

COLUMBIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY 2017

# STUDENT HANDBOOK



**FLEXIBLE. AFFORDABLE. ONLINE.**

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# COLUMBIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

**Student Handbook | Published January 2017**

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.

# A Message from the President

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Dear Students,

The CSU family of administrators, faculty, and support staff are excited you have chosen Columbia Southern University (CSU) to complete your educational goals. You join a diverse group of students located around the world, ready for a life-changing learning experience.

Our service-centered environment and student-centered staff enables each learner to achieve their educational goals and objectives through an online learning platform, driven by engaging faculty, quality courses, technical support, and affordable tuition.

CSU was founded on strong values of providing a family culture and work environment of caring and respect that provides a foundation for CSU faculty, staff, and administration to provide and create an exceptional student experience. You can expect caring staff that will support you during special circumstances and faculty that will challenge you, equating to a great learning experience. Understanding the culture and purpose of CSU is a primary step in developing a commitment to your academic endeavors and yourself.

Through the offering of quality programs and building longer term relationships with students and the industries we serve, CSU maintains a competitive and quality national and international reputation as an institution of higher learning. As a student, you have a team that is committed to your success.

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.

If you need further assistance, please feel free to contact your Academic Advisor. Thank you for choosing Columbia Southern University!



Robert Mayes, President

Columbia Southern University

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# I. Introduction

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## The Student's Ultimate Resource

The CSU Student Handbook serves as the student's personal guidebook, assisting them in answering questions related to policies and procedures that are both academic and administrative in nature, support services available for student success, academic guidance and the responsibilities, expectations, and rights of students. We recognize the delicate balance of work, family, and other commitments while pursuing higher education. This resource was created to assist you while on your journey to degree completion.

The CSU University Catalog and CSU Website are resources for online degree program listings and other information that may not be contained in the Student Handbook.

## Scope of the Student Handbook

The policies and procedures contained in the Columbia Southern University (CSU) Student Handbook are applicable to all members of the CSU community, including students, staff, faculty, and administration. The Student Handbook is the official document regarding policies, procedures, and resources of Columbia Southern University.

The University conducts on-going benchmarking with similar institutions to provide the most relevant, useful information for the Student Handbook. The handbook is regularly updated to incorporate changes to University policies and/or procedures.

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.

## II. About CSU

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### Mission Statement

Columbia Southern University 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 caring 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 professional, first class, and place 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.

### Board of Trustees

Columbia Southern University is governed by an eight to fifteen member Board of Trustees, which establishes the mission of the University and determine 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 of Trustees.

For additional information on the Board of Trustees, please visit <http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/about-csu/board-of-trustees>.

### Gainful Employment Disclosure

Columbia Southern University (CSU) self-discloses information pursuant to Gainful Employment Regulations as required by the U.S. Department of Education (ED). CSU is forthright in publishing gainful employment information so students have the information necessary to make informed, rational educational decisions. For information concerning median loan debt, cost of attendance, occupational information, or retention and graduation rates, please visit <http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/consumer-information/>

### State Authorization and Licensure

Columbia Southern University (CSU) is licensed by the State of 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 on state licensure, please visit <http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/about-csu/accreditation-licensure/state-authorization>.

### NC-SARA

Columbia Southern University 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.

### Accreditation

Columbia Southern University is an accredited member of the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC). DEAC is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) as a nationally recognized accrediting agency, and is a recognized member of 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](http://www.deac.org)  
[info@deac.org](mailto:info@deac.org)

## Registering a Complaint with External Agencies

Students who wish to file a complaint with an agency, may review full contact and website information located on the [CSU Website, www.columbiasouthern.edu/about-csu/accreditation-licensure/registering-a-complaint](http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/about-csu/accreditation-licensure/registering-a-complaint). Additionally, students should not contact these agencies unless they have proceeded through the institution's process for filing a complaint and no resolution has been achieved.

### Registering a Complaint with the Accrediting Agency

Students may file a complaint with the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC) by using the [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](http://www.deac.org)  
[info@deac.org](mailto:info@deac.org)

<http://www.deac.org/Student-Center/Complaint-Process.aspx>

### Complaint Contact Information for State Agencies

In compliance with the U.S. Department of Education, under the provisions of section 668.43 (b), Columbia Southern University provides its enrolled or prospective students with contact information for filing complaints with the relevant state official or agency that would handle a student's complaint, regardless of whether the state regulates the institution.

The state agencies correspond with the physical location of students while enrolled in CSU's degree programs. The state agency would generally correspond with the student's state of residence.

For a complete list of States and US Territories, please visit the CSU website at [www.columbiasouthern.edu/about-csu/accreditation-licensure/external-complaint-process](http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/about-csu/accreditation-licensure/external-complaint-process).

### Registering a Complaint with Georgia

Georgia Residents may register a complaint with the state of Georgia by following the contact information below.

Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission  
2082 East Exchange Place, Suite 220  
Tucker, Georgia 30084  
(770) 414-3300

Complaints can be submitted through the following website:  
[www.gnpec.org](http://www.gnpec.org)

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 the following link: <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."

## 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.

## 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 & faculty. Abusive language and rude behavior will be considered ethical misconduct.

## 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 on Administration and Academic Officers, please visit [www.columbiasouthern.edu/About-CSU/Administration](http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/About-CSU/Administration).

## III. Student Communications

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### 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  
251.981.3771

#### Main Fax Number

251.981.3815

#### Business Hours (CT)

##### Main Office Hours

Monday—Thursday: 8 AM to 5 PM  
Friday: 8 AM to 3 PM

##### Academic Advising and Student Support Center, and Admissions Hours:

Monday-Thursday: 8 AM to 6 PM  
Friday: 8 AM to 5 PM

##### Bookstore, Business Affairs, Office of Financial Aid, Office of the Registrar Hours:

Monday-Friday: 8 AM to 5 PM

##### Technical Support Hours

Monday—Friday: 8 AM – 8 PM  
Saturday: 10 AM – 7 PM  
Sunday: Closed

Hours will be extended, to include Sunday, on the three days leading up to Term end dates. Those hours are as follows:

Sunday: 10 AM - 7 PM  
Monday: 8AM - 11 PM  
Tuesday: 8 AM - 11 PM

#### Contact Information

##### Academic Advising and Student Support Center

[students@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:students@columbiasouthern.edu)

Phone: 877.323.4471  
Fax: 251.224.0550

##### Accounting/Business Affairs

[accounting@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:accounting@columbiasouthern.edu)

Phone: 877.323.4472  
Fax: 251.224.0570

##### Admissions

[admissions@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:admissions@columbiasouthern.edu)

Phone: 877.347.6050  
Fax: 251.224.0540

##### Bookstore

<http://bookstore.columbiasouthern.edu>

[bookstore@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:bookstore@columbiasouthern.edu)

Phone: 877.323.4474

##### Career Services

[careerservices@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:careerservices@columbiasouthern.edu)

Phone: 877.297.6192  
Main Office Hours

##### Continuing Education

[ContinuingEd@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:ContinuingEd@columbiasouthern.edu)

Phone: 800.313.1992  
Main Office Hours

##### CSU Online Library

[library@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:library@columbiasouthern.edu)

Phone: 877.268.8046  
Main Office Hours

##### Live Chat Services

<http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/Library>

24 Hours Per Day/7 Days Per Week

##### Learning Partnerships

[learningpartners@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:learningpartners@columbiasouthern.edu)

Phone: 800.344.5021  
Main Office Hours

##### Military Support Group

[militarysupportgroup@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:militarysupportgroup@columbiasouthern.edu)

Phone: 888.643.8541

##### Office of Disability Services

[disabilityservices@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@columbiasouthern.edu)

Phone: 888.785.3005  
Main Office Hours

##### Office of Financial Aid

[financialaid@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:financialaid@columbiasouthern.edu)

Phone: 877.316.8396  
Fax: 251.224.0590

##### Office of the Registrar

[registrar@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:registrar@columbiasouthern.edu)

Phone: 877.316.0219  
Fax: 251.224.0575

**Student Affairs**[VPSA@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:VPSA@columbiasouthern.edu)

Phone: 888.758.8614

Main Office Hours

**Student and Alumni Engagement**[CSU-SAE@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:CSU-SAE@columbiasouthern.edu)

Main Office Hours

**Success Center**[teamsucceed@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:teamsucceed@columbiasouthern.edu)

Phone: 877.875.0533

Main Office Hours

**Technical Support**[techsupport@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:techsupport@columbiasouthern.edu)

877.399.1063

**Resources:****CSU Website**<http://www.columbiasouthern.edu>**Blackboard Website**<http://online.columbiasouthern.edu>**Student Portal**<http://mycsu.columbiasouthern.edu>**2017 Observed Holidays**

University offices are closed annually in observance of the following holidays: (Specific date closure information is published in the myCSU Student Portal under the Announcements section.)

New Year's Day — January 2

Martin Luther King Jr. Day — January 16

Fat Tuesday (Mardi Gras) — February 28

Good Friday — April 14

Memorial Day — May 29

Independence Day — July 4

Labor Day — September 4

Veterans Day — November 10

Thanksgiving — November 22-24

Christmas — December 25-27

**Communication Guidelines**

Columbia Southern University (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, myCSU Student Portal; Learning Management System; CSU Website; CSU Student Handbook; CSU Catalog; CSU Communicator; social media; postal mail; email; online chat; telephone; 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. 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 documentation; such as a marriage certificate, divorce decree, driver's license, Social Security card, passport, or court documented name change. Documentation can be emailed to [registrar@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto: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, the expected response time from CSU staff and faculty is 2 to 3 business days. 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 (LMS)**

CSU utilizes Blackboard as the 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 CSU Student Handbook and 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, as they are guides when needing information related to the student experience. The CSU Student Handbook outlines policies, guidelines, resources, and University contact information; whereas the CSU Catalog outlines program requirements, course descriptions, admission policies, tuition and fees, financial assistance, and much more. The CSU Student Handbook and Catalog may be found on the website or myCSU Student Portal.

**CSU Communicator**

The CSU 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 CSU 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 CSU 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 CSU 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 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 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 24 hours per day/7 days per week through live chat services by visiting <http://libguides.columbiasouthern.edu>.

### 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 relation to the following:

- Reminders – e.g. registration deadlines, upcoming course end dates, advising session appointments, etc.
- 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 (student id number or last four of social).
- For identification purposes, be prepared to provide a secondary form of identification when contacting the University (e.g. student id number, last four of social, date of birth, address, etc.).
- 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.

# IV. Tuition & Financing

## Tuition Rates

CSU tuition rates are priced competitively to allow your dream of achieving a quality education to be within reach. Tuition and other student fees are payable in U.S. funds by check, credit card, money order, or other approved financing programs. A complete listing of Payment Options can be found on the CSU website.

Education Level	Cost Per Credit Hour
Undergraduate .....	\$220.00
Graduate† .....	\$290.00
Doctoral.....	\$350.00

*Rates are per credit hour. Most courses are 3 credit hours. Tuition and fees are payable in U.S. funds. Tuition Rates are subject to change.*

For the most current tuition information, please visit [www.ColumbiaSouthern.edu/Financial](http://www.ColumbiaSouthern.edu/Financial).

†The tuition rate for graduate courses per-credit hour is \$250 for all active-duty military members using military tuition assistance (not applicable for CSU learning partners). The lower rate is offered to keep the tuition rate at the DoD cap of \$250.

CSU Learning Partners receive a tuition discount that is applied to the full tuition rate. Tuition rates are subject to change.

## Student Fees

Fees are charged when services are rendered.

Fee	Amount
Application-Domestic.....	\$0
Application-International.....	\$0
CSU Online Library Fee (One-Time Fee.)	
*Waived for Military using military TA (Tuition Assistance).....	\$35
Petition to Graduate.....	\$100
DBA Dissertation*.....	\$1,200
DBA Research Project*.....	\$1200
DBA Online Library Fee (One-Time Fee).....	\$50

### Additional Fees

Bachelor to Associate Degree Request.....	\$100
Change of Concentration.....	\$25
Change of Program .....	\$35
CSU Official Transcript.....	\$15
Degree to Certificate Request.....	\$50
Industrial Hygiene Management Certificate (IHMC).....	\$25
In-Program Re-Evaluation.....	\$25
Priority Evaluation.....	\$25
Replacement Diploma/Certificate.....	\$25
Return Check.....	\$25
Subsequent Evaluations.....	\$35

\*Dissertation fees are to be paid in increments of \$300 upon enrollment into Dissertation Research courses.

\*\* Fee to utilize this service will be made to Software Secure

Term Late Enrollment .....	\$50
Commencement Ceremony (includes 4 guests).....	\$135
Graduation Reception (graduate plus 1 guest).....	\$0
Additional Guests .....	\$10/person

### Proctoring Fees

Remote Proctor Now ** .....	\$19
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**Additional fees may apply for students utilizing the standard proctoring option.**

### Incomplete Course Fees

#### LifePace Learning:

15 day .....	\$25
30 day .....	\$50
60 day .....	\$100

#### Term and Veterans Advantage:

30 day .....	\$50
60 day.....	\$100

*Fees and shipping & handling charges are non-refundable and are subject to change.*

## Automatic Credit Card Payment Plan

Automatic Credit Card Payment Plan information applies to all online learning options: LifePace Learning, Term, and Veterans Advantage.

CSU offers an automatic credit card payment plan for students paying out-of-pocket. This plan allows students to spread tuition payments out over time by having them automatically charged to a credit card on a pre-set schedule. The student's credit card will be charged for half of the tuition due for the term upon registration and half at the start of the fifth week of the term.

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
- 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 DANTES. In most cases, these benefits will cover the entire cost of your 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 Advantage learning options.

The following 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 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 receiving any other form of financial assistance.

## Pay As You Learn

Whether students would like to pay weekly, bi-weekly, monthly or a full payment, CSU offers this special payment plan that gives students the power of choice. Using scheduled, automatic credit card payments, tuition is spread out over weekly, bi-weekly or monthly payments to help students fit education into their budget.

## Types of Federal Student Aid Available

(To be eligible for Federal Student Aid, students must be unconditionally admitted to the university.)

Federal Student Aid (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 Federal Student Aid including eligibility, procedures for applying, awarding FSA and loan counseling, students should access the Office of Financial Aid website at <http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/Financial/Office-of-Financial-Aid>.

## Tuition Refund Policy

### LifePace Learning, Term and Veterans Advantage

Refunds are subject to state policies. For information about refund policies in specific states, please see the [State Authorization](#) page of the CSU Website.

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 percent 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](#)).

In the states of Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, and Mississippi, CSU follows the refund guidelines set forth by their State Boards of Education or equivalents. The state refund policies apply when students who are residents of these states withdraw, drop, or are administratively dropped from a course or the institution.

**Table 1 displays the percentage of tuition returned to the student minus the application and/or registration fee AFTER the listed timeframes.**

**Table 1 – Percent Return**

\*Percent return is effective after the timeframe.

Timeframe*	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)	\$630
One-time Registration Fee – 20%	\$126

**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)	\$630
One-time Registration Fee	(\$126)
Net Remaining Tuition	\$504

CSU Institutional Charge	Eligible Refund
Refund Percentage	80%
Eligible Refund	\$504 x 80% = \$403.20

Note: Refunds may be reduced by the cost of the textbook (See [Textbook and Course Material Policy](#)). This also applies to the specific state refund policies outlined below.

## Specific State Refund Policies

### Arkansas State Refund Policy

Tuition Due Student:

Proportion of Total Course, Program, or Term Completed as of

Date of Withdrawal or Termination	Tuition Refund
Less than 25%	Prorated
25% up to but not including 50%	50% Refund
50% up to but not including 75%	25% Refund
75% or more	No Refund

### Indiana State Refund Policy

Tuition Due Student:

Proportion of Total Course, Program, or Term Completed as of

Date of Withdrawal or Termination	Tuition Refund
Less than 10%	90% Refund
10% up to but not including 25%	75% Refund
25% up to but not including 50%	50% Refund
50% up to but not including 75%	25% Refund
75% or more	No Refund

### Iowa State Refund Policy

The Iowa State Refund Policy is calculated as follows:

- Remaining # of calendar days (up to 60% of the total calendar days)
- Divided by
- The total number of calendar days (up to 60% of the total calendar days)
- Multiplied by 90% of the charged tuition

If at any time, a student terminates a postsecondary educational program due to the student's physical incapacity, the terminating student shall receive a refund of tuition charges in an amount that equals the amount of tuition charged to the student multiplied by the ratio of the remaining number of calendar days in the school period to the total number of calendar days in the school period.

### Maryland State Refund Policy

Tuition Due Student:

Proportion of Total Course, Program, or Term Completed as of

Date of Withdrawal or Termination	Tuition Refund
Less than 10%	90% Refund
10% up to but not including 20%	80% Refund
20% up to but not including 30%	60% Refund
30% up to but not including 40%	40% Refund
40% up to and including 60%	20% Refund
More than 60%	No Refund

### Mississippi State Refund Policy

The Mississippi State Refund Policy applies to students who are residents of Mississippi and are enrolled in certificate programs.

Tuition Due Student:

Proportion of Total Course, Program, or Term Completed as of

Date of Withdrawal or Termination	Tuition Refund
Up to 10%	90% Refund
More than 10% up to and including 25%	50% Refund
More than 25% up to and including 50%	25% Refund
More than 50%	No Refund

## Enrollment Status Requirements

### Term Programs

Students must be enrolled at least half-time in order to be eligible to receive federal student aid (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 federal student aid awarded will be recalculated. Please refer to the chart below for enrollment status classifications.

	Undergraduate (Associate & Bachelor Programs)	Graduate (MS & MBA Programs)	Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)
Full-Time	6 credits +	3 credits +	3 credits +*
Half-Time	3 credits	N/A	1 credit

\*DBA students may be approved to take 6 credits of major requirements simultaneously; however, they may take no more than 3 credits of dissertation research courses simultaneously.

## V. Online Learning Options

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An application for admission is required for all students; in addition, all applicable admission requirements apply.

### LifePace Learning

The flexibility of the LifePace Learning option is what makes CSU unique. Students can progress through a course in as early as four weeks or extend the course as long as 18 weeks\*. With LifePace Learning, students will have the flexibility to cover course material as rapidly as concepts are mastered or take that extra time needed to fully absorb and understand the assignments. LifePace Learning is simply education at the pace of your life.

Additional time beyond the normal course length of 10 weeks will require submission of a form and payment of the appropriate fee. For more information and a listing of fees, refer to the Incomplete Course Policy in the Student Handbook.

\*LifePace Learning is available for all degree programs, excluding the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program. The DBA program is only available through the Term learning option.

### Term

The CSU Term Learning (Term) option is an asynchronous online learning delivery option allowing students to choose the best time to study. The Term provides a more structured framework that facilitates on-time course completion while allowing students the flexibility throughout the week for assignment completion. There are no required login times and the start date coincides with CSU's Academic Calendar. A term begins almost every month of the year allowing students to begin or continue a program of study at a convenient time, and gives students the typical, structured schedule found with most college classes.

Weekly substantive interaction among students and the course professor is provided through submission of discussion board postings and assignment feedback.

\*The Term option is available to all students and for all degree programs. Students utilizing Federal Student Aid are required to enroll in the Term online learning option.

### Veterans Advantage

The Veterans Advantage option (formerly known as Flexible Enrollment for Veterans) features courses that combine flexibility with set start and end dates that follow the Academic Calendar. A term begins almost every month of the year.

Students will be required to complete all assignments and required course work, but will benefit from no weekly deadlines. A suggested course schedule is provided as a guide for completion. Attendance verification is required by week four of all enrolled courses to maintain enrollment in the course.

Additional time beyond the normal course length will require submission of a form and payment of the appropriate fee. For more information and a listing of fees, refer to the Incomplete Course Policy in the Student Handbook.

Students are only eligible to enroll in this option through utilization of VA educational benefits. Students not meeting this qualification may enroll in Term or LifePace Learning.

\*The DBA program is not available to students using Veterans Advantage. DBA is only available through the Term learning option.

### Non-Federal Student Aid Programs

Non-Federal Student Aid programs include all Certificate programs and the Associate of Arts in General Studies. Due to accreditation and/or U.S. Department of Education program eligibility regulations, the specified programs are not eligible for Federal Student Aid (Title IV). Students enrolled in these programs may choose to take the programs by enrolling in the LifePace Learning, Term, or Veterans Advantage options.

# VI. In-Program Student Requests

## Associate Degree Request for Bachelor Students

While completing coursework toward the bachelor's degree, students can earn the necessary credits to satisfy the requirements of the associate's degree. Students enrolled in a bachelor's degree program may petition for the corresponding associate's degree upon qualification. Qualification information and the [Associate Degree Request for Bachelor Students](#) form are located in myCSU Student Portal.

- Credits must have been earned at a nationally or regionally accredited institution
- Undergraduate courses must have earned a "C" (2.0) or better to be accepted as transfer credit
- Graduate courses must have earned a "B" (3.0) or better to be accepted as transfer credit
- When submitting a military transcript such as AARTS, SMART, or other military record, please support your request by entering the ACE Guide Number on the request form

## Changing Degree Programs

Current and withdrawn students are eligible for admission consideration into a new degree program. Students requesting consideration must submit the [Program Change/Re-Evaluation Request](#) form. Associated fees are listed below:

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

Students wishing to change degree programs or concentrations, or who wish to be re-evaluated to a revised curriculum, must complete the [Program Change/Re-Evaluation Request](#) form. Official transcripts must be on file for any transferred courses before this request can be processed. Once received, the student's file will be reviewed and the student will be provided with a new applicant evaluation report detailing which of the new program courses will be required. Additionally, this report will indicate if any of the courses the student has previously taken through CSU will apply. The new evaluation will be subject to current CSU Catalog requirements.

*Note: New policies and tuition rates may apply if the original enrollment pre-dates university policy changes. This type of information will be included in the new applicant evaluation report.*

## Course Transfer Request

Students wishing to transfer completed courses 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

## Degree to Certificate Transfer Request

Students wishing to obtain a degree level certificate, while enrolled in the corresponding degree program, may request the certificate by submittal of the [Degree to Certification Transfer Request](#) form. Students will be issued the certificate for completion of all courses required in a certificate program.

## Petition for Graduation

Students within 12 hours of satisfying program requirements are encouraged to file a [Petition for Graduation](#) form. By submission, an official audit of the student record will be performed. The audit will review several facets of the student record including, but not limited to, degree credits earned, financial standing, and official transcript record.

*Note: Students enrolled in the DBA program should refer to the [DBA Graduation Requirements Policy](#).*

## Returning Students

Students in an inactive status, or those formally withdrawn from the institution, will be required to submit a Re-Enrollment Application.

Upon submission of the Re-Enrollment Application, submittal 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 and program requirements. Once all documentation is received by the University, an applicant evaluation report will be issued to the student. Students who are in receipt of an applicant evaluation report may register for courses. Academic advisement should be sought prior to enrolling.

## 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

## IN-PROGRAM STUDENT REQUESTS

University via official documents will be 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](#) will apply. Please allow 7-10 business days for processing. The record will be sent as a sealed official transcript to the institution or person indicated on the Official 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 Graduates

Students returning for a subsequent degree program should submit the Application for Admission. 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 will need to have an evaluation of credit complete prior to beginning their next degree program with CSU.

# VII. Annual Security Report

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## 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, that requires colleges and universities across the United States to disclose information about crime on and around their campuses.

Columbia Southern University's Annual Campus Security Report includes statistics for the previous three years concerning reported crimes that occurred on-campus, in certain off-campus buildings, 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, such as policies concerning sexual assault, and other matters. A link to a copy of the report is included below.

The Annual Security Report can be viewed online at <http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/tuition-financing/federal-student-aid/consumer-information/annual-security-report>

# VIII. Drug & Alcohol Prevention

## 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:
  - » 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
  - » 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

Columbia Southern University (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 <http://www.justice.gov/dea/druginfo/ftp3.shtml>.

#### 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](http://www.adph.org)

#### **National Institute on Drug Abuse**

General Link/Address: [www.nida.nih.gov](http://www.nida.nih.gov)

Specific Link/Address on Club Drugs: [www.clubdrugs.org](http://www.clubdrugs.org)  
310.443.1124

#### **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism**

[www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://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: [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)  
Specific Address for Treatment Programs:  
[findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)  
800.729.6686

#### **Alcoholics Anonymous**

<http://www.aa.org/>

#### **Narcotics Anonymous**

[www.na.org](http://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. The Drug Convictions Policy can be located at <http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/Financial/Office-of-Financial-Aid/Policies-Procedures#drugs>.

# IX. Your Rights Under FERPA

## Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) affords a student certain rights with respect to their educational records. Columbia Southern University (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.
- 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 following:

- 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 Catalog information (electronically and print).

However, FERPA allows schools to disclose student records, without consent, to the following parties:

- 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 expressed 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 United States 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.U.S.A.LEARN (1.800.872.5327)

### Contact Us

Please contact the Office of the Registrar at 800.977.8449 or [registrar@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto: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](#)

## X. Title IX

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### Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination Policy

Columbia Southern University (CSU) affirms its commitment to promote the goals of fairness and equity in all aspects of the educational enterprise. All policies below are subject to CSU's resolution process as detailed below. When the responding party is a member of the CSU community, the resolution process is applicable regardless of the status of the reporting party who may be a member or non-member of the campus community, including students, student organizations, faculty, administrators, staff, guests, visitors, vendors, etc.

Mona McPherson serves as the Title IX Coordinator and oversees implementation of CSU's policy on equal opportunity, harassment, and nondiscrimination. The Title IX Coordinator acts with independence and authority free of conflicts of interest. To raise any concern involving a conflict of interest by the Title IX Coordinator, contact the University Chief Operating Officer (COO) at [chiefoperatingofficer@csegroup.com](mailto:chiefoperatingofficer@csegroup.com). To raise concerns regarding a potential conflict of interest with any other administrator involved in the resolution process, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at (251) 981-3771 ext. 1333 or [mona.mcpherson@csegroup.com](mailto:mona.mcpherson@csegroup.com)

Reports of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation should be made using one of the following options.

- If the discrimination or harassment occurs on campus, campus security should be contacted immediately at 251-981-3771 Ext. 1114.
- If the discrimination or harassment occurs at a CSU sanctioned event, the event coordinator or law enforcement should be contacted immediately.
- If the discrimination or harassment occurs in the classroom (including virtual classroom), the Title IX Coordinator should be contacted immediately.

In situations where sexual violence has occurred, it is strongly recommended that the victim seek immediate medical attention.

To review the full Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination Policy, please click [here](#).

### 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.

# XI. Academic Policies

## Academic Course Load Policy

Columbia Southern University (CSU) expects students to progress through their program of study at a pace in which students can be successful. The majority of CSU students take 7 to 10 weeks to complete a course. CSU encourages continuous, full-time enrollment to ensure timely graduation.

Some students may wish to progress through their program of study at a faster pace. These students are encouraged to work closely with their assigned Academic Advisor, when accelerating course completion beyond the normal course load described below, to develop a plan that will lead to success.

### LifePace Learning Course Load Policy

Normal course load in the LifePace Learning option is 6 semester hours (2 courses) in a given 10-week period. This online learning option allows students to complete their course(s) as quickly as 4 weeks or extend beyond the normal 10 weeks for an additional fee, not to exceed 18 weeks. Students may enroll in 9 semester hours (3courses) concurrently with Academic Advisor approval. Academic Advisors review and approve course load upon submission of the enrollment request, and students requesting to exceed normal course load must meet the following requirements:

- Have completed at least 12 semester hours (undergraduate), or 6 semester hours (graduate), at CSU in current degree program
- Have a minimum established GPA of 3.0
- Maintain reasonable academic progress
- Read and understand the CSU probation, suspension, and dismissal policies

The waiver is granted on an individual enrollment basis and students are expected to meet the above requirements for each waiver approval. The maximum course load allowed is 9 concurrent semester hours.

*\*A full-time load in a ten week period is six semester hours for undergraduate and three semester hours for graduate.*

### Term and Veterans Advantage Course Load Policy

Normal course load in undergraduate and graduate 8 week programs is considered a maximum of 6 semester hours (2 courses). All course loads over normal course load must be reviewed and approved by the Academic Advisor. Course loads are reviewed upon submission of the enrollment request, and students requesting to exceed normal course load must meet the following requirements:

- Have completed at least 12 semester hours (undergraduate), or 6 semester hours (graduate) at CSU in current degree program

- Have a minimum established GPA of 3.0
- Maintain reasonable academic progress
- Read and understand the CSU probation, suspension, and dismissal policies

The waiver is granted on a term-by-term basis and students are expected to meet the above requirements for each waiver approval.

*\*A full-time load in a Term is six semester hours for undergraduate and three semester hours for graduate.*

*Note: Students enrolled in the DBA program should refer to the [DBA Academic Course Load Policy](#).*

## Academic Integrity Policy

### Academic Integrity Definition

Academic integrity demonstrates intellectual honesty by avoiding incidents of cheating, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and/or poor scholarship.

- Plagiarism is defined as representing the words, ideas, or other works of another individual or entity as your own without giving proper credit to the original author or source.
- Cheating is defined as using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, study aids, or computer-related information.
- Self-plagiarism is defined as submitting previously submitted course work that may or may not have received academic credit, without prior approval of the instructor.
- Poor scholarship is defined as an incorrect attempt to give credit to or document the use of an external source.

### Statement of Policy

Ethical conduct is foundational to a successful academic career at Columbia Southern University (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 the ethics that ensure the quality of CSU's academic programs, and thus, is a violation of CSU's Academic Integrity Policy.

The Honor Pledge reads as follows:

I promise or affirm that I will not, at any time, be involved in cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or misrepresentation of sources while enrolled as a student at Columbia Southern University. I have read the Student Code of Conduct Policy and the Academic Integrity Policy, which explains disciplinary procedures that will result from failure to comply with these policies. I understand that violation of the Academic Integrity Policy will result in sanctions, appropriate to the incident and the student record as a whole, that are outlined within this policy.

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

- Using unauthorized materials, electronic or print, or receiving unauthorized assistance during any examination or in connection with any work completed or submitted for academic credit
- Presenting the work or ideas of another as one's own without proper acknowledgement of the source, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form
- Sharing, selling, or buying information related to any graded learning activities
- Using another student's graded work to complete assignment(s)
- Resubmitting, in whole or any portion of, a previously written work by the student without professor consent
- Falsifying or fabricating information
- 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

### APA Guidelines

Students are expected to follow the format 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 works which may include research papers, projects, and other written assignments.

As required by APA writing style, all sources used directly or indirectly (quoted or paraphrased) must be cited within the text and all appropriate sources shall be compiled in a reference list at the end of all applicable written works. Students and faculty should refer to all assignment instructions for specific guidelines. CSU has created the [CSU Citation Guide](#) and other resources to assist students in complying with APA standards. These resources are all located in the myCSU Student Portal under the [Learning Resources](#) tab.

### Sanctions

Violations to the Academic Integrity Policy are a very serious matter and are officially documented in the student's record. Students who are found to be in violation of this policy are subject to sanctions which are based on the severity of the specific violation, in addition to any previous violation(s) identified. Violations are cumulative throughout the student's tenure at Columbia Southern University.

Sanctions include but are not limited to:

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

*Please note: Violations that occur during a final examination are also*

*included in the cumulative number of violations that have occurred in the student's academic record. Final Examination sanctions may include a resubmission opportunity, point deduction, assignment failure, course failure, probation, suspension, and/or a university dismissal and degree revocation.*

### Statute of Limitations

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, it will result in degree revocation.

Students should be aware that dropping or withdrawing from a course in which there is an Academic Integrity violation does not void the violation and that all infractions will be recorded in the student's record.

### Due Process

If a student is found in violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the student is allowed due process and may contest the University's findings. All student appeals should be sent to [studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu) within ten business days of notification of the violation. The appeal will go through the University's student appeals process, pursuant to the Student Appeals Policy.

## Academic Program Improvement Policy

Columbia Southern University (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 has been approved, the New Program Launch Committee (NPLC) shall convene to discuss the communication plan. The NPLC 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

Columbia Southern University (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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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](mailto:Registrar@columbiasouthern.edu) or dial 877.316.0219.

## Accommodation for Disabilities

It is the policy of CSU to provide reasonable accommodation(s) for persons defined as disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and all other local and state requirements dealing with students who have recognized disabilities. A request for reasonable accommodation will be granted provided that the following criteria are met:

- The request for reasonable accommodation is based on individual needs.
- The request does not require a financial burden on CSU that is beyond what is viewed as customary and reasonable.
- The request does not compromise the basic requirements of the course.

The Office of Disability Services serves the special needs of students. It is the student's responsibility to self-disclose a disability to the Office of Disability Services and provide the appropriate documentation from a qualified medical or licensed professional if requesting specific accommodations for services. New students should submit this documentation at least 10 days prior to taking their first class at CSU.

If you have any questions regarding the services provided through the Office of Disability Services please contact us by phone or email at 1-888-785-3005 or [disabilityservices@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@columbiasouthern.edu). Contact or inquiries with this office will not imply a disclosure of a disability.

## Assignment Make-Up Policy

Columbia Southern University (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 Advantage

Students enrolled in the Veterans Advantage 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.

## Complaint and Grievance Policy

Columbia Southern University (CSU) acknowledges that students have the right to seek a remedy for a dispute or disagreement through a comprehensive complaint and grievance procedure.

- A complaint is defined as a feeling of dissatisfaction when a decision or action has been made inconsistently with university policies and procedures, or improper, unfair, arbitrary, or discriminatory treatment\* has occurred.
- A grievance is defined as a complaint for which a mutual resolution has not been achieved through informal mediation at Levels I and II. A grievance must be accompanied by supporting evidence that the decision made at Level II was unjustly rendered.

CSU reserves the right to amend use of the Complaint and Grievance Policy in any circumstance that is deemed necessary by the university. Additionally, should a complaint be against a faculty member or administrator, an opportunity will be provided for the faculty member or administrator to respond to the received complaint in attempt to aid in its resolution.

*\*Students with alleged discrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, sex or veteran's status, should contact the [Title IX Coordinator](#).*

## Complaint Procedure

### Level I

Students may file a complaint by contacting the specific department or faculty member that the complaint is against or by submitting the [Complaint Form](#) within the myCSU Student Portal. Submission of a complaint should take place within ten business days of the occurrence. The student shall be notified that the complaint has been received. A decision shall be rendered and communicated to the student within five business days of receiving the complaint.

### Level II

Students not satisfied with the decision rendered at Level I, should contact the Office of Student Resolution and Conduct, [studentresolution@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:studentresolution@columbiasouthern.edu), within five business days of receiving the Level I decision and request that the decision be considered at a higher level. The student will be informed that the request has been received. The Office of Student Resolution and Conduct will then take this Level II request to the appropriate university official who will provide a secondary review, consideration, and a decision to the student within five business days.

### Level III

Students not satisfied with the decision rendered at Level II may file a formal, written grievance. This grievance must be a letter that is to be sent to [grievance@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:grievance@columbiasouthern.edu) within ten business days of the Level II notification date. The grievant must include the following criteria, as appropriate in this letter:

- The specific university policy or procedure that has been allegedly violated
- Factual information and/or evidence supporting the grievant's views on the alleged violation
- A description of the outcome the grievant seeks

The grievant will be notified that the grievance has been received and the responding university official will then give independent consideration, adjudication, and a written decision about the grievance within seven business days of the notification.

### Level IV

Should the grievant not be satisfied with the decision rendered at Level III, a final review of the grievance decision by the Grievance Committee may be requested in writing to [grievance@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:grievance@columbiasouthern.edu) within ten business days of the Level III notification date. The Level IV decision will be rendered by the Grievance Committee who will conduct a final review of the grievance and will notify the grievant and appropriate university officials, in writing, of their action. The decision of the Grievance Committee is final, and no further appeal will be considered.

Students who wish to file a complaint with an agency, may review agency contact information on the [CSU Website](#). However, it is recommended that students not contact these agencies until they have proceeded through the university's processes for filing a complaint.

## 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 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.

## Final Examination Proctor Policy

Columbia Southern University (CSU) degree programs contain a variety of assignment types and methodologies. Comprehensive questions or exercises evaluate knowledge, skills, and mastery of subject matter prior to and during the final examination. Numerous courses within a program of study may require a final examination; for which, an approved proctor is required. An approved proctor is a credentialed organization, center, or individual who verifies student identity and supervises examination 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 (RP Now), an on-demand, third-party, virtual proctor. Students may choose to use the proctor that is best suited for their final examination needs.

### The following are important facts concerning proctored final examinations:

- Students should request to sit for a final examination during the last two (2) weeks of the course by submission of the "Final Examination Request" located in the myCSU Student Portal.
- Final Examinations must be submitted for grading by 11:59pm, Central Time (CT), on the course end date.
- Valid, government-issued photo identification, such as a driver's license, is required for identity verification prior to examination administration to receive credit for the examination.
- Students are allotted four (4) hours for examination completion, which begins at the time the exam is initially opened. The time allotment is cumulative; therefore, a total of 15 minutes in short breaks may be taken during the examination administration and are included in the time allotment. No materials are allowed to leave or re-enter the testing area.
- Permitted examination materials are provided within the course and examination instructions. Other materials and/or software may be utilized, with the approval of the course professor or Office of Disability Services.
- eTextbooks or PDF textbooks should be accessed on the computer in which the examination is being taken.
- Access to MS Office Suite software or equivalent. All documents should be started on a new page, without any previous formatting.
- Fees incurred by use of proctoring services, Standard Proctoring or Remote Proctor Now (RP Now), are the responsibility of the student.
- Final examinations should be taken in an environment which the student is not likely to be interrupted during examination administration.
- It is recommended that students have more than one approved proctor on file.

### Standard Proctoring

A standard proctor is an unbiased, qualified individual, selected by the student and approved by the University, who agrees to supervise an examination by verifying student identity and ensuring 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 Final Examination 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

- 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

### UNQUALIFIED PROCTOR

- 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

### Proctors are required to complete the following:

- Present valid credentials for proctor certification and provide a valid e-mail address from the organization which employs the proctor.
- Submit a completed "Proctor Agreement Form" to CSU for consideration of approval, along with credential certification. Approved credential certification includes:
  - » Professional business card listing company name and title
  - » Work badge notating title (excluding military identification card)
  - » Teachers Identification or copy of a teaching certificate
  - » Letter from proctor's supervisor or human resource manager, on company letterhead, stating proctor's position and relationship to the student.
- Maintain examination integrity through concealment of the final examination password. The password is delivered to the proctor who enters it into the examination on behalf of the student. At no time is the student allowed to view the password.
- Verify student identity through valid, government-issued, photo identification, prior to examination administration.
- Remain in proximity of the student through final examination completion.

- Confirm adherence to the four (4) hour examination time limit, which begins at the time the exam is initially opened.
- Ensure only permitted examination materials are present in the testing area during the examination. The list of permitted materials are available in the final examination instructions.
- Confirm the student begins all documents with a new page within MS Office Suite software or equivalent.
- Ensure any copies of the final examination are retrieved from the student and disposed of upon exam completion.
- Notify Academic Advising and Student Support Center at [students@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:students@columbiasouthern.edu) should any exam violation(s) occur, as noted in the Exam Violations section of this policy. A detailed description of the violation(s) should be provided along with current proctor contact information.

### Standard Proctoring/Testing Procedures:

- From the myCSU Student Portal, the student will send the "Proctor Information Request" to the desired proctor.
- An e-mail containing a link is delivered to the prospective proctor. The individual will complete the request, attach credential certification, and submit. Please note the link provided is only valid for 14 days; therefore, students will need to resend the invitation once it has expired.
- Academic Advising and Student Support Center notifies both the student and proctor of approval/denial, via email within 2-3 business days.
- Upon approval, the student will submit the "Final Examination Request" located in myCSU Student Portal.
- Academic Advising and Student Support Center will send the final examination password to the proctor within 2-3 business days upon receipt of the request.
- The student and proctor will meet at a pre-determined, mutually convenient time and location for examination administration.
- The proctor must verify student identity by viewing a valid, government issued photo identification and ensure only permitted materials are used during the examination.
- The student will login to Blackboard and click on the "Final Exam" link within the course.
- The proctor will enter the password, guarding against student view.
- The student can begin the examination online or print the final examination and work offline.
- The student will complete the examination within the four (4) hour time allotment.
- Printed copies of the examination must be disposed of upon completion of the examination.

### Remote Proctor Now (RP Now)

RP Now is an on-demand, third-party, virtual proctor which allows students to sit for an examination anytime, anywhere through use of video technology. Students choosing RP Now 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 examination administration; the university does not provide this equipment. During examination administration, RP Now will access the student's webcam, microphone, and desktop in order to record the examination for academic integrity review. Students utilizing YouCam software must adjust webcam settings in order to appropriately take an exam with RP Now. [Technical Support FAQs](#) are available regarding how to manually adjust

webcam settings. Please note a \$19 fee is required upon each examination taken with RP Now. If a student fails to submit payment, they will not be able to proceed with the examination.

### RP Now Proctoring/Testing Procedures:

- Students will request RP Now by submitting "Final Examination Request", located in the myCSU Student Portal. Students should request to sit for a final examination during the last two (2) weeks of the course. A confirmation email will be sent to the student containing a direct link to RP Now. Examinations must be submitted for grading by 11:59pm, Central Time (CT), on the course end date.
- The student will follow the instructions provided by RP Now to effectively register.
- During registration, permissible materials, as previously stated in policy, are to be present in the examination area prior to scanning the area with the webcam.
- Upon successful registration, students will be directed to the login page for Blackboard. Four (4) minutes is provided to login and access the final examination. In the event the time allotment is exceeded, the student is asked if additional time is needed. The registration process may begin again.
- The student will need to click "Insert Exam Password" and then "Submit" to access the exam.
- Upon accessing the examination, refrain from printing it as this action is not allowed with use of RP Now.
- Upon completion of the examination, the student will click 'Submit' and must exit the RP Now browser window to discontinue examination recording.

### Exam Violations

Upon completion of examination administration through RP Now, the recorded video will be reviewed by CSU for student identity verification and academic integrity purposes. Students will be notified of any exam violations that occur, whether through use of RP Now or the Standard Proctoring option, and are provided the opportunity to appeal any findings by following the student appeals process outlined in the Student Appeals Policy.

The following final examination violations 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 RP Now.
- Having access to the final examination password.
- Use of unapproved materials or software/technology.
- Use of the Internet to access any site other than the Blackboard Learning Management System, RP Now 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 testing 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.

- 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 final examination, including natural disasters, emergencies, power or internet outages, etc., the student and/or proctor should contact the Academic Advising and Student Support Center immediately at 877-323-4471. In the event of technical difficulty during an 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](mailto:students@columbiasouthern.edu).

## Grading Policies

Columbia Southern University (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 and review all assignment grades for courses completed at CSU.

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

\*Not recorded on the CSU transcript.

Final course grades of W, I, IP, R, DN, DP, and DC do not generate quality points and are not normally included in the cumulative grade point average (GPA). However, grades of I and R will be calculated to determine Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), which may impact federal student aid eligibility. An IP grade is assigned when a student is in the process of completing a course and does not indicate that the student has been granted additional time to complete course assignments.

### 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. Selected assignments in the DBA program allow seven day grading time periods. Please Note: There may be times in which a grading delay could occur due to extenuating circumstances. These delays will be communicated appropriately.

## Late Assignment Submissions

The following list defines information regarding late 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, 11:59pm CT and comment on another student’s response by Tuesday, 11:59pm CT.
- Assignments not turned in by the deadline will 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.

## Final Course Grade Appeals

Students have the option to appeal a final course grade should the student have reason to believe an error has been made in determining their grade. A final course grade may be appealed once the course end date has lapsed and the final course grade has posted. Individual assignment grade challenges should be addressed to the course professor prior to the course end date and are considered informal.

A student may file a formal final course grade appeal if the following conditions are met:

- The student has attempted to resolve the issue informally with the course professor.

- The grading issues at stake impact the final course grade.
- The student believes that his or her final course grade was assigned contrary to procedures as specified in the course syllabus or was based on bias or caprice.
- All course assignments were submitted.
- The final course grade appeal is filed no later than 10 calendar days from the date the final course grade posted.

Students meeting the above criteria, wishing to appeal a final course grade, are required to complete the [Final Course Grade Appeal Form](#). Along with this form, students should provide all email correspondence with the faculty member showing an attempt to informally resolve the issue and justification supporting the reason for the appeal. The Final Course Grade Appeal Form, email correspondence, and justification should be submitted via email to [studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu), to begin the Level I Appeal pursuant to the [Student Appeals Policy](#).

## Graduation Requirements Policy

Students must successfully complete all degree requirements with passing grades, meet the minimum GPA requirements, 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 sixty (60) semester hours in the associate’s program and 120 semester hours in the bachelor’s program. At least 25 percent of the courses that comprise the program must be completed with CSU, which is a minimum of 15 semester hours (5 courses) in an associate’s program and a minimum of 30 semester hours (10 courses) in a bachelor’s program. Bachelor’s seeking students must also complete 36 upper division semester hours (3000-4000 level). Students must also maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA to be eligible for graduation. Though 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 semester hours. At least 50 percent of the courses that comprise the program must be completed with CSU, which is 18 semester hours (6 courses). Grades below a “C” are not considered passing in the graduate program. 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.

## Graduation with Honors

Students enrolled in baccalaureate degree programs who achieve high level of academic achievement may qualify for honors if certain criteria is met. Honors will be noted both on the students’ diplomas and transcripts.

## Types of Honors

Cum laude signifies a high level of academic achievement in a baccalaureate degree program and graduation with praise. This honor requires a 3.5 – 3.79 cumulative GPA.

Magna cum laude signifies a very high level of academic achievement in a baccalaureate degree program and graduation with great praise. This honor requires a 3.8 – 3.99 cumulative GPA. Summa cum laude signifies the highest level of academic achievement in a baccalaureate degree program and graduation with great praise. This honor requires a 4.0 cumulative GPA.

## Qualifying for Honors

Graduating with honors is a tribute that recognizes academic achievement and represents a student's academic experience. A cumulative "honors GPA" is calculated by combining all coursework attempted at CSU. Students must have no grade lower than a "C"; must have no record of academic integrity violation, and must not have repeated any course taken at CSU due to non-satisfactory grades. Honors designation is not awarded for certificate, associate, and graduate degree programs.

## Letter of Pending Graduation

Students who need to verify that they have graduated or who are scheduled to graduate due to an upcoming promotion board, school admission, or other work-related circumstance may request a Pending Graduation Letter from the Office of the Registrar by submitting the request to [Registrar@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:Registrar@columbiasouthern.edu) or 1.800.977.8449 ext. 6526. A transcript bearing the University seal and signature of the registrar is the official copy of your permanent academic record. A transcript will be provided to you at the time of graduation. Additional transcripts may be obtained by written request to the University.

For a list of 2017 degree conferral dates, please refer to the [2017 Approved Dates for Degree Conferral](#).

*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 will be considered inactive and any tuition being held by the University will be forfeited. Students desiring to return to their studies must be reevaluated and will be subject to any changed academic requirements, tuition increases, and policy changes in force at the time of reenrollment. The student will also be assessed a \$25 reevaluation fee.

*Note: This policy does not apply to students enrolled in the DBA program. DBA students are required to maintain continuous enrollment, as outlined in the [DBA Continuous Enrollment Policy](#).*

## Incomplete Course Policy

Students requesting additional time to successfully complete coursework, in excess of the prescribed enrollment period, may apply for an Incomplete. Requests for an Incomplete should be the exception during a student's tenure; academic progress throughout the course is expected as it promotes student success.

### The following are general facts concerning an Incomplete:

- An Incomplete Course Request form should not be submitted for a course in which assignments need to be re-submitted or if all

assignments have been submitted and/or graded. Refer to the [Assignment Make-up Policy](#) for further information on assignment re-submission.

- 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](#). Students may refer to the [Withdrawal for Special Circumstances Policy](#) should extenuating circumstances prevent course completion.
- Assignments not completed at the conclusion of the Incomplete period will be assigned a grade of zero (0); the final course grade is calculated utilizing the weighted score assigned to each course assignment as indicated in the course syllabus. The final course grade will replace the grade of "I".
- The Incomplete fee is non-refundable. Students may not apply any Title IV or VA funds toward the payment of the Incomplete fee. The fee will be applied at the time the request is processed.
- Students who are unable to complete their course due to an extenuating circumstance may choose to review the Incomplete for Special Circumstances Policy.
- Military students utilizing Tuition Assistance should contact their 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 their final course grade at the conclusion of the Incomplete period.
- To promote academic success, students should request the appropriate amount of time in accordance with the number of remaining assignments required for course completion. Students are encouraged to contact their academic advisor to discuss Incomplete options.

### Incompletes within the LifePace Learning program:

- The request for an Incomplete is to be submitted prior to the original or adjusted course end date. There are three Incomplete options available, each with associated fees: 15 days for \$25, 30 days for \$50, and 60 days for \$100.
- A maximum of 60 days, from the original end date, may be applied in each course. Should additional time beyond the maximum amount of days be needed for an extenuating circumstance, students should refer to the [Incomplete for Special Circumstances Policy](#).
- Students should provide projected completion dates for each remaining assignment upon submission of the request.
- Students may formally request an Incomplete through submittal of the [Incomplete Course Request form](#) or via telephone, chat, or email request to the Academic Advising and Student Support Center.
- A course grade of "I" will be assigned and may affect future course enrollments. Please review the [Academic Course Load Policy](#) for more information.

### Incompletes within Term and Veterans Advantage programs:

- The request for an Incomplete is to be submitted only during weeks six, seven, or eight and/or by the original course or adjusted end date through the [Incomplete Course Request form](#). There are two Incomplete options available, each with associated fees: 30 days for \$50 and 60 days for \$100. In order to be approved for an Incomplete, students must meet the following qualifications:
  - » Undergraduate Level – Course grade average of at least 60%
  - » Graduate Level – Course grade average of at least 70%
- A maximum of 60 days, from the original end date, may be

approved for each course. If the maximum of 60 days is approved, students will no longer be eligible for the Incomplete for Special Circumstances option.

- Students approved for an Incomplete are still expected to meet attendance requirements in the course. Students utilizing Federal Student Aid, should refer to the [Unofficial Withdrawal Policy](#) for more information.
- For purposes of determining earned Federal Student Aid, when a student withdraws from a term, periods of an Incomplete are not considered. A student granted an Incomplete will be required to continue to participate in a course during the original term start and end date or a return of unearned Federal Student Aid may be required.
- Assignment due dates are required upon submission of the request. If more than one assignment remains at the time of the request, each assignment due date should be spaced apart in order to ensure successful completion. Students will be held to the assignment due dates provided on the request form. Students unable to meet the assignment due dates must contact their professor for late submission approval.
- Students approved for an Incomplete will receive a course grade of "I" which may affect future course enrollments, Satisfactory Academic Progress, and Federal Student Aid eligibility. The [Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy](#) and [Academic Course Load Policy](#) should be reviewed regarding how future enrollments could be affected. Students should contact their assigned academic advisor for additional information.
- A course with a grade of "I" will be considered as attempted credits but not earned credits for purposes of calculating a student's pace for Satisfactory Academic Progress. A course grade of "I" will not be calculated in the student's cumulative grade point average.
- Federal Student Aid may be impacted if the student does not make up the Incomplete or if the Incomplete grade converts to a failing grade.
- Students are not eligible for an Incomplete if a course from a previous term has a grade of "I".
- The approval process may take up to five business days. Students will be notified of the approval or denial via email.

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

## Incomplete for Special Circumstances Policy

Columbia Southern University (CSU) recognizes students encounter life situations that may impede academic progress toward degree completion. The Incomplete for Special Circumstances (ISC) is reserved for students who encounter an extenuating circumstance during a course, which inhibits regular, on-time course completion. 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. Students requesting consideration must meet all established qualifications for the Incomplete for Special Circumstances approval.

Under these circumstances, students may also elect to withdraw from the course if it is deemed circumstances may prevent successful course completion. 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](#), as well as the [Withdrawal for Special Circumstances](#)

[Policy](#). In addition, academic advisement should be sought to address all consequential actions prior to submitting a withdrawal request.

### The following are general facts concerning an Incomplete for Special Circumstances:

- The ISC request form, available in the myCSU Student Portal, should be submitted prior to the course end date.
- The ISC request form must be accompanied by relevant supporting documentation, substantiating 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.
- Required submission dates for all outstanding assignments are to be provided by the student when submitting the ISC request. Individual assignment deadlines should be spaced apart to allow adequate study and submission time.
- ISC requests are not automatically granted and must be approved. A maximum of two (2) ISCs will be granted, upon approval, per calendar year. Students are not granted in excess of one (1) ISC per course.
- Successful course progress may be taken into consideration when reviewing the request.
- Students approved for an ISC are not eligible to apply for a standard, paid Incomplete in the event additional time, beyond time already granted, is needed for course completion.
- Students approved for an ISC forfeit the option to withdraw from the course, after the original course end date, pursuant to the [Official Course Drop/Withdrawal Policy](#). Students may refer to the [Withdrawal for Special Circumstances Policy](#) should further extenuating circumstances prevent course completion.
- An ISC request should not be submitted for a course in which assignments need to be re-submitted or if all assignments have been submitted and/or graded. Refer to the [Assignment Make-up Policy](#) for further information on assignment re-submission.
- Assignments not completed at the conclusion of the Incomplete period will be assigned a grade of zero (0); the final course grade is calculated utilizing the weighted score assigned to each course assignment, as indicated in the course syllabus. The final course grade replaces the grade of "I".
- Military students utilizing tuition assistance should contact their education officer if approved for an ISC. Incompletes should be reported to the education office to avoid inaccurate recoupment of funds. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure the appropriate final course grade has posted at the conclusion of the Incomplete period.
- There is no fee requirement for an ISC.

### Incomplete for Special Circumstances for the LifePace Learning Program:

- A maximum of 120 days beyond the original course end date may be requested by the student for review and approval. Approval is subject to meeting requirements outlined in policy and the amount of time granted is based upon the student's documented circumstance.
- A grade of "I" will be assigned to the course and may affect future course enrollments; please review the [Academic Course Load Policy](#) for more information.

### Incomplete for Special Circumstances for Term and

## Veterans Advantage Programs:

- A maximum of 60 days beyond the original course end date may be requested by the student for review and approval. Approval is subject to meeting requirements outlined in policy and the amount of time granted is based upon the student's documented circumstance.
- Students will be held to the submission due dates provided. If the assignments are not submitted by the due dates, the course professor has the discretion to post an assignment grade of zero (0). Students unable to meet the assignment due dates must contact their course professor for late submission approval.
- Students approved for an Incomplete will receive a course grade of "I" which may affect future course enrollments, Satisfactory Academic Progress, and Federal Student Aid eligibility. The [Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy](#) and [Academic Course Load Policy](#) should be reviewed regarding how future enrollments could be affected. Students should contact their assigned academic advisor for additional information.
- A course with a grade of "I" will be considered as attempted credits but not earned credits for purposes of calculating a student's pace for Satisfactory Academic Progress. A course grade of "I" will not be calculated in the student's cumulative grade point average.
- Federal Student Aid may be impacted if the student does not make up the Incomplete or if the Incomplete grade converts to a failing grade.
- For purposes of determining earned Federal Student Aid, when a student withdraws from the term, periods of an ISC are not considered. A student granted an ISC will be required to continue to participate in a course during the original term start and end date or a return of unearned Federal Student Aid may be required.
- Students approved for an ISC are still expected to meet attendance requirements in the course. Students utilizing Federal Student Aid should refer to the [Unofficial Withdrawal Policy](#) for more information. Students utilizing VA benefits must meet attendance requirements by Week 4 of the course, pursuant to the [Attendance Policy](#).

Students meeting required qualifications may request an ISC through submittal of the online Incomplete for Special Circumstances Request Form. Please allow 7 to 10 business days for processing the request.

All questions should be directed to the Academic Advising and Student Support Center at 877.323.4471, or by email at [specialcircumstances@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:specialcircumstances@columbiasouthern.edu).

*Note: The Incomplete for Special Circumstances Policy does not apply to students enrolled in dissertation courses of the DBA program.*

## 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:

### Good Standing (Active)

A minimum cumulative GPA of 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 will automatically be placed on academic probation at any time that his/her cumulative GPA drops below the required minimum.\* A student will remain on academic probation for 12 semester hours (four courses). While on academic probation, a student will have to 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 that the student makes progress towards earning the acceptable GPA during the probationary period, as detailed below:

The student will be removed from probation and placed in good standing if a cumulative GPA, 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 will be placed on suspension. Please refer to the Academic Suspension 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: Students who show substandard academic progress in their first 12 semester hours may be academically dismissed without a probationary period. See the Academic Dismissal Policy for details.*

### Academic Suspension

Should the probationary student fail to demonstrate satisfactory progress, he/she will be academically suspended for a period no less than 10 weeks (LifePace Learning) and one term (Term and Veterans Advantage). A student may request reinstatement after the suspension period has expired. If a second suspension occurs, the student will be 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 must be made to the Registrar no later than one month prior to the desired enrollment period. Reinstatement following academic suspension will be determined by the Reinstatement Committee and is not automatic.

Students who enroll in other colleges or universities while on academic suspension from CSU will not be 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 will return on probation 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](#).*

## 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:

- (a) 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 Business Affairs to calculate the refund.
- (b) 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.
- (c) 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.

## Leave of Absence Policy

Students enrolled in the Term learning option that 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 their academic program and upon return a student will 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 will be 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 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 the myCSU Student Portal. All requests must be submitted a minimum of 3 weeks prior to the start of the term a student will be unable to attend. A temporary LOA from the university will only be granted to a student planning to return to their academic program at the end of the LOA. In addition, for 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 Leave of Absence:

- For purposes of Title IV a student will be considered withdrawn from the University while on a LOA; therefore federal student loans are not eligible for an in-school deferment;
- A student will not be eligible to receive federal student aid while on a LOA;
- A student who fails to return from a LOA will be required to reapply for admissions to the University after a period of 12 months of inactivity in their 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 their 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.

Students should contact their Academic Advisor and the Office of Financial Aid to discuss potential academic and financial implications prior to taking a LOA from their 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](#).

## 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 and
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress in their program of study, as set forth 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 Institutional 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 timeframe. Students must meet all three standards to maintain eligibility for Title IV funds.

### Standard 1: Grade Point Average (Qualitative Measure)

Students must maintain a minimum qualitative measure of progress defined as the cumulative GPA. The requirements are listed below:

- Students in undergraduate programs must maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA.

- Students in graduate programs must maintain a 3.0 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 67 percent 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. Graduate students must achieve a passing rate of a minimum of 50 percent of 0 to 9 attempted credit hours, a minimum of 60 percent of 10 to 18 attempted credit hours and 67 percent of 19 or more attempted credit hours. 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 Timeframe

Undergraduate students must complete their degree program within 150 percent 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 timeframe calculation.

Graduate students must complete their degree requirements within 7 years of study in a specific graduate program. Doctoral students must complete their degree requirements within 10 years of study after completing their first class.

### SAP Policy Notification

Students are notified of the SAP policy in the CSU 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 “WF”. Unofficial withdrawals will count as credit hours attempted when measuring the maximum time frame and quantitative SAP. A grade of “WF” counts as a grade of “F” when measuring qualitative SAP progress.

### 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 timeframe 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.

### **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.

### **Change of Program**

Generally, all periods of enrollment count when assessing satisfactory academic progress. 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's to Bachelor's).

### **SAP Evaluation**

SAP is evaluated after every payment period. Students who fail to meet the CGPA and /or pace of completion requirements of SAP will be notified and will be placed on SAP Financial Aid Warning for one term and are encouraged to work with their academic advisor to discuss enrollment options. A student placed on SAP 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.

### **SAP Warning**

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 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 MTF appeal form completed by the student and 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 credits required for the completion of the degree.

### **Maximum Time Frame Appeal – Multiple Degrees**

CSU includes all attempted hours at a program level (i.e. Associate or Bachelor) as attempted hours when calculating the maximum time frame allowed for degree completion. For example, if a student attempts 120 hours and earns a Bachelor Degree with CSU and wants to pursue a second Bachelor's degree at CSU, all 120 hours will count as attempted hours in maximum time frame calculation of SAP. Students who reach or exceed the maximum time frame allowed while pursuing multiple degrees at the same degree level may have their maximum time frame adjusted if an appeal is granted. The student appeal must include the MTF appeal form completed by the student and student's academic advisor to include expected graduate date and hours required for degree completion and detailed explanation of rationale for pursuing multiple degrees. If the appeal is approved, aid will be awarded only for the remaining credits 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 a negative SAP determination. Appeals should be submitted in writing and addressed to: Columbia Southern University, SAP Appeals Committee, Office of Financial Aid, 21982 University Lane, Orange Beach, AL 36561 or emailed to Attention: SAP Appeals Committee at [financialaid@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:financialaid@columbiasouthern.edu). Appeals without supporting documentation will not be considered. The committee will make every effort to consider each appeal carefully and provide a decision within seven 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.

### **Reinstatement of Financial Aid**

If a student's appeal is denied or a student does not wish to appeal, a student may regain eligibility 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/she successfully completes

enough credits 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 Appeals Policy

Columbia Southern University (CSU) recognizes decisions surrounding Academic and Student Affairs policies and/or other university requirements may be reconsidered on occasion. Students have the right to appeal any university decision based upon an academic policy or university requirement, with the exception of those made in accordance with the Complaint and Grievance or Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policies. Appeals for these decisions follow separate appeal processes.

Students have ten business days from the date of the original decision to file an appeal, outlined in the Student Appeals Process. The decision to approve or deny an appeal is based upon, but not limited to, the following:

- An extenuating circumstance that creates an unrealistic expectation to comply with an academic policy or university requirement
- An improper or unwarranted interpretation or application of academic policy or university requirement that creates an undue hardship

Documentation that may otherwise provide justification directly related to the basis of the appeal

## Student Appeals Process

### Level I. Appeal

- Students appealing a decision should submit a formal letter, identifying the basis of the appeal, directly to [studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu) within ten business days of the original decision. Relevant documentation will be taken into consideration and should accompany the formal letter.
- The appeal will be reviewed based upon the merit of the claim.
- An appeal decision will be sent to the student via e-mail within five business days.

### Level II. Appeal

- Students unsatisfied with the appeal decision may petition for a secondary review to [studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu). Level II Appeals must be received within five business days of the Level I notification date.
- An appeal decision will be sent to the student via email within five business days.

### Level III. Appeal

- Students unsatisfied with the Level II appeal decision may petition for a final review to [studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu). Level III Appeals must be received within five business days of the Level II notification date.
- The Student Appeals Committee will conduct a final review of the appeal. Notification of a decision will be sent within five business days. The decision rendered at this level denotes a final decision.

## Student Code of Conduct Policy

Ethical behavior and conduct is foundational to a successful academic career at Columbia Southern University (CSU). The 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 of CSU. 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:

- Violation of the [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- Disrespect of university personnel
- Inappropriate content posted to discussion boards and other university/social media platforms including but not limited to, harassment, prejudice, stalking, offensive language, threats, abuse, insults, or humiliation. No demeaning comments will be tolerated, including, but not limited to, comments on religion, race, age, sexual orientation, and unwanted sexual advances or intimidations.
- Breaches of privacy, hacking passwords or systems, distribution or copying of copyrighted material, plagiarism, unauthorized distribution of instructional materials to other users, 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

Investigations of the Student Code of Conduct shall be conducted in a prompt and reasonable manner. While an alleged violation is being investigated, interim action may be initiated including, but not limited to removal from course, university-sanctioned events, and other functions, and/or receive 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 ten 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:

- A university official will be designated to review the response.
- If the student has additional documentation to substantiate their denial of the charge, it should be submitted to the designated university official at this time.
- 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 decision rendered.

## Decision

- The decision shall be communicated to the student in writing from the 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 is not limited to, warning, probation, loss of academic credit, suspension, and conduct dismissal.

## Student Appeal

Students that are found to be in violation of the Student Code of Conduct after receiving a decision have the right to appeal within five business days through Level III of the Student Appeals Policy. The student should include justification of why the decision rendered should be overturned, as well as corresponding documentation that will support their request. The appeal decision of the Student Appeals Committee is final and shall be communicated directly to the student.

## 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 Columbia Southern University (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 at the time of admission. CSU reserves the right to require additional sources of identity verification as described in the [Admission Requirements Policy](#). Students sitting for a proctored 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 Examinations

Use of a CSU approved proctor or Remote Proctor Now, a virtual, third-party proctoring service, is required for all final 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 (RP Now), an on-demand, third-party, virtual proctor. Students who elect to use the services of RP Now 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 Website, 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

Columbia Southern University (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 appeals process outlined in the Student Appeals Policy
- Right to file a complaint with the institution pursuant to the [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

Columbia Southern University (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 of CSU Technical Requirements, please click on the following link:

[www.columbiasouthern.edu/Future-Students/Requirements](http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/Future-Students/Requirements)

### 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 (RP Now) 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](mailto:techsupport@columbiasouthern.edu)

**Live Chat**

For Helpdesk availability, please visit the Technical Support page in the myCSU Student Portal by clicking on the link below:

[mycsu.columbiasouthern.edu/student/blackboard/support/](http://mycsu.columbiasouthern.edu/student/blackboard/support/)

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

Columbia Southern University (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

Columbia Southern University (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

Columbia Southern University (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

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

### Printed Textbooks

#### Book Grant

The Book Grant provides printed textbooks to students at no cost contingent upon the student successfully completing the course. Successful course completion is defined as earning a passing grade in the course.

If a student drops, withdraws from, is institutionally withdrawn from, or fails a course, the student will be 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. Students enrolled in the Term or Veterans Advantage learning option should return the textbook if the course is not available in the next consecutive term

Students who do not successfully complete a course should enclose the [Textbook Return Form](#) with the returned textbook. Students who return textbooks without the proper paperwork to identify themselves may not receive credit for the return. Students who do not return textbooks and/or do not pay the textbook charge may not be allowed to enroll in future courses.

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

*Note: Textbooks may be in new or used condition.*

#### Loan-a-Book

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 will be 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. Students enrolled in the Term or Veterans Advantage learning option should return the textbook if the course is not available in the next consecutive term

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

Textbook charges will be 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 will be charged to the student's account.

*Note: Textbooks may be in new or used condition.*

### 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, and take notes directly within the eTextbook.

Students will gain access to the eTextbook in Blackboard, on the course start date. The eTextbook will remain active for 180 days from the initial time the text is accessed. The eTextbook can be printed as much as needed, up to ten pages at a time. Students will be able to purchase a printed version of the eTextbook once the course begins from a third-party vendor link within the eTextbook. The cost of the printed eTextbook will be 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 all other capabilities.

Students should contact their course professors or [CSU Technical Support](#) with any technical issues that may arise.

### Integrated Learning Resources (ILR)

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

## 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.

### Withdrawal for Special Circumstances Policy

Columbia Southern University (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 [Registrar@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:Registrar@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.*

## XII. DBA Academic Policies

*All academic policies outlined within this section of the CSU Student Handbook pertain only to students enrolled in the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program and are intended as a supplement to defined academic policies. Please note: Unless indicated otherwise, DBA students are subject to all aforementioned policies in addition to the policies outlined below.*

### DBA Academic Course Load Policy

Columbia Southern University (CSU) expects DBA students to maintain continuous enrollment and progress through their program at a pace which will promote success. Students at this academic level should be familiar with academic rigor and expectations and should understand what is required of them in their personal and/or professional lives.

Normal course load in the DBA program is 3 semester hours (1 course) per enrollment period. This course load is recommended to promote the best opportunity for success in this program. However, DBA students do have the option to enroll in 6 semester hours (2 courses) per enrollment period, without prior approval, given that they maintain an academic status of Good Standing (3.0 GPA).

Note: If a student's academic status moves to Academic Probation (GPA falls below 3.0), the student is immediately no longer eligible to enroll in 6 semester hours per enrollment period. However, if the student is able to improve their academic status from Academic Probation to Good Standing, the student is once again eligible to enroll in 6 semester hours per enrollment period.

### DBA Admission Requirements Policy

Students wishing to apply for admission into the DBA program should refer to the Admission Requirements Policy, located on the [CSU website](#), for specific admission requirements.

### DBA Candidacy Status Policy

Students earn DBA Candidacy Status following the successful completion of DBA 9101, Comprehensive Exams. Enrollment in DBA 9101, Comprehensive Exams is dependent upon successful completion of all DBA major requirements, which the Office of the Registrar verifies.

### DBA Continuous Enrollment Policy

Students enrolled in the DBA program must maintain continuous enrollment to promote successful degree completion.

In Term and Veterans Advantage learning options, continuous enrollment is defined as enrolling in the subsequent term. For students enrolled in the Life Pace Learning option prior to April 1, 2016, continuous enrollment is defined as enrolling within

two weeks of the current course end date. New students who enroll in the DBA program after April 1, 2016 may only enroll in the Term learning option.

Failure to maintain continuous enrollment will result in dismissal from the program. Dismissal because of lack of continuous enrollment does not exclude students from readmission.

Students who wish to take additional time beyond the requirements outlined above should refer to the DBA Leave of Absence (LOA) Policy.

### 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](#) once the dissertation defense is scheduled with the DBA Academic Program Director.

DBA students must complete a minimum of 61 semester hours with a minimum of 12 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. Grades below a "C" are not considered passing. 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. Honors designation is not awarded for DBA programs.

### DBA Institutional Academic Progress Policy

University policy requires students to maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 in the DBA program. 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.

## Academic Probation

The University may place a student on academic probation due to a violation of academic integrity or if the grade point average (GPA) falls below 3.0. The Office of the Registrar specifies the conditions of academic probation to students in writing. Once placed on academic probation, a student will have six credit hours to raise the GPA to 3.0 or higher.

## Academic Dismissal

A student not achieving a GPA of 3.0 or higher, during the probationary period, is subject to academic dismissal from the program. The Academic Program Director of the DBA Program will determine the enrollment status of a student on academic probation.

A student can appeal an academic dismissal decision or apply for reinstatement from academic dismissal to the Appeals Board through the Office of the Registrar.

## DBA Leave of Absence Policy

Students enrolled in the DBA Program, unable to maintain continuous enrollment, may apply for a temporary Leave of Absence (LOA). University LOA policy allows students the flexibility to take a temporary break from their program. Upon return from a LOA, policy does not require a student to apply for re-admission to the University. This policy does not require the University to dismiss a student from the program because of not maintaining continuous enrollment. The University will not grant a student an LOA in the middle of a term; therefore, for purposes of Title IV, the University considers a student granted a temporary LOA withdrawn during this time. The University expects a student 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. Should circumstances prevent regular on-time course completion within the enrollment period, students will 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 have it approved by appropriate administration. Administration 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 their 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 chair about any special circumstances that arise during this period of their program.*

## 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 10 years from the date of initial enrollment. In some cases, due to extenuating circumstances, an appeal may be made to the DBA Academic Program Director. Supporting documentation describing the extenuating circumstance may be required for consideration.

## XIII. Student Resources

### Division of Student Affairs

The Division of Student Affairs incorporates excellence and innovation in the delivery of student support services that emphasize a student-centered learning environment. Our goal is to effectively remove barriers to student success and build strong, meaningful relationships that will foster life-long learning and provide each student an opportunity to earn degree course credit. CSU's student-centered support services are personal, responsive, and geared toward assisting students achieve their educational goals.

### Academic Advising and Student Support Center

The Academic Advising & Student Support Center at Columbia Southern University engages, inspires, encourages, and supports students through personal, purposeful advising strategies and exceptional, responsive student-centered services, always focused on student success.

The role of the Academic Advisor is to serve as the center point of contact from the beginning to the end of your degree program. Academic Advisors assist with:

- ongoing and regular advising sessions
- course selection
- degree program inquiries
- course pairing and sequencing
- course load
- making sound academic decisions
- resolving issues

Academic Advisors strive to offer exceptional customer service at all times. 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 about their education and future.

The role of the Student Support Specialist is to serve as point of contact for general student inquiries. Specialists are able to 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.

Other Student Support Specialists work diligently to ensure that students remain enrolled throughout their educational career. CSU understands that sometimes submitting an enrollment is not a student's first priority, so this group is here to offer a reminder that an enrollment is needed to keep the degree plan on track.

Student Support Processors are responsible for processing online requests submitted for:

- Final Exams
- Proctors
- Incomplete Course Requests

This group also facilitates the Remote Proctor Now (RP Now) process and will assist students who wish to be proctored onsite.

Working with the Academic Advising & Student Support Center will help keep you on track to timely degree completion.

### Office of the Registrar

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 twice a month, 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 auditors complete audits for students nearing graduation to verify the student has completed all academic requirements of the degree. Auditors also receive and process Commencement registrations.
- The Registrar Support Team responds to student requests, including probation and suspension monitoring, processing transcript requests, receiving official transcripts, monitoring conditional and temporary students, as well as keeping all student records current and up-to-date.

### Office of Student Resolution and Conduct

The Office of Student Resolution and Conduct is available to students who may need assistance in resolving issues related to their educational experience at CSU in a timely and effective manner. It is our goal to listen and discuss questions, concerns, and complaints that may impact your student experience and work collaboratively across university departments to provide resolution.

The Office of Student Resolution and Conduct strives to provide guidance in solving issues informally through directed facilitation. For students who remain dissatisfied, mediation can be provided as well as advisement regarding formal and administrative options of complaint resolution.

For more information on what services are available through the Office of Student Resolution and Conduct, please contact us at [studentresolution@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:studentresolution@columbiasouthern.edu).

## Success Center

### Math & Writing Centers

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 the area of math and writing via phone and email
- Course assistance at the request of professors and students
- Liaison service to the faculty within each course to help students meet objectives
- Learning styles and study skills development that will enhance learning
- Additional assistance to students registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS)
- Learning and instructional resources such as interactive webinars covering math, writing, APA, and basic course concepts
- Readiness self-assessments for math and writing intensive courses
- Individualized math or writing sessions utilizing interactive technology
- Guidance regarding APA citation and the university's academic integrity policy

### 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 by the Success Center must have limits placed on it to ensure that the quality of feedback is at its highest level and so that 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 and teachers so that students can better understand how to function independently as writers in the post-collegiate realm.

To view these guidelines, please click on the following link: [Writing-Center-Guidelines](#)

### Office of 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, CSU is committed to providing students with disabilities the equal opportunity to benefit from its educational programs and services. The mission of the Office of Disability Services (ODS) is to enhance this

experience for students with disabilities. Our goal is to ensure a comprehensively accessible university experience where individuals with disabilities have the same access to programs, opportunities, and activities as all others.

Any student with a disability who wishes to receive accommodations MUST self-disclose with the Office of Disability Services. Documentation guidelines must be followed before a student can receive services.

Please view the [Office of Disability Services Handbook](#) for further clarification for any of the above information.

For additional information, contact the Office of Disability Services at 888-785-3005 or [disabilityservices@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@columbiasouthern.edu).

### Temporary Health Situations

Students who experience temporary health situations such as surgery complications, emergency surgery/ hospitalization, or pregnancy complications should review the Incomplete for Special Circumstances Request in the myCSU Student Portal or contact a special circumstances specialist by e-mail at [specialcircumstances@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:specialcircumstances@columbiasouthern.edu).

## Bookstore Operations

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 in the CSU administrative building in Orange Beach, AL.

## Business Affairs

The Business Affairs Department is responsible for handling CSU student accounts and enrollment request processing.

## Career Services

The mission of Career Services is to provide CSU students and alumni with resources to assist in the achievement of their career related goals.

Services are provided to all students and alumni at no additional charge and include assistance with:

- Job search strategies
- Interview preparation
- Professional correspondence review
- Networking techniques
- Personal online branding guidance
- Direct access to employers across the globe via CareerQuest

Career Services can be reached through email at [careerservices@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:careerservices@columbiasouthern.edu) or by phone at 877-297-6192.

For professional correspondence reviews, please submit your correspondence to Career Services by email at [careerservices@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:careerservices@columbiasouthern.edu). Please allow two to three business days for your correspondence to be reviewed. Career

Services is neither a placement office nor a resume writing service. Career Services provides general information and support to students and alumni to assist in the achievement of career related goals.

## Continuing Education

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 <http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/online-degree/continuing-education>.

## CSU Online Library

The [CSU Online Library](#) is designed to provide students with a broad scope of research options, as well as reference assistance.

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 a group of professional librarians available to assist students with each step of their research journey from topic creation, keyword selection, resource selection, refinement, understanding, organizing, and so on. To better assist students in an online environment there are multiple avenues for library instruction: phone, email, live digital sessions, and chat. CSU librarians provide research assistance during business hours. Ask-a-Librarian chat service is provided 24/7. If students are available to visit the CSU campus, a librarian will be happy to conduct a face-to-face session.

## Helpdesk Technical Support

Technical Support is available in the event difficulties occur or general assistance is needed in determining how to submit a course assignment. The following resources are available to students in the myCSU Student Portal.

- Student Tutorials
  - » How to Submit a Unit Assessment
  - » How to Upload Blackboard Assignments
  - » How to Upload SafeAssign Assignments
  - » How to Respond to a Discussion Board Question
  - » How to Comment on Another Student's Discussion Board Post
  - » How to View Feedback to Essay Questions
  - » Common SafeAssign Errors
- Browser Tools
  - » [Supported Browsers for Blackboard](#)
- FAQ
  - » Frequently Asked Questions

## Military Support Group

With over half of CSU students being military, it is important to us that service members receive the proper support and respect as they move forward in completing their degree with CSU. This support center is available specifically for military students who need assistance with any of the following:

- Tuition Assistance
- Enrolling at the GoArmyEd Portal and AI Portal
- VA Benefits

## Office of Financial Aid

The Office of Financial Aid is responsible for awarding Federal Student Aid to qualifying students.

## Student and Alumni Engagement

The mission of the Student and Alumni Engagement department is to engage alumni and students in mutually beneficial relationships within a shared community that results in lifelong connections to each other and their Alma Mater, and the achievement of career related goals.

Student and Alumni Engagement provides support through the following:

- Coordination of co-curricular communication between students, alumni, faculty, and staff
- Creation and management of clubs and organizations
- Planning and implementation of alumni events in collaboration with the Alumni Association.
- Career Services programs and activities

# XIV. References for Students

## myCSU Student Portal

The [myCSU Student Portal](#) is the gateway to the University. Students have the option to:

- Log into 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, the Office of Disability Services, and the CSU Online Library
- Access [Technical Support](#) resources such as tutorials and Frequently Asked Questions
- And much more

## 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 Columbia Southern University: [Full Course Listing](#). For questions pertaining to courses or prerequisites, students should speak with their Academic Advisor.

## Graduation Information

### Commencement Ceremony

Columbia Southern University holds a commencement ceremony each year. Information regarding an upcoming ceremony will be listed on the [CSU website](#) and Student Portal.

## University Catalog

The Columbia Southern 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 and procedures, and other valuable information.

## CSU Grading Rubric

The Columbia Southern University Grading Rubric is established for all assignments including written response, Discussion Board, and Research Projects. Grading rubrics are located within each course in [Blackboard](#).

## Additional Tutorials & Resources

### Citation Guide

This [Citation Guide](#) will provide 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, this guide will provide 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.

### CSU Success Guide

This [CSU Success Guide](#) is meant to help students navigate the world of online learning. The steps provided in this guide are proven to make students successful in college. In addition, students will learn a little about the history and what makes CSU special.

### 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 Counselor, 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.

# Academic Calendar

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.

## 2016–2017 Term Enrollment

### Track A

Semester	Term	Registration*	FA Documentation Due	Start Date	Drop Date	End Date
Summer	1A17	04/13/16 to 06/21/16	06/14/16	07/06/16	07/12/16	08/30/16
Fall	2A17	06/22/16 to 08/23/16	08/16/16	09/07/16	09/13/16	11/01/16
Fall	3A17	08/24/16 to 10/25/16	10/18/16	11/09/16	11/15/16	01/17/17
<b>Christmas Break – During 3A (12/21/16 to 01/03/17)</b>						
Winter	4A17	10/26/16 to 01/10/17	01/03/17	01/25/17	01/31/17	03/21/17
Spring	5A17	01/11/17 to 03/14/17	03/07/17	03/29/17	04/04/17	05/23/17
Summer	6A17	03/15/17 to 05/16/17	05/09/17	05/31/17	06/06/17	07/25/17

### Track B

Semester	Term	Registration*	FA Documentation Due	Start Date	Drop Date	End Date
Summer	1B17	05/11/16 to 07/19/16	07/12/16	08/03/16	08/09/16	09/27/16
Fall	2B17	07/20/16 to 09/20/16	09/13/16	10/05/16	10/11/16	11/29/16
Winter	3B17	09/21/16 to 11/22/16	11/15/16	12/07/16	12/13/16	02/14/17
<b>Christmas Break – During 3B (12/21/16 to 01/03/17)</b>						
Winter	4B17	11/23/16 to 02/07/17	01/31/17	02/22/17	02/28/17	04/18/17
Spring	5B17	02/08/17 to 04/11/17	04/04/17	04/26/17	05/02/17	06/20/17

## 2017–2018 Term Enrollment

### Track A

Semester	Term	Registration*	FA Documentation Due	Start Date	Drop Date	End Date
Summer	1A18	05/17/17 to 07/18/17	07/11/17	08/02/17	08/08/17	09/26/17
Fall	2A18	07/19/17 to 09/19/17	09/12/17	10/04/17	10/10/17	11/28/17
Winter	3A18	09/20/17 to 11/21/17	11/14/17	12/06/17	12/12/17	02/13/18
<b>Christmas Break – During 3A (12/20/17 to 01/02/18)</b>						
Winter	4A18	11/22/17 to 02/06/18	01/30/18	02/21/18	02/27/18	04/17/18
Spring	5A18	02/07/18 to 04/10/18	04/03/18	04/25/18	05/01/18	06/19/18

### Track B

Semester	Term	Registration*	FA Documentation Due	Start Date	Drop Date	End Date
Summer	1B18	04/12/17 to 06/20/17	06/13/17	07/05/17	07/11/17	08/29/17
Fall	2B18	06/21/17 to 08/22/17	08/15/17	09/06/17	09/12/17	10/31/17
Fall	3B18	08/23/17 to 10/24/17	10/17/17	11/08/17	11/14/17	01/16/18
<b>Christmas Break – During 3B (12/20/17 to 01/02/18)</b>						
Winter	4B18	10/25/17 to 01/09/18	01/02/18	01/24/18	01/30/18	03/20/18
Spring	5B18	01/10/18 to 03/13/18	03/06/18	03/28/18	04/03/18	05/22/18
Spring	6B18	03/14/18 to 05/15/18	05/08/18	05/30/18	06/05/18	07/24/18

\*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](#).

# 2017 Approved Dates for Degree Conferral

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 2017.

MONTH	MID-MONTH	END OF MONTH
JANUARY	12	26
FEBRUARY	9	23
MARCH	15	29
APRIL	13	27
MAY	10	22
JUNE	15	29
JULY	11	24
AUGUST	9	28
SEPTEMBER	14	25
OCTOBER	12	25
NOVEMBER	7	16
DECEMBER	7	21

## XV. Acronyms/Abbreviations

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AA	Associate of Arts	FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
AARTS	Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System	GAE	GoArmyEd
AAS	Associates of Applied Science	GED	General Education Development
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	I	Incomplete
AGI	Adjusted Gross Income	IP	In Progress
AU-ABC	Air University-Associates to Bachelors Cooperative	ISIR	Institutional Student Information Record
BS	Bachelors of Science	LOA	Leave of Absence
BSBA	Bachelors of Science in Business Administration	MBA	Masters of Business Administration
CCAF	Community College of the Air Force	MPN	Master Promissory Note
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation	MS	Masters 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

