

Academic engagement may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Reviewing a class lecture
- Taking an examination
- An interactive tutorial
- Computer-assisted instruction
- Contributing to an online discussion
- Attending a study group assigned by the institution
- Initiating a course-related contact with a faculty member

Student preparation may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Homework (including reading and study time)
- Completing an academic assignment
- Completing an academic project

The CSU Clock/Credit Hour Worksheet is utilized to estimate the amount of time a student should spend to accomplish course learning outcomes in order to substantiate semester credit hours awarded for all courses.

Considering the variety of assignments and assessments that may be used in course development, it is not always possible to develop three semester credit hour courses with exactly 135 hours of student work. Thus, CSU has established a target range of 135 – 150 hours of student work as the requirement for three semester hours of academic credit.

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Definition

Ethical conduct is foundational to a successful academic career at CSU. Students, faculty, and staff must commit themselves to the highest standards of honesty, fairness, and responsibility. Therefore, any deviation from these standards is a breach of the ethics that ensures the quality of CSU's academic programs, and thus, is a violation of CSU's Academic Integrity Policy.

Academic integrity demonstrates intellectual honesty by avoiding incidents of cheating, plagiarism, and self-plagiarism (unless otherwise approved). CSU has established the following definitions of plagiarism, cheating, and self-plagiarism:

- **Plagiarism** is representing the words, ideas, or works of an author without giving proper attribution to sources used through the use of in-text citations and references.
- **Cheating** is using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, study aids, or other information to fulfill scholastic requirements with the intent to defraud. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: contract cheating, submission of another student's work, purchasing assignments, collusion, or submitting an assignment with the intent to defraud.
- **Self-plagiarism** is submitting previously submitted course work without prior professor approval.

CSU uses the style of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) (current edition) when assignment instructions indicate APA format is required. The APA manual presents explicit style requirements for students in the preparation of written assignments. APA is used to provide a standardized style format for written assignments while ensuring proper attribution is given to sources used in academic work through the use of in-text citations and references. Resources to assist students in complying with APA standards are located in the myCSU Student Portal under the Resources tab.

CSU students agree to an Honor Pledge through the submission of each course enrollment.

> *I promise that I will not be involved in cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or misrepresentation of sources while enrolled as a student at Columbia Southern University. I have read the Academic Integrity Policy, which outlines disciplinary procedures that will result from failure to comply with this policy. I understand that violation of the Academic Integrity Policy will result in disciplinary action, outlined within the policy.*

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy include, but are not limited to:

- Using unauthorized materials, or receiving unauthorized assistance in connection with any work completed or submitted
- Presenting the work or ideas of another as one's own without proper acknowledgment of the source, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in the verbatim or near-verbatim form
- Sharing, selling, buying, or uploading work or information related to any graded assignments
- Using another student's graded work to complete an assignment(s)
- Resubmitting, in whole or any portion of, a previously written work by the student without professor consent
- Using sources deemed as inappropriate by the university such as
- Internet essay/paper generators
- Homework assistant websites
- Using an alternate, stand-in, or proxy during an examination
- Violations outlined within the Final Examination Proctor Policy

Violations to the Academic Integrity Policy are a very serious matter and are officially documented in the student's record and preclude students from graduating with honors. Students who are found to violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action which are based on the type of violation and are cumulative throughout the student's tenure at CSU. Violations that occur during a final examination are also included in the cumulative number of violations and are subject to the same sanctions outlined herein. Dropping or withdrawing from a course in which there is an Academic Integrity violation does not void the violation.

Sanctions include but are not limited to:

- Point(s) deduction
- Assignment failure
- Course failure
- Probation
- University dismissal
- Degree revocation

The following procedures are followed to address situations wherein students exhibit behavior in violation of academic integrity standards. Matriculation from one offense to the next is based upon formal notification from the university. Please note: CSU reserves the right to amend the procedure as appropriate based upon the severity of the violation.

Plagiarism

Students found guilty of plagiarism, as defined within this policy, shall receive sanctions as outlined below:

First Offense

Students will be allowed to resubmit the assignment in question within 14 calendar days with corrections. Faculty have the discretion to penalize up to one letter grade.

Second Offense
Students will receive a zero on the assignment in question without the opportunity for resubmission and will be placed on Academic Integrity Probation for 12 credit hours.

Third Offense
Students will receive a course failure for the course in question, be placed on Academic Integrity Probation for 12 credit hours, and will be required to complete a training module with the Office of Student Resolution and Conduct within four weeks of notification. Students failing to complete the required training module will be referred to the academic dean/assistant provost of the student's degree program for additional sanctions.

Fourth Offense
Students will be dismissed from the university.

Cheating

Students who choose to participate in cheating, as defined within this policy, shall receive sanctions as outlined below:

First Offense
Students will receive a zero on the assignment in question, be placed on Academic Integrity Probation for 12 credit hours and be required to complete a training module with the Office of Student Resolution and Conduct within four weeks of notification. Students failing to complete the required training module will be referred to the academic dean/assistant provost of the student's degree program for additional sanctions

Second Offense
Students will be dismissed from the university

Academic Integrity Probation

Students placed on Academic Integrity Probation will remain on Academic Integrity Probation for 12 credit hours (unless otherwise specified) wherein they must exhibit integrity through submission of coursework and complete a required training module through the Office of Student Resolution and Conduct within four weeks. Additionally, students may be limited to enrolling in one course at a time if it is determined necessary.

Students are removed from Academic Integrity Probation after 12 credit hours (unless otherwise specified) provided they have not received any academic integrity-related infractions during their probationary status. Students who fail to complete their probationary status without academic infractions or fail to complete the required training module will be referred to the academic dean/assistant provost of the student's degree program for additional sanctions, up to and including dismissal.

There shall be no statute of limitations that precludes the university from acting on the discovery of alleged violations. This could take place during the time in which the course in question is being offered, after the course has ended, or after the student has graduated. In the event additional academic integrity violations are discovered after degree conferral, the student will be referred to the provost/chief academic officer for review and decision.

Students found in violation of the Academic Integrity policy may contest the infraction by following the process outlined within the Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy.

Academic Program Improvement Policy

CSU is committed to provide students program options that will prepare them to enter the workforce in a discipline of interest. The university regularly reviews academic programs (courses, concentrations, certificates or full degree programs) and considers those which will meet the needs of CSU students and the workforce. As a result of this comprehensive review, decisions sometime result in an improvement or discontinuation of the academic program. Once a new program or improvements to an existing program have been approved, the Operations and Support Committee shall convene to discuss the communication plan. The Operations and Support Committee is responsible for the notification to enrolled and prospective students of any plan to modify its programs. Changes to CSU programs will be relayed using approved university communication mediums.

Teach-Out Plan

The purpose of a teach-out plan is to provide eligible students who are enrolled in CSU programs scheduled for discontinuation the opportunity to complete the program before it is no longer available for enrollment registration. When a program is discontinued, a teach-out plan is administered to ensure eligible students receive the information and support services needed to complete the program within the established parameters of the teach-out plan. Eligible students are those who are actively enrolled or registered in the program scheduled for discontinuation. The Office of the Registrar will notify students via email who are actively enrolled or registered in the program and include a reasonable registration schedule that will allow students to complete the program requirements before the program is no longer available for enrollment registration. This notification will include active students who may need to repeat program requirements. Students who are readmitted will be required to choose a different program upon readmission. Students who do not respond to the teach-out notification may be required to change programs once the program is discontinued.

Academic Records Privacy Policy

CSU is responsible and accountable for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in its distance education programs and as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). The purpose of this policy is to provide written procedures CSU takes to effectively provide this protection.

Procedures for Protecting Distance Learning Student Privacy

- CSU protects the privacy of all its distance learning students through the strict adherence to the rules of FERPA. The official FERPA statement is available for student and public view through the CSU website. All CSU employees and faculty complete required annual training in FERPA rules and acknowledge by signing a Confidentiality Notice.
- Students may wish to authorize consent to share student record information with another individual. In this case, a FERPA consent form must be on file and the person authorized consent may only access information by providing an assigned password. Consent only provides authorization to release information, not to take action on a student record. Students may also revoke the release of student record information.
- CSU students are assigned a secure, individual Student Identification Number (SID) and password upon enrollment. These assigned identifiers are used to access Blackboard, CSU's Learning Management System (LMS), to complete coursework and myCSU Student Portal to access grades and related information. Students who contact the university by phone, chat or email must provide this information and a second source of personally identifiable information in order to discuss matters pertaining to their student record. Students may refer to the Student Identity Verification Policy to learn more.
- Information contained within the CSU Student Information System (SIS) is also viewed as sensitive, personally identifiable information and the university makes reasonable efforts to ensure all information contained within is secure from modifications or deletion by unauthorized personnel. In addition, employees who do not have a vested interest to perform a relative job function are not granted access to information contained in the SIS. Servers containing the SIS are located in a secure environment.

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for the privacy of all CSU student record information. Students who wish to discuss privacy of student records, FERPA, or wish to express concern may contact the office at Registrar@columbiasouthern.edu or 877.316.0219.

Accommodation for Disabilities Policy

It is the policy of CSU to provide reasonable educational accommodation(s) for persons defined as disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, and all other local and state requirements. A request for accommodations will be granted provided that it is based on individual needs, does not compromise the basic requirements of the course or degree program, and does not require a financial burden on CSU beyond what is viewed as customary and reasonable.

It is the student's responsibility to self-disclose a disability to the Office of Disability Services and provide the appropriate documentation if requesting specific educational accommodations. Although students may register for disability services at any time during a degree program, the time required for accommodation provision can vary with the type of request, so a general recommendation is to submit the request and documentation at least six weeks in advance.

For questions regarding the services provided through the Office of Disability Services, please see our **Office of Disability Services Handbook** or contact us by phone or email at 1-888-785-3005 or **disabilityservices@columbiasouthern.edu**.

Assignment Make-Up Policy

CSU delivers curriculum through a variety of assignment types and methodologies. Assignment types are unique and carry specific submission requirements. Assignment submittal information can be viewed within the assignment instructions in each course. In the event technical difficulty occurs, please refer to the Technology Policies located within the myCSU Student Portal. The CSU Technical Support Department is available to assist students in resolving technical issues.

On occasions in which special consideration is granted by the course professor to make-up or re-submit an assignment, specific instructions or assignment due dates for make-up work should be followed. Requests for special consideration to make-up or re-submit an assignment should be emailed to the course professor prior to the course end date. Requests will be reviewed by the course professor who will render a decision based upon the merits of the case.

Attendance Policy

Term

CSU will verify your attendance in each registered course at the end of the first week. The discussion board posting or Unit I assessment must be submitted to verify attendance and all Unit I assignments are due by the end of week one to receive credit. Students who choose not to attend the first week will be institutionally dropped from the course.

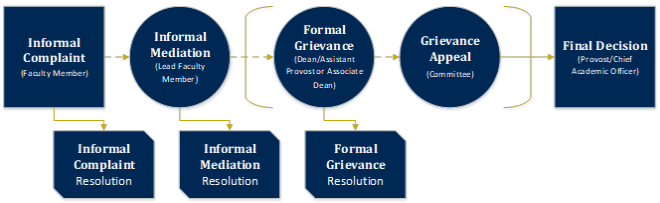
Veterans Flexible Enrollment

Students enrolled in the Veterans Flexible Enrollment option must show attendance by submission of an assignment for each course enrolled prior to the end of week four (4) in the enrolled term. Students failing to show attendance will be automatically withdrawn from the course and a grade of "W" will be posted. Please refer to the Tuition Refund Policy for any eligible refund due. CSU will file VA Form 22-1999b with the Department of Veterans Affairs indicating course enrollment termination due to unsatisfactory attendance. This action will result in the suspension of benefit payments on courses reported.

Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy

CSU acknowledges that students have the right to seek a remedy for a dispute or disagreement through a comprehensive complaint procedure. The purpose of the Academic Complaint and Grievance policy is to provide students with a pathway to have a complaint reviewed and a resolution rendered, within the academic or classroom context. An academic complaint is based on a case or circumstance that the student feels violates a published policy, syllabus, or rubric. Academic complaints include, but are not limited to, academic integrity, grading, feedback, etc.

The process to file an academic complaint is as follows:



Informal Complaint

Within five business days of the specific occurrence, the student may provide the faculty member (whom the complaint is against) with a clearly written complaint that includes the specific policy, syllabus item, and/or rubric information that has been allegedly violated. The faculty member is responsible for reviewing the complaint and providing a response in writing to the student within three business days.

If the complaint is related to the lack of email response of the faculty member, the student should make a final attempt to contact the faculty member and allow 48 hours for response prior to moving to Informal Mediation.

Informal Mediation

If the resolution rendered remains unsatisfactory upon receiving the faculty member's response, the student may contact the lead faculty member* of the course within five business days of the informal complaint response. The student will provide the lead faculty with the faculty member's response and the specific policy, syllabus item, and/or rubric information that has allegedly been violated. The lead faculty is responsible for reviewing/investigating the complaint and providing a written response to the student within three business days.

*Students may contact the Office of Student Resolution and Conduct to gain understanding and contact information for the appropriate lead faculty member.

Formal Grievance

If the resolution rendered remains unsatisfactory upon receipt of a response from the lead faculty member, within 10 business days the student may submit a formal letter to Grievance@columbiasouthern.edu outlining their grievance to be formally recorded by the institution. The student will be responsible for providing dates and documentation wherein they attempted an informal resolution for their complaint. The grievance will be provided to the dean/assistant provost or associate dean responsible for the course in question. The dean/assistant provost or associate dean will notify the faculty member that a formal grievance has been received and may choose to schedule a phone/virtual conference with the student and faculty member in order to gain more details regarding the formal grievance. The dean/assistant provost or associate dean is responsible for reviewing/investigating the formal grievance and providing a written response within 10 business days of receiving the formal grievance.

Grievance Appeal

If the resolution rendered remains unsatisfactory upon receipt of a response from the dean/assistant provost, the student may submit a formal letter within 10 business days to Grievance@ColumbiaSouthern.edu outlining the desire to appeal the grievance decision and request a hearing before the Academic Grievance Appeals Committee. The student must submit all evidence to support that informal and formal processes have been completed, in addition to a clearly articulated expected outcome.

The Academic Grievance Appeals Committee shall be comprised of:

- Vice Provost for Student Affairs, Chair
- Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
- Vice Provost for Educational Support and Services
- Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, and Compliance

In addition to the aforementioned committee, a member of faculty will be brought in as an advisor but will not serve as a member of the committee.

A virtual/in-person hearing shall be scheduled within 15 days of receipt of the grievance appeal. During the hearing, the student will be required to present their perspective to the committee. The Office of Student Resolution and Conduct will be responsible for scheduling the hearing with the committee, student, and faculty member. The faculty member will be present to provide rationale for the decision rendered. Within five business days of its conclusion, the committee will provide a formal recommendation to the provost/chief academic officer. The provost/chief academic officer will make a final decision and a written decision will be provided to the student within five business days of receipt of the Academic Grievance Appeals Committee's recommendation. The decision of the provost/chief academic officer shall be the final action taken by the institution.

Students who wish to file a complaint as a result of discrimination or harassment on the basis of protected class status, and/or allegations of retaliation should review the Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Non-discrimination policy and follow the steps outlined therein.

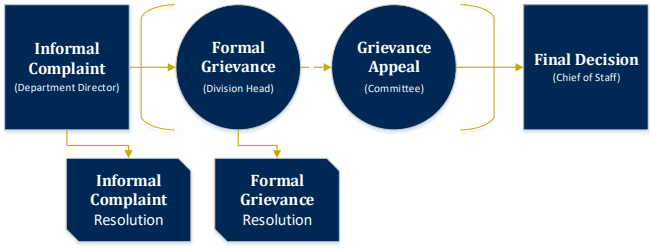
Students who wish to file a complaint with an external agency may review agency contact information on the CSU Website. Students are encouraged to proceed through university processes before filing a complaint with an external agency.

Non-Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy

CSU acknowledges that students have the right to seek a remedy for a dispute or disagreement through a comprehensive complaint procedure. The purpose of the Non-Academic Complaint and Grievance policy is to provide students with a pathway to have a complaint reviewed and a resolution rendered, for situations that arise outside the context of the classroom. A non-academic complaint is based on a case or circumstance that the student feels violates a published policy, procedure, or agreement made between the student and the institution. Non-academic complaints include, but are not limited to: financial decisions*, refunds, honors status, disparate treatment, etc.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and any other appeal that has a separate policy/procedure is excluded from this policy*

The process to file a non-academic complaint is as follows:



Informal Complaint

Within five business days of the specific occurrence, the student may provide the department director* with a clearly identified complaint. The written complaint should include the specific policy/agreement that has been violated, and their desired resolution. The department director is responsible for reviewing/investigating the complaint and providing a written decision to the student within three business days.

*Students may contact the Office of Student Resolution and Conduct to gain understanding and contact information for a specific department director.

Formal Grievance

If the resolution rendered remains unsatisfactory upon receipt of a response from the department director, within 10 business days the student may submit a formal letter to Grievance@columbiasouthern.edu outlining their grievance to be formally recorded by the institution. The student will be responsible for providing dates and documentation wherein they attempted informal resolution for their complaint. The grievance will be provided to the division head for review and investigation. The division head will notify the department director that a formal grievance has been received. The division head may choose to schedule a phone/virtual conference with the student and department director in order to gain additional details regarding the formal grievance. The division head is responsible for reviewing and investigating the formal grievance and providing a response to the student within 10 business days of receipt of the formal grievance.

Grievance Appeal

If the resolution rendered remains unsatisfactory upon receipt of a response from the division head, the student may submit a formal letter, within 10 business days, to Grievance@ColumbiaSouthern.edu outlining the desire to appeal the grievance decision and request a hearing before the Non-Academic Grievance Appeals Committee. The student must submit all evidence to support that informal and formal processes have been completed, in addition to a clearly articulated expected outcome.

The Non-Academic Grievance Appeals Committee shall be comprised of:

- Director of Student Resolution and Conduct, Chair
- Vice Provost for Student Affairs
- Assistant Provost of Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, and Compliance
- Associate Vice President of Finance

A virtual/in-person hearing shall be scheduled within 15 days of receipt of the grievance appeal wherein the student will be required to present their perspective to the committee. The Office of Student Resolution and Conduct will be responsible

for scheduling the hearing with the committee, student, and department director. The department director will be present to provide rationale for the decision rendered. The committee will conduct the hearing and at the conclusion of the hearing and review of evidence shall provide a formal recommendation to the chief of staff within five business days of the hearing. The chief of staff shall provide a written decision to the student within five business days of receipt of the Non-Academic Grievance Appeals Committee's recommendation. The decision of the chief of staff shall be the final action taken by the institution.

Students who wish to file a complaint as a result of discrimination or harassment on the basis of protected class status, and/or allegations of retaliation should review the Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Non-discrimination policy and follow the steps outlined therein.

Students who wish to file a complaint with an external agency may review agency contact information on the CSU Website. Students are encouraged to proceed through the university processes before filing a complaint with an external agency.

Course Access Policy

Students enrolled at Columbia Southern University are subject to time-sensitive course access as stated in the Course Access Policy.

At the conclusion of a completed course, students will retain course access for a period of 21 days. Any course which is unfinished, further defined as a course with outstanding assignments, will be closed for access at the conclusion of the enrollment period. Students who have been granted an Incomplete (I) will retain course access until the conclusion of the incomplete period; in addition, the student will retain course access for an additional 21 days in excess of the incomplete period for all completed courses. The final course grade will be calculated utilizing the weighted score assigned to each course assignment, as indicated in the course syllabus. Once the course access period has elapsed, all coursework submitted therein is archived and future access to the course through Columbia Southern University's Learning Management System is restricted. Students are encouraged to save their work through use of technology. Please review the Technology Policies for suggested methods of saving coursework. Course access will not be granted to archived courses unless approval is granted by the Assistant Provost for the college in which the course in question is located.

Course Completion Policy

Students are encouraged to complete all assignments within a course; each assignment holds a weighted score that comprises the final course grade. Course assignments not completed by the original or adjusted course end date will be assigned a grade of zero (0). Final course grades are calculated utilizing the weighted score assigned to each course assignment. For example, failing to complete an assignment weighted at 25% of the course grade would earn a final grade no higher than 75%. Students who are unable to complete all course assignments prior to their original course end date are offered the option of requesting an Incomplete (I), or withdrawing from the course. Academic and financial consequences should be noted for students who withdraw after week one of the course. Students planning to withdraw from any course should review the Official Course Drop/Withdrawal Policy. In addition, academic advisement should be sought to address all consequential actions prior to submitting the withdrawal request. Students requesting additional time in a course must submit the online Incomplete Course Request Form located in the Student Portal under Online Forms. Students are required to maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 in undergraduate programs and 3.0 in graduate programs. Academic standards of performance are established to ensure satisfactory academic progress toward an earned degree.

Course Extension Policy for LifePace Learning Courses

Students enrolled in LifePace Learning courses may request additional time to successfully complete coursework in excess of the allotted enrollment period. Requests for a course extension should be the exception during a student's tenure, as academic progress throughout the course promotes student success.

If the student has an extenuating circumstance or a hardship, and needs additional time, the student should refer to the Incomplete for Special Circumstances section of the Incomplete Grading Policy for more information.

Students enrolled in Term and Veterans Flexible Enrollment courses should refer to the Incomplete Grading Policy for Term and Veterans Flexible Enrollment Courses in the Student Handbook.

Course Extensions

Any student who needs time in excess of 10 weeks to complete a course may request an extension from the university. Students are encouraged to submit the Course Extension Request Form on or before the course end date; however, requests must be submitted no later than three (3) calendar days after the course end date, unless approved by the Lead Faculty. Three extension options are available to students, each with associated, non-refundable processing fees: 15 days for $25, 30 days for $50, and 60 days for $100. The total length of the course extension is not to exceed 60 days. Additional time applied to a course will begin at the previous course end date. The student should allow up to three (3) business days to process an extension prior to the first assignment due date.

Students provided an extension will see a grade of "I" until the course is complete. A grade will replace this placeholder upon completion of the extension period. At that time, unsubmitted course assignments will be assigned a grade of zero. The student's grade will be calculated on the weighted scores earned on all course assignments. The final course grade will replace the placeholder of "I".

Other Considerations

- A course extension request should not be submitted for a course in which assignments need to be resubmitted or if all assignments have been submitted and/or graded.
- Students approved for an extension forfeit the option to withdraw from the course after the original course end date, pursuant to the Official Course Drop/Withdrawal Policy. Students should refer to the Withdrawal for Special Circumstances Policy if extenuating circumstances prevent course completion.
- A service member utilizing Tuition Assistance should contact his or her education officer to report an extension in order to avoid inaccurate recoupment of funds. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the education office of his or her final course grade at the conclusion of the extension period.

Course Retake Policy

Undergraduate students must earn a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale. Students earning a "D" or below may need to repeat the course to satisfy program requirements.

Graduate students must earn a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale. The course in which a grade below C is received must be repeated at CSU. Students may need to repeat a grade of "C" to satisfy graduation requirements.

In cases where a student repeats a course, the original course will be issued a grade of "R" upon completion of the retake. If a course must be repeated to satisfy GPA requirements for graduation and the previously earned grade is normally considered passing, the course retake is eligible for Federal Student Aid one time, provided the student is eligible.

DBA Academic Course Load Policy

The Doctor of Business Administration consists of two course formats. The first phase of the program includes didactic courses, which fulfill the major requirement courses for the degree. The second phase consists of courses related to the doctoral research study or dissertation.

Didactic Course Load

Didactic courses are three semester hours each. Columbia Southern University (CSU) considers one or more didactic courses a full-time load.

Doctoral Research Study/Dissertation Course Load

Courses are one credit hour each. A full-time load during the Doctoral Research Study/Dissertation phase is considered two or more courses.

Funding Considerations

Students seeking alternative funding (corporate, military, other funding sources) should review the appropriate alternative funding policy to determine the number of credit hours for which to register in order to receive the full financial benefits.

DBA Admission Requirements Policy

Students wishing to apply for admission into the DBA program should refer to the Admission Requirements Policy for specific admission requirements.

DBA Candidacy Status Policy

Students earn DBA Candidacy Status following the successful completion of DBA 9301, Comprehensive Examination. Enrollment in DBA 9301, Comprehensive Examination is dependent upon successful completion of all DBA major requirements, which the Office of the Registrar verifies.

DBA Graduation Requirements Policy

Students must successfully complete all degree requirements with passing grades, meet the minimum GPA requirements, successfully defend the dissertation, meet all financial obligations to the institution and have all official transcripts on file. Students enrolled in the DBA program are eligible to apply for graduation by submitting a Petition for Graduation upon receiving approval of a successful dissertation defense.

DBA students must complete a minimum of 61 semester hours with a minimum of 15 hours of dissertation/research courses. At least 85 percent of the courses that comprise the program must be completed with CSU, which is a minimum of 52 semester hours in the DBA program.

Honors designation is not awarded for DBA programs. Though a grade of "C" is considered passing, students may be required to repeat a course in which a "C" is earned if this grade results in a substandard cumulative GPA. Grades below a "C" are not considered passing.

DBA Institutional Academic Progress Policy

University policy requires students to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 in the DBA program and maintain successful academic progress in dissertation research courses. These performance standards form a basis for the following academic classifications:

- Good Standing
- Academic Probation
- Academic Dismissal

Guidelines and procedures for placing students in the above classifications include:

Good Standing (Active)

A student in good standing must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. In addition, a student performing research in support of their dissertation must make successful progress.

Academic Probation

The university may place a student on academic probation for several reasons:

- Cumulative GPA falls below 3.0
- Unsatisfactory Progress ("U") in the dissertation research course
- Withdrawal from the same course twice
- Repeat pattern of consecutive withdrawals from courses impeding academic progress

The Office of the Registrar specifies the conditions of academic probation to students in writing.

A student placed on academic probation due to their cumulative GPA falling below 3.00 is given 6 credit hours to raise the GPA to 3.0 or higher. A student placed on probation due to receiving a "U" in a dissertation research course must receive an "S" in the next dissertation research course. A student placed on probation for repeated withdraws from the same course must complete the course on the third attempt. Students must demonstrate academic progress and avoid repeated patterns of withdrawing from courses to avoid academic dismissal.

Academic Dismissal

Students enrolled in the DBA program are expected to progress through the program timely and successfully; therefore, academic dismissal due to substandard academic performance is final. The university will dismiss a student from the program under the following circumstances:

- Not achieving a GPA of 3.0 or higher at the conclusion of the probationary period
- Withdrawing from the same course three times
- Earning two consecutive grades of "U" in dissertation research courses

However, a student may appeal a dismissal due to two consecutive grades of unsatisfactory in dissertation research courses.

Appeal Process

A student dismissed from the DBA Program for earning consecutive "U" grades in dissertation research courses may submit a written appeal via email, within ten business days of the date the decision was sent, to the DBA Appeals Board through the DBA Program Coordinator. The written appeal by the student to the Board must clearly state the reasons for the appeal and remedy sought. The DBA Academic Program Director will appoint three academic faculty to evaluate the appeal. The Board composition will consist of the Lead Faculty of the DBA Program, acting as chair, and two faculty members from the DBA Program unrelated to the student's committee.

The DBA Appeals Board will review all submissions, obtain additional information and opinions if desired, and provide the student with a written response within ten business days of receipt. The DBA Program Director will receive a copy of the Board's response. The findings and recommendation of the DBA Appeals Board are final.

DBA Leave of Absence Policy

The university's Leave of Absence (LOA) policy allows students the flexibility to take a temporary break from the program. Students enrolled in the DBA Program, who are unable to maintain continuous enrollment, may apply for a temporary LOA. The policy does not require students to apply for re-admission to the university upon return from an LOA. For purposes of Title IV, however, students are considered withdrawn from the university while on a LOA; therefore, federal student loans are not eligible for an in-school deferment. The university expects all students to complete all courses and does not grant students LOAs in the middle of a term. Students currently enrolled in a term should complete all courses and apply for an LOA to begin at the start of the next term. Should circumstances prevent regular, on-time, course completion within the enrollment period, students have the option to request an Incomplete or withdraw from the course.

> *Note: If the student wishes to withdraw, the university may require a Return of Title IV calculation.*

A student may apply for a LOA by communicating the intent to their academic advisor. University policy requires students to complete the Leave of Absence Request Form and obtain

approval by the appropriate administrative staff. Administrative staff will notify students of the decision within 10 business days of the request.

DBA students are eligible for one (1) LOA per 12-month period. After this LOA, the DBA student is once again subject to the DBA Continuous Enrollment Policy.

Military/Special Services Leave of Absence Provision

DBA students requiring a military or special services deployment may request a provisional LOA for the designated deployment period for up to 12 consecutive months. A student may apply for a provisional LOA by submitting the Leave of Absence Request Form located in myCSU Student Portal. In addition, a student must provide supporting documentation about the nature and period of deployment from his or her commanding officer or supervisor. If the military or special services deployment occurs during a course, policy requires a student to withdraw from the course or request an Incomplete for Special Circumstances.

> *Note: Students enrolled in Dissertation/Research courses are not eligible for the Incomplete for Special Circumstances (ISC) and should work with their dissertation chairs about any special circumstances that arise during this period of his or her programs.*

DBA Time Limits

Students enrolled in the DBA program are expected to complete the program in no fewer than three (3) years and no more than seven years from the date of initial enrollment in the Doctoral Orientation course. In addition, students must meet the following program milestones:

- Complete all coursework within four years of completing the Doctoral Orientation course
- Successfully defend dissertation within three years of passing the comprehensive exam course

In some cases, due to extenuating circumstances, students can appeal the 4-year coursework and/or 3-year research limit to the DBA Appeals Board, not to exceed ten years from the start of enrollment in the program. The DBA Appeals Board will be appointed by the DBA Academic Program Director and consists of:

- Lead Faculty of the DBA Program, Chair
- Two DBA program faculty members (unrelated to student's committee)

Students who wish to appeal shall submit a formal letter to the DBA Program Coordinator clearly stating the reason(s) for the appeal and remedy sought. The DBA Program Coordinator will provide the appeal to the DBA Appeals Board. The DBA Appeals Board will review the appeal, all submissions, obtain additional information if necessary, and provide the student with a written response within ten business days of receipt. The DBA Program Director will receive a copy of the Board's response. The findings and recommendation of the DBA Appeals Board are final.

Drug & Alcohol Prevention Program

The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 requires that all institutions of higher education (IHE) adopt and implement an alcohol and drug prevention program to prevent the abuse of alcohol and use of illicit drugs by students and employees on institutional premises or as part of any of its activities. The regulations require an IHE to do the following:

1. Prepare a written policy on alcohol and other drugs.
2. Distribute the policy to every student and staff member each year.
3. Prepare a biennial review report on the effectiveness of its alcohol and other drug (AOD) programs and the consistency of policy enforcement.
4. As part of the biennial review, the institution must determine the following:
    a. The number of drug and alcohol related violations and fatalities that occur on the campus, or as part of any of the institution's activities and are reported to campus officials, and
    b. The number and type of sanctions that are imposed by the institution as a result of drug and alcohol-related violations and fatalities on the institution's campus or as part of any of the institution's activities.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

I. Standards of Conduct

CSU is committed to providing a drug-free campus and workplace. CSU prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students, employees, and guests on its premises, or at any activity it sponsors.

Students, employees, and guests must comply with the federal, state, and local laws concerning underage drinking and illegal drug usage Violations of federal, state, or local laws will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement officials.

Students and employees will be subject to university disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion or separation, pursuant to CSU policies and procedures.

II. Legal Sanctions Regarding Unlawful Use, Possession, or Distribution of Alcoholic Beverages and Illicit Drugs

A. State Laws and Sanctions

The legal drinking age in the United States is 21 in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Legal drinking age is 18 in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam.

Alabama laws related to the illicit possession, use, and distribution of alcoholic beverages or drugs, and the possible legal penalties for violation of these laws can be found at the following web pages:

- **http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/alison/codeofalabama/1975/coatoc.htm** — Alcohol
  Sections 28-1-1, 28-1-5, 28-4-20, and 28-3A-25
- **http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/alison/codeofalabama/1975/coatoc.htm** — Drug Offenses
  Sections 13A-12-211 to 215, 13A-12-250, 13A-12-260
- **http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/alison/codeofalabama/1975/coatoc.htm** — Public Intoxication
  Section 13A-11-10
- **http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/alison/codeofalabama/1975/coatoc.htm** — Driving while under the influence
  Section 32-5A-191

B. Federal Laws and Sanctions

United States Code Title 21, Chapter 13, Section 812 establishes classifications of controlled substances and is located at **http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title21/chapter13&edition=prelim.**

Section 841 makes it unlawful to manufacture, distribute, or dispense, or possess with intent to manufacture, distribute, or dispense, a controlled substance or a counterfeit substance. Federal penalties for controlled substances can be found at **https://www.dea.gov/drug-information**.

C. Local Ordinances

Local authorities abide by state and federal laws concerning unlawful possession, use, and distribution of alcoholic beverages and drugs.

Penalties for subsequent violations and convictions of the above are progressively more severe than for initial convictions.

Drug and Alcohol Prevention Program

Columbia Southern University provides the eCHECKUP TO GO software for all students, faculty, and employees. eCHECKUP TO GO is an alcohol and drug prevention program that educates students and other members of the CSU community on drinking patterns and the risks associated with alcohol and marijuana use. Students, faculty, and employees can access the software at **http://interwork.sdsu.edu/echeckup/usa/alc/coll/columbiasouthern.**

Health Risks

Alcohol and other drug abuse is a significant public health problem and has a detrimental effect on the community in terms of increased medical and workers compensation claims, medical disability costs, decreased productivity, injuries, theft, and absenteeism. To learn more about the health risks of alcohol and drug use, please visit the National Institute on Drug Abuse at **http://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse**.

Other Resources

Because CSU's virtual campus does not enable the provision of on-site counseling or treatment, the following information is provided as a resource for those who need assistance with avoiding or recovering from alcohol or drug abuse. Students or employees who need information related to alcohol or drug abuse are encouraged to use directory information, online searches, the telephone book, or referrals from friends and/or professionals.

Below is a list of local and national organizations dedicated to providing information and suggestions.

Addiction Center
https://www.addictioncenter.com/

Alabama Department of Public Health
www.adph.org

National Institute on Drug Abuse
General Link/Address: **www.nida.nih.gov**
Specific Link/Address on Club Drugs:
https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/club-drugs
310.443.1124

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
www.niaaa.nih.gov

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
An agency of the US Department of Health & Human Services providing information online regarding alcohol, drugs, and treatment programs.

General Address
https://www.samhsa.gov/

Specific Address for Treatment Programs
findtreatment.samhsa.gov

Phone
800.729.6686

Alcoholics Anonymous
http://www.aa.org/

Narcotics Anonymous
www.na.org

Drug Convictions Policy

Under federal law, a student who has been convicted of the sale or possession of illegal drugs under any federal or state law during a period of enrollment for which the student was receiving financial aid (grant, loans, and/or work-study) is not eligible for federal student aid. To view the policy, please visit the Drug Convictions Policy online.

Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) Policy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their educational records. CSU acknowledges this law as university policy.

Under the provisions of this law, students are entitled to the following privileges:

- inspection and review of the student's educational records;
- request of amendments to the student's records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights;
- consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent; and
- ability to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by CSU to comply with FERPA requirements in the instance that a complaint cannot be resolved within the university.

Requests by students to inspect, review, or amend must be submitted in writing and identify the information below.

- Record the student wishes to inspect
- Signature and date

For requests to amend, students must clearly identify the portion of the educational record the student is requesting be changed and specify why the record should be changed. If the requested change is not approved, the student will be notified of the university's decision and the student's right to a hearing. FERPA regulations now allow the request to be submitted electronically.

Students are informed of those instances where FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent in the university catalog information (electronically and in print).
However, FERPA allows schools to disclose student records, without consent, to the parties listed below.

- School officials with legitimate educational interest
- Other schools to which a student is transferring
- Specified officials for audit of evaluation purposes
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
- Accrediting organizations
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies
- State and local authorities

Release of student directory information is also permitted by FERPA. CSU identifies directory information as name, address, telephone number, email address, date and place of birth, honors and awards, dates of attendance, major field of study, enrollment status, previous institutions attended, photograph or other comparable information.

Personally identifiable information (or non-releasable information) includes all information not defined as directory information and may not be released without the express written consent of the student.

The Consent to Release must:

- identify and authenticate a particular person as the source of the consent (whether in writing or transmitted electronically) and
- indicate that person's approval of the information contained in the electronic consent.

Students may control the release of directory information by completing the **CSU Request to Revoke Directory Information Release Form**. Upon receipt of this form, a Privacy Hold will be placed on the student's record.

To Whose Record Does the Act Apply?

FERPA applies to the education records of persons who are or have been in attendance at CSU, including students in continuing education programs sponsored by the university. FERPA does not apply to records of applicants who are denied admittance or, if accepted, do not attend CSU.

To What Records Does the Act Apply?

The act applies to all education records maintained by CSU and all parties acting for CSU, which are directly related to a

student. Records containing a student's name, identification number, or other personally identifiable information, in whatever medium, are covered by FERPA unless identified in one of the act's excluded categories.

Enforcement and Penalties

The CSU Office of the Registrar is responsible for university compliance with this policy. Responsibility for administering the act by the federal government has been assigned to the Family Policy Compliance Office within the U.S. Department of Education. This office reviews and investigates complaints and attempts to bring compliance through voluntary means.

FERPA Compliance

Students who need assistance or who wish to file a complaint under FERPA should do so in writing to the Family Policy Compliance Office, sending pertinent information through mail, concerning any allegations to the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office

U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920
Phone: 1.800.USA.LEARN (1.800.872.5327)

Contact Us

Please contact the Office of the Registrar at 800.977.8449 or registrar@columbiasouthern.edu if you have any additional questions or concerns about our privacy policy.

We accept the following forms by email, fax and mail.

- Student Release for Education Records
- Request to Revoke Directory Information Release Form

For complete FERPA information, visit the FERPA section of the website.

Grading Policies

CSU students can view course grades at any time through Blackboard or by visiting the myCSU Student Portal. The myCSU Student Portal provides students the option to print course grade reports, review all assignment grades for courses completed at CSU, and print an unofficial transcript.

Course specific grading information is available within each Course Syllabus, to include assignment weights.

Grading System

The following scale is used to determine final course grades and are recorded on the CSU transcript unless noted:

Grading		Quality Points per Credit Hour
A	90-100	4.00
B	80-89	3.00
C	70-79	2.00
D	60-69	1.00
F	59-0	0.00
W	Withdrawn	0.00
W/F	Withdraw/Fail	0.00
I	Incomplete/Extension	0.00
IP	In Progress	0.00
R	Retake	0.00
DN*	Dropped for Non-Attendance	0.00
DP	Dropped from Course	0.00
DC*	Institutional Drop	0.00
S	Satisfactory Progress	0.00
U	Unsatisfactory Progress	0.00
W/U	Withdrawal/Unsatisfactory	0.00

**Not recorded on the CSU transcript.*

Grade Descriptions

Final course grades of A, B, C, and D generate quality points as described in the grading system table, are included in the cumulative grade point average (GPA), and are counted towards hours attempted to determine Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP).

Course grades of W, I, IP, R, DN, DP, DC, S, U, and W/U do not generate quality points and are not normally included in the cumulative GPA. However, grades of W, I, R, S, U, and W/U are calculated as attempted hours to determine SAP.

While final grades of F and W/F do not generate quality points, they are included in the GPA and counted towards hours attempted to determine SAP.

A grade of IP is assigned as a placeholder when a student is in the process of completing a course during original course start and end dates. In cases where a student has been granted additional time to complete course assignments (Incomplete or Extension), a grade of "I" will be assigned as a placeholder until an earned grade is determined.

Grade Point Average

The grade point average (GPA) is computed by dividing the total number of quality points by the total number of hours completed.

Grading Rubric

Columbia Southern University has established functional scoring rubrics for all assignment types (e.g., research paper, case study, article critique). The rubrics are located in Blackboard units with the assignments and are available for student review. Faculty apply the rubrics to evaluate the

assignments and enter the scores and feedback directly into the rubric located with the assignment. There are also non-functional scoring rubrics for written response assessment items and discussion forums. The written response rubric is found in the unit assessment directions, and the discussion forum rubric is found in the Unit I Discussion Board. Faculty apply these rubrics in scoring the items and provide summative feedback in the "Feedback to Learner", which is found in the gradebook.

Grading Timeframes

CSU requires all assignments to be graded in a timely manner.

- Unit Assessments and Final Examinations are required to be graded within three days of submission.
- Papers, Projects, Article Critiques, and Case Studies are required to be graded within five days of submission.
- Assignments in the DBA program may allow a seven, ten, or fourteen day grading time period.

Note: There may be times in which a grading delay could occur due to extenuating circumstances. These delays will be communicated appropriately.

Assignment Submission Timeframes

The following list defines information regarding assignment submissions for students enrolled in the Term learning option:

- Weekly course assignments must be turned in during the week they are assigned. Students have the option to submit assignments one week in advance, unless otherwise indicated by the university.
- Students are required to respond to the Discussion Board assignment by Saturday, 11:59 PM CT and comment on another student's response by Tuesday, 11:59 PM CT.
- Assignments not turned in by the deadline may be penalized as follows:
  - One day late – 10 points deduction
  - Two days late – 20 points deduction
  - Three days late – 30 points deduction
  - Assignments will not be accepted after the third day.
  - The student will earn a zero on assignments not turned in by the third day after the deadline unless otherwise approved by the course professor, per the Assignment Make-Up Policy.
  - Students earn zero points if Discussion Board assignments are submitted late.

Contesting Grades

Students who feel that a grade awarded is inconsistent with published policy, course syllabi, rubric item, or assignment requirements should address the grade with their faculty member during the course. At the conclusion of the course, should the student remain dissatisfied with the rendered grade, the student may contest the grade by following the steps outlined within the Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy.

Related Policies

Students enrolled in CSU courses, including the DBA dissertation courses, are expected to meet attendance and participation requirements. Please refer to the Attendance Policy and Unofficial Withdrawal Policy to learn more details.

To learn more about SAP, which may impact federal student aid eligibility, please refer to the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy.

To learn more about incomplete grades and course extensions, students may wish to refer to the Incomplete Grading Policy and Course Extension Policy.

Graduation Requirements Policy

Students are required to complete all degree requirements, obtain the minimum cumulative GPA, meet all financial obligations to the institution, have all official transcripts on file, and apply for graduation by submitting a Petition for Graduation. Students who use Federal Student Aid to cover any portion of tuition are also required to complete Direct Loan Exit Counseling.

Undergraduate Requirements

Students enrolled in undergraduate programs must:

- complete a minimum of 60 credit hours in an associate program.
- complete a minimum of 120 credit hours in a bachelor's program.
- complete at least 25 percent of the courses within an undergraduate program at CSU.
- maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA to be eligible for graduation.

Although a grade of "D" is considered passing, students may be required to repeat a course in which a "D" is earned if the grade results in a substandard cumulative GPA.

Graduate Requirements

Students enrolled in a master's program must:

- complete a minimum of 36 credit hours.

- complete at least 50 percent of the courses within a graduate program at CSU.
- maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA to be eligible for graduation.

Although a grade of "C" is considered passing, students may be required to repeat a course in which a "C" is earned if the grade results in a substandard cumulative GPA.

Graduation with Honors

Students enrolled in bachelor's degree programs who accomplish a high level of academic achievement may qualify for honors if certain criteria are met. Honors are noted both on the students' diplomas and transcripts.

A cumulative "honors GPA" is calculated by combining all coursework attempted at CSU. Students must have no grade lower than a "C", must not have been found in violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, and must not have repeated any course taken at CSU due to non-satisfactory grades. Honors recognition is only awarded for bachelor's degree programs.

The following minimum GPAs are required for honors recognition:

Latin Honors	GPA
Cum Laude	3.50 – 3.79 cumulative GPA
Magna Cum Laude	3.80 – 3.99 cumulative GPA
Summa Cum Laude	4.0 cumulative GPA

Posthumous Degree Recognition

Family members or relatives of a deceased student may qualify for posthumous degree recognition if the student was in good standing and successfully completed at least ninety percent of the degree program. Once the University is notified and has confirmed that the student is deceased, a formal degree audit will be conducted. Upon verification of the degree, the deceased student's diploma and official transcript will be presented to family member or relative at no charge. Next-of-kin who would like more information about possible award of a posthumous degree should contact the Office of the Registrar.

Note: Students enrolled in the DBA program should refer to the DBA Graduation Requirements Policy.

Inactive Status

Students who do not submit any coursework within a 12-month period are considered inactive and any tuition being held by the university will be forfeited. Students desiring to return to their studies must be re-evaluated and are subject to any changed academic requirements, tuition increases, and policy changes in force at the time of re-enrollment. The student is assessed a $25 re-evaluation fee.

Note: Students enrolled in the DBA program should refer to DBA Time Limits for additional information.

Incomplete Grading Policy for Term and Veterans Flexible Enrollment

Students enrolled in Term and Veterans Flexible enrollment options may request additional time to successfully complete coursework in excess of the allotted enrollment period. Requests for an Incomplete grade should be the exception during a student's tenure, as academic progress throughout the course promotes student success. If approved, an Incomplete grade provides an additional 30 calendar days for course completion.

Students enrolled in LifePace Learning (LPL) courses should refer to the Course Extension Policy for LifePace Learning Courses. For information about an Incomplete for Special Circumstances for LPL courses, continue reading this policy.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for an Incomplete, the student must demonstrate satisfactory progress in the course through the following minimum requirements:

- The student is in units six, seven, or eight of the course.
- The grade average of graded coursework must be at least
  - 60% for undergraduate students.
  - 70% for graduate students.
  - 80% for doctoral students in the coursework phase of the program.

Course instructors may approve exceptions to the above requirements if the student provides a reasonable plan and commits to complete coursework.

Term and Veterans Flexible Enrollment Incomplete Grading

Approval of an Incomplete is at the discretion of the course instructor or as prescribed herein, and a maximum of 30 calendar days will be granted to complete remaining assignments. If the student believes a denial violates this policy, the student may follow the process outlined in the *Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy*.

Once the student submits the request form, the course instructor will review the request and render a decision to the student via email within five (5) business days. The Lead Faculty will render a decision when a student elects to submit a request after the course has ended.

If approved, a course grade of "I" will be assigned and the student will be granted an additional 30 calendar days to complete the remaining coursework. Approval may affect future course enrollments. Please review the *Academic Course Load Policy* for more information. Assignments not completed at the conclusion of the approved Incomplete period will be assigned a grade of zero (0) and the final course grade will be calculated. The final course grade will replace the grade of "I."

The student will be responsible for meeting the assignment due dates provided on the request form. If the assignments are not submitted by the adjusted due dates, the course instructor has the discretion to post an assignment grade of zero (0). A student who is unable to meet the assignment due dates must contact his or her course instructor for late submission approval.

** There is no charge to request an incomplete. If the incomplete request is approved, the student is charged a $50 processing fee. CSU may not directly apply any Title IV or VA funds toward the payment of the processing fee.*

Incomplete for Special Circumstances

At times, a student may encounter an unexpected situation during a course (Term, Veterans Flexible Enrollment, or LifePace Learning), which inhibits his or her ability to complete the course. Examples of such circumstances may include, but are not limited to forward deployment, medical circumstances or surgery, natural disaster, family emergency, death in the immediate family, or job relocation. Under these circumstances, the student may request one (1) Incomplete for Special Circumstances (ISC) per course. A maximum of two (2) ISCs will be granted, upon approval, per calendar year.

An ISC adds a maximum of 60 calendar days to the course. If a student is approved for an Incomplete or extension and it is later determined an ISC is needed, the student will follow the ISC approval process; however, the maximum time allowed remains at 60 calendar days from the original course end date for students enrolled in Term and Veterans Flexible Enrollment courses. Students in LPL courses may have a maximum of 120 calendar days added to the original course end date.

Approval of an ISC is at the discretion of the course instructor. The student must provide supporting documentation, which substantiates the stated circumstance. Documentation must be dated and correlate with the hardship and time parameter in which the student is/was unable to complete coursework. Additional or alternate documentation may be requested for verification purposes. If the student believes a denial violates this policy, the student may follow the process outlined in the Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy.

Students are encouraged to submit the Incomplete for Special Circumstances Request Form on or before the course end date; however, requests must be submitted no later than three calendar days after the course end date. The student should allow seven (7)-to-ten (10) business days for review and will be notified of the decision via email. Requests made after the course has ended will be escalated to the Lead Faculty for decision.

The request form requires supporting documentation and assignment due dates. If an assignment is not submitted by the due date, the course instructor may post an assignment grade of zero (0). A student who is unable to meet the assignment due dates must contact his or her course instructor for late submission approval. The final course grade will be calculated and will replace the grade of "I."

Approval may affect future course enrollments; the Academic Course Load Policy should be reviewed for more information. The grade of "I" may affect Satisfactory Academic Progress and Federal Student Aid eligibility. The student should contact his or her academic advisor for additional information.

** An ISC does not require a processing fee.*

Other Considerations

- An Incomplete request should ***not*** be submitted for a course in which assignments need to be resubmitted or if all assignments have been submitted and/or graded.
- Students approved for an Incomplete forfeit the option to withdraw from the course after the original course end date, pursuant to the *Official Course Drop/Withdrawal Policy*.
- A service member utilizing Tuition Assistance should contact his or her education officer to report an Incomplete in order to avoid inaccurate recoupment of funds. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the education office of his or her final course grade at the conclusion of the Incomplete period.
- Students enrolled in Term and Veterans Flexible Enrollment courses approved for an Incomplete are expected to meet attendance requirements in the course as outlined in the Student Handbook.
- When determining the amount of Federal Student Aid a student has earned, the original term start and end dates are used for withdrawal calculations. The time period of an Incomplete is not taken into consideration. Therefore, it is important that students continue to participate in the course within the original timeframe even when an Incomplete has been granted. Failure to participate within the original start and end dates could result in a return of Federal Student Aid funds. Eligibility for Federal Student Aid could also be affected if the student does

not make up the Incomplete or if the Incomplete converts to a failing grade.
- When calculating a student's pace of completion for Satisfactory Academic Progress, a course grade of "I" will be considered as an attempted credit, but not earned credit. A course grade of "I" will not be calculated in the student's cumulative grade point average.
- The student should allow five (5) business days for processing an Incomplete and ten (10) business days to process an ISC prior to the first assignment due date. When approved, the time is added from the course end date instead of the date processed. If more than one assignment remains at the time of the request, each assignment due date should be spaced apart to ensure successful completion.
- A student is not eligible for an Incomplete if a course from a previous term has a grade of "I."

Note: The Incomplete Grading Policy does not apply to students enrolled in dissertation courses in the DBA program.

Iowa Military Deployment Policy

Columbia Southern University will offer the following options to a student who is a member, or the spouse of a member if the member has a dependent child, of the Iowa National Guard or reserve forces of the United States and who is ordered to state military service or federal service or duty:

- Withdraw from the student's entire registration and receive a full refund of tuition and mandatory fees. CSU's Registrar's Office processes all withdrawal requests and notifies Student Accounts to calculate the refund.
- Make arrangements with the student's instructors for course grades, or for incompletes that shall be completed by the student at a later date. This option is available to the student under CSU's Incomplete for Special Circumstances policy. Requests may be sent directly to the instructor for approval. If such arrangements are made, the student's registration shall remain intact and tuition and mandatory fees shall be assessed for the courses in full.
- Make arrangements with only some of the student's instructors for grades, or for incompletes that shall be completed by the student at a later date. If such arrangements are made, the registration for those courses shall remain intact and tuition and mandatory fees shall be assessed for those courses. Any course for which arrangements cannot be made for grades or incompletes shall be considered dropped and the tuition and mandatory fees for the course refunded.

Supporting documentation must be submitted to CSU describing the order to state military service, federal service, or duty.

Institutional Academic Progress Policy

Students are required to have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 in undergraduate programs and a 3.0 in graduate programs. Academic standards of performance have been established to ensure satisfactory progress toward a degree. These performance standards form a basis for the following academic classifications:

- Good Standing
- Academic Probation
- Academic Suspension

Guidelines and procedures for placing students in the above classifications include the following:

Good Standing (Active)

A minimum cumulative GPA (2.0 for undergraduates and 3.0 for graduates) must be maintained to be in good standing.

Academic Probation

Upon the completion of a minimum of 12 semester hours, a student is placed on academic probation at any time that his or her cumulative GPA drops below the required minimum.* A student remains on academic probation for 12 semester hours (four courses). While on academic probation, a student must demonstrate sustained satisfactory progress and develop an action plan for academic improvement, approved by their academic advisor, which may include referral to the Success Center. Students may be limited to enrolling in one course at a time until a cumulative GPA of 2.0 undergraduate/3.0 graduate is achieved. In addition, a student may be delayed from enrolling in the next course pending evaluation of academic progress.

Satisfactory progress requires that a student either raise the cumulative GPA to an acceptable level or make progress toward earning the acceptable GPA during the probationary period, as detailed below.

The student is removed from probation and placed in good standing if the cumulative GPA threshold (2.0 or higher undergraduate/3.0 or higher graduate) is achieved after completing the required 12 semester hours required during the probationary period. If the student does not raise the cumulative GPA to good standing, the student is placed on suspension. Please refer to the Academic Suspension section of this policy for details.

If the GPA for the probationary period is 2.5 or higher for undergraduates or 3.5 or higher for graduates, but the student does not raise the cumulative GPA to the minimum 2.0 or higher for undergraduates or 3.0 or higher for graduates, a secondary probation period may begin.

**Note: A student who shows substandard academic progress in their first 12 semester hours may be academically dismissed without a probationary period. See the Academic Dismissal section of this policy for details.*

Academic Suspension

Should the probationary student fail to demonstrate satisfactory progress, he or she will be academically suspended for a period no less than 10 weeks (LifePace Learning) or one term (Term and Veterans Flexible Enrollment). A student may request reinstatement after the suspension period has expired. If a second suspension occurs, the student is suspended for a period of at least six months before they are eligible to request re-instatement. If a third suspension occurs, the student must wait a minimum of one calendar year before requesting reinstatement.

Requests for reinstatement are made to the Registrar no later than one month prior to the desired enrollment period. Reinstatement following academic suspension is determined by the Reinstatement Committee and is not automatic. Students who enroll in other colleges or universities while on academic suspension from CSU are not eligible for reinstatement to CSU until the cumulative grade point average from these other colleges and universities is 2.0 or higher for undergraduate or 3.0 or higher for graduate.

Once reinstated, the student returns to probational status for a period of 12 semester hours. The student is expected to demonstrate academic progress while on probation.

Academic Dismissal

Columbia Southern University reserves the right to dismiss students whose academic progress is substandard. Factors considered will include, but are not limited to, the number of failing grades, past academic performance, the number of withdrawn courses, and the probability of achieving satisfactory academic standing within a reasonable time frame. Students are subject to academic dismissal (without a probationary period) from the program for a full calendar year if their GPA falls below 1.0 or if they withdraw from the majority of courses within the last 12 semester hours.

Appeal or reinstatement from academic dismissal shall be made to the Appeals Board through the Office of the Registrar.

Note: Students enrolled in the DBA program should refer to the DBA Institutional Academic Progress Policy.

Leave of Absence Policy

Students enrolled in the Term learning option who are unable to enroll in one or more terms, may apply for a temporary Leave of Absence (LOA) from the university. This policy is designed to allow a student the flexibility to take a temporary break from his or her academic program, and upon return, a student is not be required to apply for readmission to the university. A student will not be granted a LOA in the middle of a term; therefore, for purposes of Title IV, a student granted a temporary LOA is considered withdrawn from the university during this time. A student is expected to complete all courses if currently enrolled in a term and apply for a LOA to begin at the start of the next term in the academic program. If a student is having difficulty or is unable to complete all courses in the term, they may apply for an incomplete, an incomplete for special circumstance, or withdraw, in which case a Return of Title IV calculation may be required.

A student may apply for a LOA by submitting the Leave of Absence Request Form located in myCSU Student Portal. All requests must be submitted a minimum of 3 weeks prior to the start of the term the student will be unable to attend. A temporary LOA from the university is granted only to a student planning to return to his or her academic program at the end of the LOA. In addition, for both undergraduate and graduate students, the LOA request may not exceed more than two consecutive terms within a 12- month period. A student may request more than one LOA during their academic program not to exceed two terms within a 12-month period.

Important Facts Concerning a LOA

- For purposes of Title IV, a student is considered withdrawn from the university while on a LOA; therefore, federal student loans are not eligible for an in-school deferment.
- A student is not eligible to receive federal student aid while on a LOA.
- A student who fails to return from a LOA is required to reapply for admissions to the university after a period of 12 months of inactivity in his or her academic program.

Military/Special Services Leave of Absence Provision

Undergraduate and graduate students requiring a military or special services deployment may request a provisional LOA for the designated deployment period up to 12 consecutive months. A student may apply for a provisional LOA by submitting the Leave of Absence Request Form located in myCSU Student Portal. In addition, a student must provide supporting documentation regarding the nature and period of deployment from his or her commanding officer or supervisor. If the military or special services deployment occurs during a course, the student may be required to withdraw from the course or request an incomplete for special circumstances.

A student should contact his or her academic advisor and the Office of Financial Aid to discuss potential academic and

financial implications prior to taking a LOA from his or her academic program.

Note: Students enrolled in the DBA program should refer to the DBA Leave of Absence Policy.

Official Course Drop/Withdrawal Policy

A student's notification to drop or withdraw may be conveyed to the institution in any manner by contacting the Office of the Registrar. Students requesting to drop or withdraw from a course or program should submit the Course Drop/Withdrawal form located in the Online Forms section of the Student Portal. Details regarding tuition refunds as a result of a drop or withdrawal are described in the Tuition Refund Policy.

Course Drop

Students are allowed to drop a course through the term "drop date" as listed on the academic calendar (normally the first week of the course) without financial penalty. A grade of "DP" will be recorded for the course. Dropped courses will appear on the student's official transcript but do not count as hours attempted in the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) calculation. The course drop date is determined by the date the request is received.

Course Withdrawal

A course drop/withdrawal request submitted after the term drop date and before or on the original term/course end date will be considered a course withdrawal. A grade of "W" will be issued. The grade of "W" will appear on the student's transcript but will have no effect on the student's cumulative GPA. However, the course will count toward hours attempted (completion ratio and maximum timeframe) and may affect Federal Student Aid (FSA) eligibility. Students using military Tuition Assistance (TA) must contact their Education Services Officer (ESO) when withdrawing from courses. Students who demonstrate a pattern of withdrawals are at risk for academic dismissal per the Institutional Academic Progress Policy.

Privacy Policy

CSU is committed to protecting your privacy. The university has established this privacy policy to communicate the manner in which it collects and uses your personal information as well as methods and efforts we use to safeguard it.

Personally Identifiable Information

Personally identifiable information (PII) is only collected with your approval, which is affirmed via actions, such as submitting online forms or phone calls. By PII, we are referring to information that can be used to identify or contact an individual. For example, you may choose to provide your name, address or telephone number when submitting an information request. PII is used by the university to assist individual visitors as necessary. This assistance may involve redirecting an inquiry or comment to another university individual or department better suited to provide requested service.

Non-Personally Identifiable Information

CSU collects a variety of information from website visitors. Some of this data is not personally identifiable and is collected automatically via the use of cookies and other standard web technologies. Automatically collected information might include operating system and web browser version, internet IP address, as well as date and time web pages were visited. Non-personally identifiable information is stored in security and traffic logs on our servers, and in cookies.

Use of Information

Directory Information may be disseminated to specific parties pursuant to FERPA. CSU does not sell or share user information to outside parties without prior written consent of the user; however, the university may share any user information with its employees, affiliates and partners, or independent contractors with a vested interest. In some cases, cookies provided by third-party services, including Google Analytics, may be used to review website performance and to identify enhancements that may benefit visitors based on current navigation patterns and search trends.

Security of Information

CSU takes security of information seriously and as such, takes all reasonable precautionary measures to protect sensitive user information. CSU utilizes encryption wherever possible for sensitive information requested for submission the World Wide Web. The university may contract with third-party vendors to show our advertisements on non-CSU websites and other digital delivery mechanisms.

FERPA

Personally identifiable information (PII) for enrolled students is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") administered by the U.S. Department of Education. Please visit our FERPA page for more information. "Directory information" disclosures include verifying enrollment for employment or credit application purposes.

GDPR

Columbia Southern University observes the applicable principles of the EU General Data Protection Regulation.

For further information please refer to our Technology Policies or please contact us at DataSecurityOfficer@columbiasouthern.edu.

Proctor Policy

Columbia Southern University (CSU) degree programs contain a variety of assignment types and methodologies. Numerous courses within a program of study may require an assessment or exam that requires a proctor. An approved proctor is a credentialed organization, center, or individual who verifies student identity and supervises assessment or exam integrity. CSU approves two flexible proctoring options: a standard proctor, who is chosen by the student and approved by the University, or Remote Proctor Now (RPNow), an on-demand, third-party, virtual proctor. Students may choose to use the proctor that is best suited for their situation.

Standard Proctoring

A standard proctor is an unbiased, qualified individual, selected by the student and approved by the university, who agrees to supervise an assessment or examination by verifying student identity and ensuring assessment or examination integrity. Upon approval, the proctor will remain active with the university unless proctoring qualifications change, the student or proctor requests discontinuation, or the proctor is disqualified due to a violation of any applicable academic policies including Proctor Policy and/or Academic Integrity Policy. CSU reserves the right to verify proctor qualifications, require additional evidence of eligibility, or require an alternative proctor be selected. Falsification of proctor information is a violation and could result in proctor revocation and/or other sanctions identified in the Academic Integrity Policy. Please note additional fees may apply for students utilizing the standard proctoring option.

The following are examples of qualified and unqualified standard proctors:

Qualified Proctor	Unqualified Proctor
• College or University Professor, Dean, Director, or university official • School Principal or Vice-Principal • University/College Testing Center • Private Testing Center • Personnel Officer, Human Resources Manager, training officer or training facilitator • Commissioned Officer or Senior Non-Commissioned Officer in the Armed Forces or Civil Service equivalent • Police or fire service sergeant or higher • Educational Services Officer (ESO) • Educational Services Specialist (ESS) • Military Base Testing Offices • Library / Librarian • Teacher or School / Guidance Counselor • Minister, Priest, Rabbi or other Religious Leader	• Any individual that poses a conflict of interest • Co-worker • Tutor • Friend • Neighbor • Relative • CSU Student • Individuals paid for a personal service (doctor, attorney, consultant, etc.) • Individuals deemed unqualified by university personnel

Remote Proctor Now (RPNow)

RPNow is an on-demand, third-party, virtual proctor which allows students to sit for an assessment or examination anytime, anywhere through use of video technology. Students choosing RPNow must have access to a computer, high-speed internet connection, a microphone, a webcam, and appropriate system rights required to download and install software for assessment or examination administration; the university *does not* provide this equipment. During assessment or examination administration, RPNow will access the student's webcam, microphone, and desktop in order to record the session for academic integrity review. Students utilizing YouCam software must adjust webcam settings in order to appropriately take an exam with RPNow. Technical Support FAQs are available regarding how to manually adjust webcam settings. Please note a $19 fee is required upon each assessment or examination taken with RPNow. If a student fails to submit payment, they will not be able to proceed with the assessment or examination.

Assessment/Exam Violations

Upon completion of assessment or examination administration through RPNow, the recorded video will be reviewed by CSU for student identity verification and academic integrity purposes. Students will be notified of any violations that occur, whether through use of RPNow or the Standard Proctoring option, and are provided the opportunity to appeal any findings by following the student appeals process outlined in the Academic Complaint Policy. Further restrictions or allowances may be disclosed in the syllabus and Blackboard for the specific course and assessment/exam.

The following violations in a proctored assessment or proctored examination are subject to sanctions pursuant to the Academic Integrity and Code of Conduct Policies:

- Failure to present a valid, government-issued photo identification card.
- Failure to scan the testing area when utilizing RPNow.
- Having access to the final examination password in a standard proctor setting.
- Use of unapproved materials or software/technology.
- Use of the Internet to access any site other than the Blackboard Learning Management System, RPNow Proctoring System, or links provided in an integrated learning resource course.
- Speaking with another individual or receiving unauthorized assistance regarding the final examination.
- Use of a mobile device (Kindle, iPad, cellphone, etc) or other technology during examination administration. Students encountering technical difficulty may access a phone to call technical support.
- Materials exiting or re-entering the testing area.

- Exceeding the four (4) hour assessment/examination time limit.
- Not remaining in front of the webcam during examination administration, with the exception of approved breaks noted in policy.
- Actions deemed disorderly, lewd, lascivious, indecent or otherwise inappropriate in nature. Students must adhere to professional and academic behavioral standards, abide by the CSU Student Code of Conduct, and adhere to any local, state, and federal laws while in a traditional or remote proctor setting.
- Any other violation that is outlined within the Academic Integrity Policy and the Student Code of Conduct Policy.

Should any circumstances develop before or during a proctored assessment or examination, including natural disasters, emergencies, power or internet outages, etc., the student and/or proctor should contact the Student Support Center immediately at 877-323-4471.

In the event of technical difficulty during an assessment or exam, the student and/or proctor should contact Technical Support at 877-399-1063. Should the call be placed after standard operating hours, please leave a message or e-mail **students@columbiasouthern.edu**.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy (SAP) For Title IV Students

Term

Federal regulations require CSU to establish and apply reasonable standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for eligible students to receive financial assistance under the programs authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act.

CSU students who wish to be considered for financial aid must:

- be in good standing at the university
- maintain satisfactory academic progress in their program of study, as outlined in this policy.

SAP is a financial aid eligibility requirement and is administered by the university in addition to the academic standards of performance required under the CSU Academic Progress Policy.

Students are evaluated for SAP at the end of every payment period. All students are evaluated on three standards: grade point average (qualitative measure), pace of completion (quantitative measure), and maximum time frame. Students must meet all three standards to maintain eligibility for Title IV funds.

Undergraduate Students

Standard 1: Grade Point Average (Qualitative Measure)

Undergraduate students must maintain a minimum qualitative measure of progress defined as a 2.0 cumulative GPA.

Standard 2: Pace of Completion (Quantitative Measure)

Undergraduate students (either full-time or part-time) must achieve a passing rate of at least 66.67% of all credit hours attempted. Credit hours attempted include completed courses, repeated courses, withdrawals, and incompletes. Transfer credit, if applicable, is also calculated in the pace of completion as attempted and completed credit hours.

Standard 3: Maximum Time Frame

Undergraduate students must complete their degree program within 150% of the semester hour requirements for the degree as published in the catalog. Students must complete an associate degree within 90 semester hours and a bachelor's degree within 180 semester hours. Transfer credit, if applicable, is also calculated in the maximum time frame calculation.

Graduate Students

Standard 1: Grade Point Average (Qualitative Measure)

Graduate students must maintain a minimum qualitative measure of progress defined as a 3.0 cumulative GPA for their degree program.

Standard 2: Pace of Completion (Quantitative Measure)

Graduate students must achieve a passing rate of a minimum of 50% of 0 to 9 attempted credit hours, a minimum of 60% of 10 to 18 attempted credit hours, and a minimum of 66.67% of 19 or more attempted credit hours towards the degree program. Attempted hours include completed courses, repeated courses, withdrawals, and incompletes. Transfer credit, if applicable, is also calculated in the pace of completion as attempted and completed credit hours.

Standard 3: Maximum Time Frame

Graduate students must complete their degree program within 150% of the credit hour requirements for the degree as published in the catalog. Students must complete a master's degree within 54 credit hours and a doctorate degree within 90 credit hours. Transfer credit, if applicable, is also calculated in the maximum time frame calculation.

SAP Policy Notification

Students are notified of the SAP policy in the university catalog, website, and during the initial financial aid application process. All periods of enrollment at CSU are calculated in SAP, including periods of enrollment during which a student did not receive financial aid.

Course Drop

Students are allowed to drop a course without any negative impact on SAP through the term drop date as listed on the academic calendar. A course designated as a "DP" does not count as attempted hours or in the GPA when determining SAP.

Official Course Withdrawal

A student who withdraws from one or more courses after the drop date will be issued a grade of "W." Course withdrawals will count as attempted credit hours when measuring the maximum time frame and quantitative progress of SAP but will not be included in the GPA. A student who withdraws from all attempted credit hours during the student's first period of enrollment with CSU will also obtain an undefined GPA. An undefined GPA is equivalent to a 0.00 GPA.

Unofficial Course Withdrawal

A student who unofficially withdraws from one or more courses will be issued a grade of "W/F" or "W/U." "W/F" grades will count as credit hours attempted when measuring the maximum time frame and quantitative SAP. A grade of "W/F" counts as a grade of "F" when measuring qualitative SAP progress. Grades of "W/U" will count as attempted credit hours when measuring the maximum time frame and quantitative progress of SAP but will not be included in the GPA.

Transfer Credits

Transfer credits accepted toward the student's degree program will be included as credit hours attempted and earned when calculating the SAP maximum time frame and quantitative progress.

Repeated Courses

Students receiving Title IV Aid may repeat a course, as allowed under CSU academic policy. Repeated courses will be issued a grade of "R" and count as attempted credit hours toward the quantitative and maximum timeframe SAP standards. A grade of "R" does not count in qualitative determination of SAP. The grade earned upon retake will be used in the cumulative GPA.

Incomplete Grades

Students receiving federal student aid may receive incomplete grades, as allowed under CSU academic policy. A grade of incomplete will count as credit hours attempted in determining SAP. Students issued a grade of incomplete while on SAP Financial Aid Warning will not be eligible to use federal student aid for subsequent payment periods, pending the resolution of the incomplete grade.

Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Grades

Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grades will count toward total hours attempted for the Pace of Completion and Maximum Time Frame (calculation of both attempted hours and, if passed, completed credit hours) but will not count in the GPA calculation.

Change of Program

All periods of enrollment count when assessing satisfactory academic progress for undergraduate students. All attempted credit hours will be included in making satisfactory academic progress determinations when a student changes degree programs (majors) at the same degree level (e.g., bachelor to bachelor). For graduate students, only the credit hours associated with the courses that apply to each specific graduate degree program will be used in the satisfactory academic progress evaluation.

SAP Evaluation and Warning

SAP is evaluated after every payment period. Students who fail to meet the cumulative grade point average (CGPA) and/or Pace of Completion requirements of SAP will be notified and will be placed on SAP Financial Aid Warning for one term. Students are encouraged to work with their academic advisor to discuss enrollment options. A student placed on SAP Financial Aid Warning will be eligible to receive Federal Student Aid for one period of enrollment.

A student who exceeds the maximum time frame requirement of SAP will be ineligible to continue to receive Federal Student Aid unless an appeal is granted, as described below.

A student who fails to meet one or more of the SAP standards at the end of the Financial Aid Warning period will be ineligible to receive Federal Student Aid unless an appeal is granted.

Financial Aid Suspension Appeal

Students not meeting SAP at the end of the Financial Aid Warning period may appeal that determination and loss of Federal Student Aid eligibility if they have extenuating circumstances, such as injury or illness, the death of a relative, or other special circumstances. The appeal must contain the Financial Aid Suspension appeal form completed by the student and must explain and document why the student was not able to make satisfactory academic progress during the period of substandard academic performance, what has changed that will allow the student to meet satisfactory academic progress requirements at the next evaluation, and a proposed Academic Plan leading to successful program completion prepared by the student's academic advisor.

Maximum Time Frame Appeal

Students who reach or exceed the maximum time frame allowed while completing their first degree are no longer eligible to receive Federal Student Aid. Students may appeal this decision. The appeal must contain the Maximum Time Frame Appeal form completed by the student and the student's academic advisor, a detailed explanation and supporting documentation of any unusual circumstances such as injury, illness, death of a relative, or other special circumstances that prevented the student from obtaining a degree within the 150% credit hour requirement.

The appeal must also include a proposed academic plan leading to successful program completion prepared by the student's academic advisor to include expected graduation date and credit hours remaining in the degree program. If the appeal is approved, aid will be awarded only for the remaining credit hours required for the completion of the degree.

Submission of Appeal

Students will be sent an email notification from the Office of Financial Aid to include the appeal form once a student becomes ineligible to receive federal student aid due to an adverse SAP determination. Appeals should be submitted in writing to:

Mail
Columbia Southern University
SAP Appeals Committee, Office of Financial Aid
21982 University Lane
Orange Beach, AL 36561

Email
SapAppeals@columbiasouthern.edu
Attention: SAP Appeals Committee

Appeals without supporting documentation will not be considered. The committee will make every effort to consider each appeal carefully and provide a decision within 7 to 10 business days.

SAP Financial Aid Probation

Appeals that are approved will result in a student being placed on SAP Financial Aid Probation. While on SAP Financial Aid Probation, students will be evaluated at the end of each payment period to ensure the student is meeting SAP and/or the conditions of the academic plan. Students on SAP Financial Aid Probation are eligible to receive Federal Student Aid.

Reinstatement of Financial Aid

If a student's appeal is denied or a student does not wish to appeal, a student may regain eligibility for Federal Student Aid by enrolling in and successfully completing courses in his or her degree program without the use of Federal Student Aid. A student may request financial aid reinstatement once he or she successfully completes enough credit hours to meet the minimum SAP standards. A student should contact the Office of Financial Aid in writing if the student feels he or she has regained financial aid eligibility and wishes to be reinstated.

Student Code of Conduct Policy

Ethical behavior and conduct is foundational to a successful academic career at CSU. Students, faculty, and staff must commit themselves to the highest standards of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Therefore, any deviation from these standards is a breach of ethics identified in CSU's Student Code of Conduct. Furthermore, violation of ethical standards can lead to disciplinary actions.

Students are responsible to know and comply with the Student Code of Conduct and other academic and student affairs policies contained within the student handbook. In addition, students are expected to demonstrate honesty and integrity with faculty, staff and other students throughout all interactions online and/or at university-sanctioned events.

Students are prohibited from engaging in conduct that includes, but is not limited to:

- Disrespect of university personnel.
- Inappropriate communication including but not limited to harassment, prejudice, stalking, offensive language, threats, abuse, insults, or humiliation made within the university environment. The university environment consists of email correspondence, phone conversations, text messages, or other university communication mediums.
- Demeaning comments including, but not limited to those regarding an individual's religion, race, age, sexual orientation, or making unwanted sexual advances or intimidations.
- Breaches of privacy, hacking passwords or systems, distribution or replication of copyrighted material(s), unauthorized distribution of instructional materials, use of illegal or unlicensed software.
- Intentional breach of university policy or procedures.
- Reproduction of university materials to include course content, assessments, or other materials deemed to be the property of the university.
- Using and/or purchasing work that is not his/her own.
- Disruptive behavior that hinders or interferes with the educational process.
- Harassment or intimidation that has the effect of creating an offensive educational environment for any student, faculty, or staff member.
- Conduct that is disorderly, lewd, lascivious, indecent or otherwise inappropriate.
- Violation of any local, state, or federal law.

- Displaying harmful or threatening behavior towards students, faculty, or other university personnel.

Investigation

The director of student resolution and conduct or designated university official shall conduct investigations of the Student Code of Conduct in a prompt and reasonable manner. The purpose of the investigation is to determine if adequate evidence exists to support a formal review. While an alleged violation is being investigated, interim action may be initiated. These actions include but are not limited to, removal from a course(s), prohibited attendance to university-sanctioned events and other functions, and/or a no contact order.

In those instances where CSU determines the conduct does not warrant a specific charge, CSU may choose to issue a warning. Note: Warnings are not appealable.

In the event of a threat or imminent harm, the university reserves the right to take immediate action prior to the investigation in accordance with sanctions outlined therein.

Notification and Response

A student charged with a violation of the Student Code of Conduct will be notified of the specific violation in writing. Students shall be given 10 business days to submit a written response to the designated university official indicating responsibility for the charged offense or denying the charges. Failure of a student to respond to the official letter constitutes a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and may result in additional sanctions by the university up to and including dismissal from the university. A student denying the charge(s) will follow the below process.

Review of Response

Reviews shall be conducted according to the following guidelines:

- The director of student resolution and conduct will assemble a committee of three university members to review the response.
- Additional documentation to substantiate a denial of the charge should be submitted to the director of student resolution and conduct.
- The determination of the misconduct shall be made on the basis of whether it is more likely than not that the student violated the Student Code of Conduct.
- The evidence in support of the charges shall be presented, considered, and a recommendation will be made by the committee to the director of student resolution and conduct or a designated university official.

Decision

- The decision shall be communicated to the student in writing from the director of student resolution and conduct or a designated university official.
- In accordance with the requirements under the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), upon written request, CSU will disclose to an alleged victim of a crime of violence, or a non-forcible sex offense, the results of any disciplinary review conducted by the institution against the student who is the alleged perpetrator of the crime or offense.
- In accordance with the requirements under HEOA, in cases of an alleged sex offense, both the accuser and the accused will be informed of the determination involving an alleged sex offense, including any imposed sanction(s).
- A summary report containing findings of fact, decision, and sanctions, will be placed in the student's file.

SANCTIONS

Disciplinary sanctions shall be based upon the seriousness of the charge(s) and may include, but are not limited to: warning, probation, loss of academic credit, suspension, and conduct dismissal.

Student Identity Verification Policy

Scope of Policy

In compliance with the provisions of the United States Federal Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008, Public Law 110-315, concerning the verification of student identity in distance education, Columbia Southern University has established processes to verify that a student registered in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives the academic credit. The Student Identity Verification Policy is applicable to all CSU students beginning with the application for admission and continuing through graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from the university.

Identity Verification Methods

Students enrolled in courses or programs offered through distance education are subject to one or more of the following student identity verification methods:

A. Government-Issued Photo Identification

Students making entrance application to CSU are required to submit a color image of a government issued photo identification, such as a state driver's license, state identification card, or U.S. passport during the admissions process. CSU reserves the right to require additional sources of identity verification as described in the Admission Requirements Policy. Students sitting for a proctored assessment/final examination are required to provide

government-issued photo identification (i.e. Driver's License, or other governmental agency issued photo identification.)

B. Secure, Individual Login and Passcode

Students are assigned a secure, individual Student Identification Number (SID) and Password upon enrollment to Columbia Southern University. These assigned identifiers are used to access Blackboard, CSUs Learning Management System (LMS), to complete coursework and myCSU Student Portal to access course grades and related information.

C. Proctored Assessments and Examinations

Use of a CSU approved proctor or Remote Proctor Now, a virtual, third-party proctoring service, is required for some assessments and examinations, pursuant to the Final Examination Proctor Policy.

D. Administrative or Academic Practices

Students are subject to identity verification, at the institution's discretion, through use of personally identifiable information provided by the student upon application to the university. Students must provide their assigned Student Identification Number, along with a secondary source of personally identifiable information when contacting the university. In addition, faculty may commence verification of student identity following review of student work. Changes in academic performance or writing style may be monitored and prompt a request for identity verification.

Protection of Student Information

CSU practices methods of student identity verification that protects the privacy of student information. Additional facts pertaining to security of information can be found within the *Technology Policies, Security of Information Policy*.

Notification of Student Fees

Students will be notified at the time of registration of any fees associated with verification of student identity. Proctoring services and associated costs are the responsibility of the student. CSU approves two, flexible proctoring options: a standard proctor, who is chosen by the student and approved by the university, or Remote Proctor Now (RPNow), an on-demand, third-party, virtual proctor. Students who elect to use the services of RPNow will incur a fee of $19 per final examination.

Student Responsibilities

Appropriate use of technology is the student's responsibility. Unauthorized use of university Systems, further defined as myCSU Student Portal, Columbia Southern University's Websites, university networks, Internet, Online classroom, or other hardware or software utilized in association with the university is prohibited as identified in CSU *Technology Policies, Acceptable Use Policy*. This includes unauthorized access to other user accounts or transfer of user passwords to others. Misuse of any university system is subject to the Student Code of Conduct Policy and sanctions contained therein.

Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy

Statement of Policy

CSU provides students and the university community with an online environment that fosters academic success and achievement. The mission of CSU is to provide exceptional service that fully supports student learning with integrity, flexibility, fairness, and respect. Students at CSU are members of a university community committed to basic and broadly shared ethical principles and concepts of integrity, justice, autonomy, commitment to excellence, code of honor, respect and responsibility.

Students who choose to attend CSU accept student rights and responsibilities as members of the university community and agree to abide by policies set forth in the CSU Catalog and CSU Student Handbook. Each student holds the right and ability to make individual decisions about their personal conduct and is responsible for their behavior. Furthermore, each student also holds the responsibility to live with the consequences of their personal decision making.

Code of Honor

CSU entrusts each student to maintain academic honesty, personal integrity, and responsible citizenship. We find these ideals are essential to the performance of all academic work and other student activities as members of the university community. The Code of Honor is embodied by these ideals with the support of students, faculty, and staff. Student enrollment into a program of study presupposes a commitment to the principles embodied in the Code of Honor. Each student should hold oneself and fellow students accountable to their commitment to the Code of Honor.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

The following student rights and responsibilities are governed by the Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy.

Student rights include, but are not limited to:

- Right to freely express his/her own thoughts, concerns, or suggestions in a manner that does not violate the Student Code of Conduct Policy
- Right to privacy
- Right to freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, sex, marital status, religion, age, or disability
- Right to freedom from harassment, including harassment that is based on an individual's sex, race,

age, or any characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws
- Right to appeal any academic or non-academic decision in conjunction with the process outlined in the Academic or Non-Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy
- Right to file a complaint with the institution pursuant to the Academic or Non-Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy
- Right to review his/her own educational record in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)
- Right to request a reasonable accommodation with the Office of Disability Services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- Right to receive prompt responses from university staff and faculty that promotes support and encouragement

Student responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Exhibit and maintain integrity when providing student contact, financial, or any other requested information or documentation to the university
- Ensure all contact and email account information is current and on file with the university
- Ensure all official transcripts are received and on file with the university
- Read, understand, and adhere to the terms and conditions, including tuition and fee requirements, upon submitting an enrollment
- Remain in good academic standing throughout his/her tenure at CSU, to include upholding standards of integrity while completing course assignments
- Review emails sent from CSU on a regular basis, as email is considered the official form of communication between the student and university
- Maintain communication with his/her assigned academic advisor concerning enrollments, course load, and degree program completion requirements
- Communicate with his/her faculty member concerning course requirements, missing assignments, grades, feedback, etc.
- Reference instructions listed in course syllabi, course schedules, and other pertinent tabs within courses in Blackboard
- Stay abreast of important dates, such as course registration deadlines, assignment due dates, and course end dates
- Review the myCSU Student Portal on a consistent basis, as it is the gateway to the university and is resourceful for students
- Submit online requests within the timeframes outlined by the university; online requests are located within the myCSU Student Portal
- Save course work as it is completed within each course; refer to the Course Access Policy
  Adhere to course withdrawal, refund, and textbook return policies
- Read, understand, and adhere to all Academic and Student Affairs policies and procedures outlined within the Student Handbook.

Technology Policies

CSU is dedicated to the success of its students through the use of a variety of technologies and technology support within the university. Collectively, the Technology Policies communicate institutional expectations for its users and constituents by providing instructional principles for use of all university systems including the myCSU Student Portal, CSU website, university networks, Internet, online classroom, and other hardware or software utilized in association with the user's interaction with Columbia Southern University or its partners and affiliates.

Technology Requirements

Proficient use of e-mail, the Internet, and standard desktop software is recommended to successfully complete online, distance learning courses. CSU utilizes an online curriculum delivery method through the Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS.)
To view a detailed list, please visit the CSU Technical Requirements section of this catalog.

Additional Technology Requirements

Additional technology requirements may be necessary in some programs of study. Specific requirements are notated in the Course Description of courses requiring additional technology. In addition, use of the voluntary Remote Proctor (RPNow) to administer final examinations will require use of a webcam with audio capability.

CSU reserves the right to update technology requirements, including both hardware and software, throughout the duration of the program. CSU strives to be innovative in its curriculum delivery to support student engagement in coursework.

Technical Support

Technical Support services are available and offer a variety of support services including desktop support, diagnostics, and Blackboard support. Students encountering technical difficulty are encouraged to contact the CSU Helpdesk through the following methods:

- Phone: (877) 399-1063
- E-mail: **techsupport@columbiasouthern.edu**
- Live Chat

For Helpdesk availability, please visit the **Technical Support page** in the myCSU Student Portal.
FAQs, Software Downloads, and Tutorials are available within the myCSU Student Portal under the Technical Support Navigation Tab.

myCSU Student Portal

The myCSU Student Portal is the gateway to the university. A few of the features available through the portal include the ability to view grades, submit course enrollments and access an individual student account. Upgraded applications, features, or functionality may be installed within the myCSU Student Portal and are subject to change. Occasionally, technology requirements will be revised accordingly to meet new university standards and initiatives.

E-mail Policy

Columbia Southern university considers e-mail the official form of communication. Important student information and announcements are communicated through this method. An appropriate, individual (non-shared) e-mail address is required for all CSU students. Students are expected to maintain a current e-mail address on file with the university. In the event a student's e-mail address is no longer valid, access to the myCSU Student Portal may be restricted until such time the address is updated. E-mail communications are subject to all applicable university policies, including the Student Rights and Responsibilities and Student Code of Conduct policy.

Student Technology Responsibilities

Online, distance learning utilizes technology as a platform for curriculum delivery and student engagement. Although most technologies can be viewed as stable, there may be occasions when technology fails. In our efforts to support students during technology failure, it is recommended students maintain an alternate technology plan. A student's ability to request a grade change, late assignment submission, or similar request will be reviewed on a limited basis by the course professor and may be verified by CSU Helpdesk Support.

The following recommendations are made to maintain an alternate technology plan:

- Periodically save written work as progression is made on assignments.
- Hard Disks or Memory sticks are recommended to back-up data storage. Computer or hard disk failures do occur and can be detrimental to student course progress.
- In the event the technology failure is severe enough to disrupt course completion, the student should contact the course professor for alternate arrangements.
- Regular use of the back-up device is recommended for effective retrieval.
- A plan of action is recommended when the user's primary computer fails. Examples of other alternatives include work computers, libraries, Internet Cafés, or a friend or family member.

The following student requirements are maintained in the event of technology failure:

- Continued course participation and assignment completion is expected unless the student makes alternate arrangements with the course professor or campus, within the limitations of CSU Institutional Policy.
- Accidental assignment submission is not a basis for an opportunity to re-submit an assignment. Students encountering this circumstance should contact their course professor for a decision.

User Information Compilation and Use

CSU is the sole owner of user information, further defined as applicant and/or student information, collected within the constraints of user interaction with the university. Directory information may be disseminated to specific parties pursuant to FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act). CSU does not sell or share user information to outside parties without prior written consent of the user; however, the university may share any user information with its employees, affiliates and partners, or independent contractors with a vested interest. In addition, CSU may share user information with parties who provide educational, operational, or technical services or products on behalf of or directly to the university.

Student Portal and Blackboard Access

Blackboard user access will terminate in the event that a student's status is changed to Inactive; further defined as inactivity in any 365-day period.

Individual course access is outlined in the Course Access Policy and is separate from the Student Portal and Blackboard Access Policy. CSU alumni will receive the official university newsletter, the CSU Communicator.

Electronically Transmitted Messages

CSU may retain electronically transmitted messages, defined as e-mail or other data, for an indefinite amount of time. Electronically submitted information, defined by this policy, is distinct and does not pertain to information collected and contained in the official student record. CSU does not retain electronically transmitted messages for any specified period other than time periods dictated by law. Users should not

have an expectation any electronically transmitted messages will be retained for a specified time period.

Security of Information

CSU takes security of information seriously and as such, takes all reasonable precautionary measures to protect sensitive user information. CSU uses encryption and Secure Sockets Layer Web Server Certificates (SSL) for sensitive information requested for submission through the World Wide Web.

Information contained within the CSU Student Information System (SIS) is also viewed as sensitive, personally identifiable information and the university makes reasonable efforts to ensure all information contained within is secure from modification or deletion by unauthorized personnel. In addition, employees who do not have a vested interest to perform a relative job function are not granted access to information contained in the SIS. Servers containing the SIS are located in a secure environment.

Users of technology systems should acknowledge security of the aforementioned information cannot be guaranteed as systems can be compromised by unauthorized third-parties. All users further acknowledge there is no expectation user information is confidential or private when transmitted through or stored upon equipment or systems owned by the university.

Acceptable Use Policy

The Acceptable Use Policy governs all university systems used in association with the user's interaction with Columbia Southern University or its partners and affiliates. Such systems include but are not limited to the following:

- myCSU Student Portal
- Columbia Southern University's Website
- University networks
- Internet
- Online classroom
- Other hardware or software utilized in association with the university

All content transmitted to and from systems or networks are subject to the Student Code of Conduct Policy and sanctions contained therein.

Permitted Uses:

Columbia Southern University technology systems are to have beneficial uses for all users for the sole purpose of instructional delivery in connection with academic, administrative, and operational activities of the university.

Prohibited Uses:

Harassment

- Sending other users threatening, inappropriate, or unwelcome messages
- Sending unsolicited, bulk spam to other users
- Any other form of harassment

Privacy Breach

- Accessing, reading, copying, altering, or deleting another users work without authorization or permission
- Unauthorized access to other users' accounts
- Transfer of user passwords to others
- Accessing unauthorized electronic communications
- Invasion of personal privacy

Willful Damage

- Purposefully damaging or corrupting hardware, software, or data systems
- Malicious uses of network and university systems
- Committing malicious attacks on university networks or systems
- Hacking passwords or systems

Copying

- Distribution or copying copyrighted material
- Copying other's work as your own; plagiarism
- Unauthorized distribution of instructional material to other users
- Use of illegal or unlicensed software in conjunction with university systems

Abstract

- Engagement in illegal activities
- Unjustified accusations or slander of any person associated with the university

Indemnification of the University

Users granted access to Columbia Southern University Systems agree, by authorization of access and use, to exempt the university and hold it harmless from damages to include lawsuits, losses, and expenses. Damages also include but are not limited to attorney fees and litigation costs which could arise from breaches of transmitted content, violation of sensitive information and privacy, user violation of the Acceptable Use Policy or any other of the Technology Policies associated with use of university systems.

Textbook and Course Material Policy

CSU provides course material for all courses. The course material may vary from course to course and may be in the form of electronic textbooks (eTextbooks), Integrated Learning Resources (ILR), or printed textbooks. CSU determines the most effective material to ensure a positive learning experience for students.

eTextbooks

An eTextbook is an interactive, electronic version of the course textbook that can be accessed and downloaded on the course start date. eTextbooks are provided at no cost. Digitally stored eTextbooks may contain audio, video, and animations that enhance the student learning experience. A clickable table of contents allows students to quickly navigate to the desired page(s), highlight(s), and take notes directly within the eTextbook.

Students gain access to the eTextbook in Blackboard on the course start date. The eTextbook remains active for 180 days from the initial time it is accessed. The eTextbook can be printed as needed, up to ten pages at a time. Once the course begins, students can purchase a printed version of the eTextbook from a third-party vendor link within the eTextbook. The cost of the printed eTextbook is the responsibility of the student.

eTextbooks can be accessed by utilizing iOS, Android, Kindle Fire, Mac, and PC computers and devices. Video tutorials are available in Blackboard to assist students on how to utilize eTextbooks. The tutorials outline tips for using the eTextbook on and offline, highlighting, note taking, and any other capabilities.

Students should contact their course professors or CSU Technical Support with any technical issues that may arise.

Integrated Learning Resources (ILR)

To improve and enhance learning, selected CSU courses do not require a printed or electronic textbook. ILR material contains library resources, labs, lectures, faculty-created content, and video presentations. Subsequently, courses may have extended study guides or interactive material that enhances the learning experience and enables students to learn and grow in their disciplines in a practical way.

Students gain access to the ILR material through Blackboard on the course start date. These resources are stored digitally and can be printed.

Printed Textbook

The Loan-a-Book program provides printed textbooks for select courses at no cost contingent upon the student successfully completing the course. Printed textbooks provided in the Loan-a-Book program are required to be returned to CSU within 30 days after course completion.

If a student drops, withdraws from, is institutionally withdrawn from, or fails a course, the student is responsible for the cost of the textbook unless one of the following occurs:

- The student returns the textbook postmarked within 30 days to have the charge reversed.
- The student plans to retake the same course in the next consecutive term or enrollment period and submits an enrollment within 30 days. The student enrolled in the Term or Veterans Flexible Enrollment learning option should return the textbook if the course is not available in the next consecutive term.

A return label is provided with the textbook and should be utilized when returning the textbook to CSU. Instructions are emailed to students that outline additional requirements. Students who do not return textbooks and/or do not pay the textbook charge may be prohibited to enroll in future courses.

Textbook charges are based on the retail textbook price listed at the CSU website or 70% of the listed retail price if the student was issued a used textbook.

The Loan-a-Book program may be utilized during natural disasters or other situations where the student's textbook is destroyed or no longer accessible. Textbooks provided during these circumstances are required to be returned following the same procedures as the standard Loan-a-Book program. Textbooks not returned are charged to the student's account.

Note: Textbooks may be in new or used condition.

Sexual Violence Prevention Program

Columbia Southern University (CSU) believes that it is the responsibility of all students, faculty, and staff to be a well-informed, active participant in building and supporting a safe campus environment. The Sexual Violence Prevention Program is provided as an online resource within the myCSU Student Portal, under University Resources and may be taken at any time.

Title IX

Policy Statement

CSU adheres to all federal, state, and local civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination in employment and education. The university does not discriminate in its admissions practices (except as permitted by law), in its employment practices, or in its educational programs or activities on the basis of sex/gender. As a recipient of federal financial assistance for education activities, CSU is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 to ensure that all of its

education programs and activities do not discriminate on the basis of sex/gender. Sex includes sex, sex stereotypes, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and pregnancy or parenting status.

CSU also prohibits retaliation against any person opposing discrimination or participating in any discrimination investigation or complaint process internal or external to the institution. Sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking are forms of sex discrimination, which are prohibited under Title IX and by CSU policy.

Any member of the campus community, guest, or visitor who acts to deny, deprive, or limit the educational, employment, residential, or social access, opportunities, and/or benefits of any member of the university community on the basis of sex is in violation of the CSU's policy on Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination.

Any person may report sex discrimination (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to have experienced the conduct), in person, by mail, by telephone, by video, or by email, using the contact information listed for the Title IX coordinator (below). A report may be made at any time (including during non-business hours) by email.
Questions regarding Title IX, including its application and/or concerns about noncompliance, should be directed to the Title IX coordinator. For a complete copy of the policy or for more information, please visit https://www.columbiasouthern.edu/consumer-information/title-ix or contact the Title IX coordinator.

Individuals who believe they have experienced sex discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation in violation of CSU policy should contact the following:

Title IX coordinator
Alexis Harris, MS, MBA
Columbia Southern University
21982 University Lane, Orange Beach, AL 36561
Telephone: 800-977-8449 ext: 1352
Email: CSU-Title-IX@columbiasouthern.edu

A person may also file a complaint with the appropriate federal, state, or local agency within the time frame required by law. Depending upon the nature of the complaint, the appropriate agency may be the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Education, and/or the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

For complaints involving employees:
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
Ridge Park Place
1130 22nd Street South
Suite 2000
Birmingham, AL 35205
United States

Regional Contact:
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Civil Rights, Region IV
61 Forsyth St., Southwest, Suite 19T70
Atlanta, GA 30303-8927

Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
Office for Civil Rights, National Headquarters
U.S. Department of Education
Lyndon Baines Johnson Dept. of Education Building
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-1100
Telephone: 800-421-3481
Fax: 202-453-6012; TDD: 800-877-8339
Email: OCR@ed.gov

Within any resolution process related to this policy, CSU provides reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities and religious accommodations when that accommodation is consistent with state and federal law.

Transfer Credit Policy

CSU evaluates transfer credit upon student submission of the following:

- official post-secondary transcripts,
- military and employer courses reviewed by the American Council on Education (ACE),
- credit by examination score sheets, and
- professional training certificates.

Accepted courses are relevant to the program of study and equivalent in both content and degree level. The Office of the Registrar conducts all transfer credit evaluations. The academic program director approves exceptions. The college dean determines the final decision regarding transfer credit appeals.

Sources of Transfer Credit

Academic Credit

CSU accepts academic credit from accredited institutions whose agencies are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and/or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

Transferrable Courses

- Courses with a grade of "D" or above may apply to undergraduate degree requirements unless a minimum grade of "C" is required to satisfy specific program requirements.
- A grade of "D" is not accepted as transfer credit for English composition or any mathematics requirement for any degree program.
- Courses with a grade of "B" or above may apply to master's degree program requirements; in some cases, a grade of "C" may be considered.

Transcripts submitted in languages other than English must be evaluated by an approved third-party and translated into English. Acceptable third-party agencies are those recognized by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Service (NACES). Transcripts may also be evaluated by a transcript evaluator who is fluent in the language of origin and English and who possesses expertise in the educational practices of the country of origin. All translated materials must be official and translated to English.

Credit by Examination

CSU uses ACE guidelines to determine if examinations warrant awarding academic credit. Examinations must meet minimum passing scores. CSU accepts credit by examination from testing centers, to include but not limited to, the following.

- **The College Level Examination Program (CLEP)**
- **DSST**
- **Excelsior's UExcel**

Professional Licenses, Certificates, and Training Programs

CSU uses ACE guidelines to determine if training programs, certificates, professional licenses, and/or military training warrant awarding academic credit. The ACE publications listed below are used.

- **The National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training**
- **Military Guide: Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services**

Professional training certificates without an ACE recommendation may be considered. Approval is determined upon the academic program director's review and acceptance of industry curriculum standards associated with the certificate.

Experiential or Equivalent Learning

CSU takes into consideration that adult learners gain knowledge outside of a traditional academic environment and will consider experiential learning credit through a Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) review. An experienced subject matter expert conducts a PLA review to determine if the prior learning experience meets the standards to award academic credit. Students should contact their academic advisor for more information.

Technical Credit

The academic program director reviews submitted technical credit by assessing the course content and learning outcomes to determine transferability.

Maximum Allowable Transfer Limits

Undergraduate Degrees

A maximum of 45 semester hours may be awarded as transfer credit for an associate degree program and 90 semester hours for a bachelor's degree program.
Transfer credit for experiential learning may not exceed 25% of the degree program.

Master's Degrees

A maximum of 18 semester hours may be awarded as transfer credit for a master's degree. Transfer credit for experiential learning may not exceed 25% of the degree program.

Doctoral Degrees

A maximum of 9 semester hours may be awarded as transfer credit for doctoral programs. No credit for experiential or equivalent credit may be considered. In instances where a student seeks to transfer more than the maximum allowable percentage of required credit hours, the institution must conduct a comprehensive assessment of the student's credits earned and document how the credits align with its program outcomes. In such cases, transfer credit allowances may not exceed the lesser of any applicable state requirements or 40 percent of the credits (24 credit hours) required for professional doctoral degrees.

Additional Transfer Credit Limitations

- CSU certificates are not eligible to receive transfer credit.
- CSU does not accept developmental and remedial coursework for transfer credit.
- Transfer credit decisions, determined by previous colleges or universities, that involve auditing or waiving of program requirements are not applicable at CSU.
- Transfer credit may be limited in order to satisfy specific and relevant degree program requirements. Some courses may not be transferrable due to age of credit. In these cases, the academic program director will review the course information to determine transferability.
- CSU does not typically accept transfer credit from non-accredited institutions; however, transfer credit decisions are not based solely on accreditation. In some cases, CSU's qualified faculty conduct a review to determine that courses meet the requirements for

the degree the institution awards and that applicable accreditation standards are met.
- Credit for experiential or equivalent learning is applied only to CSU undergraduate and master's level course offerings, excluding general education requirements.

Transfer Credit Decision Appeal

Students may appeal transfer credit decisions. The completed Transfer Credit Decision Appeal form must be submitted to Registrarappeals@columbiasouthern.edu. The Office of the Registrar will escalate the appeal to the appropriate academic program director for consideration.

Transfer of CSU Credit

CSU credit transferred to other institutions is evaluated at the sole discretion of said institutions. It is the students' responsibility to seek prior approval of CSU credits for purposes related to transferability of credit, credentialing, tuition reimbursement, or other academic and professional reasons. Students with questions regarding the transfer of CSU credit may send inquiries to: **Registrar@columbiasouthern.edu**.

Unofficial Withdrawal Policy

This policy affects any student enrolled in the Term learning option who does not officially notify the institution that they have ceased or will cease attending the school and does not complete the course(s) by the term end date resulting in an unofficially withdrawn status. Students should submit an official Course Drop/Withdrawal request or contact the Office of the Registrar to notify the school of his or her withdrawal. CSU will determine if a student is unofficially withdrawn by reviewing student records to verify the following:

- If no assignments are submitted in Units 6, 7 or 8, the student will be withdrawn from the course and a grade of "WF" will be assigned. Grades of "WF" count in the calculation of the student's GPA as a grade of "F." The grade of "WF" is counted as attempted hours and will affect SAP. A charge will be posted to the student's account if the textbook was supplied through the CSU Book Grant. The student will be notified of the course drop/textbook return process.
- If an assignment has been submitted in Units 6, 7, or 8, the student will not be withdrawn and no action will be taken. All non-submitted assignments will be recorded with a score of "0" and the final grade will be calculated.
- Students who are on an Incomplete are still expected to submit assignments in Units 6, 7 or 8.
- When determining last day of attendance for financial aid purposes, the course mid-point or last assignment date, whichever is later, will be used.

Withdrawal for Special Circumstances Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Withdrawal for Special Circumstances Policy is to provide students who encounter special circumstances the opportunity to withdraw from a course when such withdrawal would normally not be considered. Eligible students fall under the following categories:

- The student has a course on Incomplete.
- The student has a course that has ended with a final grade.

Policy

CSU recognizes students may encounter life situations that impede successful course completion. Students experiencing an extenuating circumstance, such as a prolonged illness, death in the immediate family, military deployment, or similar incident, have the option to request a Withdrawal for Special Circumstances (WSC). Requests for a WSC are limited to students who have a course(s) on Incomplete or have a course that has ended with a sub-standard, final course grade directly related to the incident.

Students are eligible to request one WSC per calendar year and the request must be within one calendar year from original course end date. Each withdrawal request may include all courses in which the student is enrolled during the period

of special circumstance. Requests for a WSC are not automatically granted and are reviewed independently through the Student Appeals process. Students who wish to withdraw under special circumstances must submit documentation which supports the extenuating circumstance. Acceptable documentation should include applicable dates to justify the request and may include:

- Medical documentation by a licensed practitioner
- Deployment notice documentation
- Officially signed letter from a Unit/Battalion Commander or Employer
- Death certificate
- Any other documentation deemed acceptable to CSU

Students approved for a WSC will receive a grade of "W" for the course, which will be recorded in the student record. The grade of "W" will have no effect on the cumulative CSU GPA, but will count toward hours attempted when determining Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and may affect Federal Student Aid (FSA) eligibility. Students using FSA should contact their academic advisor to discuss SAP standing and the Office of Financial Aid to discuss FSA eligibility.

An approved WSC is subject to the Tuition Refund Policy, Official Course/Drop Withdrawal Policy, and requirements outlined within the Textbook and Course Material Policy.

Students applying for a Withdrawal for Special Circumstances should submit a formal letter to **Registrarappeals@columbiasouthern.edu** and include necessary documentation to support the request. Students will be notified of a decision within 7 calendar days.

Note: DBA students enrolled in Dissertation/Research courses are not eligible for the Withdrawal for Special Circumstances and should be working with their dissertation chair regarding any special circumstances that arise during this period of their program.

Degree Conferral Schedule

2021 – 2022 Degree Conferral Dates

A conferral date is the date on which the university formally acknowledges a student has graduated from their program of study. The below table outlines the dates that CSU will confer degrees for 2021 - 2022.

Month	Mid-Month	End of Month
July 2021	13th	29th
August 2021	12th	26th
September 2021	9th	23rd
October 2021	7th	19th
November 2021	4th	18th
December 2021	2nd	16th
January 2022	6th	27th
February 2022	10th	24th
March 2022	10th	21st
April 2022	5th	21st
May 2022	5th	19th
June 2022	2nd	16th
July 2022	7th	21st

Academic Calendar

Effective Dates and Terms

July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 | 1A22 through 6B22

U.S. students must register by the end of the registration period. Students with APO/FPO addresses must register at least four weeks prior to the term start date in order to allow sufficient time for textbook delivery.

Track A

Semester	Term	Registration*	Start Date	Drop Date	End Date
Summer	1A22	05/12/21-07/13/21	07/28/21	08/03/21	09/21/21
Fall	2A22	07/14/21-09/14/21	09/29/21	10/05/21	11/23/21
Winter	3A22	09/15/21-11/16/21	12/01/21	12/07/21	02/08/22
Christmas Break – During Term 3A (12/22/21-01/04/22)					
Winter	4A22	11/17/21-02/01/22	02/16/22	02/22/22	04/12/22
Spring	5A22	02/02/22-04/05/22	04/27/22	05/03/22	06/21/22

Track B

Semester	Term	Registration*	Start Date	Drop Date	End Date
Summer	1B22	04/07/21-06/22/21	07/07/21	07/13/21	08/31/21
Fall	2B22	06/23/21-08/24/21	09/08/21	09/14/21	11/02/21
Fall	3B22	08/25/21-10/26/21	11/10/21	11/16/21	01/18/22
Christmas Break – During Term 3B (12/22/21-01/04/22)					
Winter	4B22	10/27/21-01/11/22	01/26/22	02/01/22	03/22/22
Spring	5B22	01/12/22-03/15/22	03/30/22	04/05/22	05/24/22
Spring	6B22	03/16/22-05/17/22	06/01/22	06/07/22	07/26/22

*Please note a late fee of $50.00 will be due for enrollments received after Registration end date. Please refer to the CSU website for the current Academic Calendar.

Acronyms

AARTS	Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System	GED	General Education Development
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	I	Incomplete
AGI	Adjusted Gross Income	IP	In Progress
AS	Associate of Science	ISIR	Institutional Student Information Record
AU-ABC	Air University-Associate to Baccalaureate Cooperative	JST	Joint Services Transcript
BS	Bachelor of Science	LOA	Leave of Absence
BSBA	Bachelor of Science in Business Administration	MBA	Master of Business Administration
CCAF	Community College of the Air Force	MPN	Master Promissory Note
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation	MS	Master of Science
CLEP	College Level Examination Program	MyCAA	Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts
CSU	Columbia Southern University	NSLDS	National Student Loan Data System
DANTES	Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support	POST	Peace Officer Standards and Training Council
DAP	Degree Advisement Plan	R	Placeholder for a Retake
DBA	Doctor of Business Administration	SAP	Satisfactory Academic Progress
DC	Dropped due to course being closed	SMART	Sailor/Marines American Council on Education Registry Transcript
DEAC	Distance Education Accrediting Commission	SOCAD	Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Army Degree
DN	Dropped due to Non-Attendance	SUB	Subsidized Federal Stafford Loan
DOE	Department of Education	TA	Tuition Assistance
DP	Student dropped course before start date or within 1st week of course	TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
EFA	Estimated Financial Assistance or Estimated Financial Aid	UNSUB	Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loan
EFC	Expected Family Contribution	VA	Veteran's Affairs
FA	Financial Aid	W	Withdrawn
FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid	WF	Withdrawn/Failure
FSA	Federal Student Aid		
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act		