



GRADUATE & UNDERGRADUATE

COLUMBIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

STUDENT

# Handbook

2015



COLUMBIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

Published January 2015

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#### **NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY**

CSU provides equal educational opportunity and does not discriminate with respect to race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, physical handicap, age, marital status, gender or status such as a disabled veteran.

#### **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 in our course offerings, curricula, academic policies, and other rules and regulations affecting students without prior notification.

## 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

### 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

The CSU mission rests on the commitment to and achievement of the following core values:

- Integrity, fairness, tolerance, and professionalism in all operations which support our mission;
- Focus on affordable, quality online instruction including undergraduate programs with a general education core that promotes life-long learning and the success of its graduates;
- Receptivity and respect for a diversity of cultures, ideas, experiences, and people by all areas of the university;
- Accessibility, flexibility, and the use of appropriate technology in the delivery of its online programs, services, and operations;
- Encouragement of scholarly pursuit and creative endeavors of students, faculty, and university staff;
- Provide student-centered support services that are personal, responsive, and geared toward assisting students in achieving their educational goals;
- Collaboration with business, industry, the community, and governmental bodies to create affordable and accessible learning opportunities for employees;
- A focus on long-term relationships and serving constituencies with special needs that include members of the armed services, public service employees, law enforcement, fire, and public safety individuals;
- A professional outlook that values innovation, ongoing self-assessment, creative thinking, and a willingness to lead positive educational change;
- Provide staff and faculty with a stable and enjoyable work environment enriched by a family culture of caring, respect, and open communication;
- Fulfill the role of a good corporate citizen through community participation and support.

### 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>

### Accreditation

Columbia Southern University is an accredited member of the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC). The Accrediting Commission of DEAC is listed by the U.S. Department of Education as a nationally 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 and Training Council

1601 18th Street, NW, Suite 2  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 234-5100  
[www.deac.org](http://www.deac.org)

### 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 is licensed by the State of Alabama, Department of Post-Secondary Education 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 [www.columbiasouthern.edu/About-CSU/Accreditation/State-Licensure](http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/About-CSU/Accreditation/State-Licensure).



## 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 (CST)*

#### *Main Office Hours*

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

Academic Advising Center, Student Services,  
and Admissions:

Monday-Friday: 8AM to 7PM

Business Affairs, Office of Financial Aid,  
and Office of the Registrar:

Monday-Friday: 8AM to 5PM

### *Technical Support*

Monday—Friday: 8 AM–11 PM  
Saturday—Sunday: 10 AM–7 PM

### *Accounting/Business Affairs*

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

Phone: 877.323.4472

Fax: 251.224.0570

Main Office Hours

### *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

Main Office Hours

### *Career Services*

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

Phone: 877.297.6192

Main Office Hours

### *CSU Online Library*

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

Phone: 877.268.8046

Online: 24/7

Email: 24/7

### *Learning Partnerships*

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

Phone: 800.344.5021

Main Office Hours

### *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

Main Office Hours

### *Office of the Registrar*

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

Phone: 877.316.0219

Fax: 251.224.0575

### *Office of Student Resolution*

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

Phone: 877.845.7926

Main Office Hours

### *Quality Assurance*

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

Phone: 800.977.8449

Main Office Hours

### *Student Affairs*

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

Phone: 888.758.8614

### *Student and Alumni Engagement*

[CSU-SAE@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:CSU-SAE@columbiasouthern.edu)

### *Student Services and Academic Advising*

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

Phone: 877.323.4471

Fax: 251.224.0550

**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

**CSU Website**

<http://www.columbiasouthern.edu>

**Blackboard Website**

<http://online.columbiasouthern.edu>

**Student Portal**

<http://mycsu.columbiasouthern.edu>

**Holidays**

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

New Year's Day — January 1

MLK Jr. Day — January 19

Fat Tuesday (Mardi Gras) — February 17

Good Friday — April 3

Memorial Day — May 25

Independence Day — July 3

Labor Day — September 7

Veterans Day — November 11

Thanksgiving — November 25–27

Christmas — December 23–25

**Official Mode of Communication**

Columbia Southern University considers email as 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 email address on file with the University. In the event a student's e-mail address is no longer valid, access to myCSU Student Portal may be restricted until such time the address is updated. This policy is officially published within Technology Policies.

Email communications are subject to all applicable university policies, including Student Rights and Responsibilities and Student Code of Conduct policies.

**Student Contact Information**

Students are expected to maintain updated contact information on file with the University. A convenient, online form is available to assist students in remaining current with personal contact information.

**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.

# 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.....	\$210
Graduate† .....	\$275

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 [ColumbiaSouthern.edu/Financial](http://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 Fee-Domestic .....	\$0
Application Fee-International .....	\$0
CSU Online Library Fee (One-Time Fee).....	\$20
Graduation Fee.....	\$75
DBA Dissertation Fee* .....	\$1,200
DBA Research Project Fee** .....	\$900

### Optional Fees

Priority Evaluation Fee.....	\$25
Transcript Request Service Fee .....	\$0
Change of Degree Program / Concentration Fee .....	\$25
In-Program Re-Evaluation Fee .....	\$25
Bachelor to Associate Degree Request.....	\$100
Term Late Enrollment Fee.....	\$50
Return Check Fee.....	\$25
Remote Proctor Now *** .....	\$19
<i>Additional fees may apply for students utilizing the standard proctoring option.</i>	
Official CSU Transcript .....	\$10
Late Payment Fee.....	\$15

\* Dissertation Fee \$1200 to be paid in equal increments of \$300 upon enrolling in DBA 9306A, DBA 9306B, DBA 9306C and DBA 9306D (or Project Fee \$900 paid in equal increments of \$300 upon enrolling in DBA 9406A, 9406B and 9406C)

\*\* \$900 to be paid in equal increments of \$300 upon enrolling in DBA 9406A, DBA 9406B, and DBA 4306D

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

## Incomplete Course Fees

### LifePace Learning:

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

### Term and Veterans Advantage:

45 day .....	\$50
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Fees and shipping & handling charges are non-refundable and 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).

## 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 option or Veterans Advantage option.

The following are for informational purposes as students pursue these benefits:

- Military Tuition Assistance†
- Veterans Affairs Benefits: [VA Benefits](#)
- DANTES Tuition Assistance: [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.

## 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.

## 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 Grant
- \* Federal Direct Loan Program  
Direct Subsidized Loans  
Direct Unsubsidized Loan  
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 from a course or withdraw from their program are encouraged to complete the Course Drop/Withdrawal Form located in 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 business days. All students who drop/withdraw from a course after the drop date (7 calendar days for a course in the Term option or Veterans Advantage option and 2 calendar days for a course in the LifePace Learning option) 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. 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.

Tuition Due Student in the:

- 1st week: 100%
- 2nd week: 80%
- 3rd week: 60%
- 4th week: 40%
- 5th week: 20%
- 6th week: 0%

### Arkansas State Refund Policy

The Arkansas State Refund Policy applies when students who are residents of Arkansas withdraw, drop, or are administratively dropped from a course or the institution.

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
More than 75%	No Refund

### Indiana State Refund Policy

The Indiana State Refund Policy applies when students who are residents of Indiana withdraw, drop, or are administratively dropped from a course or the institution.

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
More than 75%	No Refund

### Iowa State Refund Policy

The Iowa State Refund Policy applies when students who are residents of Iowa withdraw, drop, or are administratively dropped from a course or the institution and is calculated as follows:

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

### Maryland State Refund Policy

The Maryland State Refund Policy applies when students who are residents of Maryland withdraw, drop, or are administratively dropped from a course or the institution.

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 but not including 60%	20% Refund
More than 60%	No Refund

### Mississippi State Refund Policy

The Mississippi State Refund Policy applies when students who are residents of Mississippi withdraw, drop, or are administratively dropped from a course or the institution.

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%	50% Refund
25% up to but not 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 and Bachelor Degree Programs)	Graduate (MS and MBA Pro- grams)
Full-Time	6 credits +	3 credits +
Half-Time	3 credits	N/A

# 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

Providing the most flexibility, LifePace Learning allows you to start your degree program and courses at any time. This option provides an individualized learning approach allowing you to establish a suitable pace for course completion. Courses can be completed in as early as 4 weeks or as long as 18 weeks. There are no weekly deadlines between the start and end of the course, allowing LifePace Learning to fit around your schedule. (Note: Specific details and restrictions for course completion are available on the CSU website at <http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/LifePace>).

**Qualifications:** LifePace Learning is available for all degree programs. You are eligible to enroll in the LifePace Learning option if you are not using Federal Student Aid, the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB), or Post-911 GI Bill benefits as funding options.

## Term

Term is an asynchronous online learning option that allows you to study, participate in discussions, and complete assignments and other course components in a dynamic environment. Terms start almost every month allowing you to quickly begin or continue your degree program. Courses provide a structured framework that facilitates on-time course completion with scheduled weekly assignment due dates.

**Qualifications:** The Term option is available for all programs. All students are eligible to enroll in the Term option. However, if you are utilizing Federal Student Aid, you are required to enroll in this online learning option.

To learn more about the Term option, visit <http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/Term-Enrollment>

## Veterans Advantage

Providing alternative online learning options for those utilizing military benefits, the Veterans Advantage option combines flexibility with scheduled term start and end dates that coincide with the Academic Calendar. These courses have limited submission deadlines allowing you the flexibility to fit courses around your changing schedule.

**Qualifications:** Veterans Advantage is available for all courses. You are only eligible to enroll in this option through utilization of Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) or Post-911/GI Bill benefits.

To learn more about the Veterans Advantage option, visit <http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/Veterans-Advantage>

## 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

## Changing Degree Programs

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

Change Degree Program.....	\$25
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, CSU will review your file and provide you a new applicant evaluation report detailing which of the new program courses will be required of you. Additionally, this report will indicate if any of the courses you have previously taken through CSU will apply. Your new evaluation will be subject to current CSU Catalog requirements.

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

## 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 Certificate Transfer Request form. Students will be issued the certificate for completion of all courses required in a certificate program.

## 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 associates degree. Students enrolled in a bachelor's degree program may petition for the corresponding associate's degree upon qualification. Qualification information and the Bachelor to Associate Degree Request Form are located in myCSU Student Portal.

## Course Transfer Request

Students wishing to transfer completed courses into their program of study at CSU should submit the Course Transfer Request form.

### Transfer Requirements:

- Official transcripts should be requested from each institution in which a course is being considered for transfer; the Course Transfer Request will not be processed until all official documents are received by the Office of the Registrar
- Courses being considered must have similar content to those offered at CSU
- Credits must have been earned at a 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

## Returning Students

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 military transcripts, 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. Returning students cannot enroll under temporary status unless they are utilizing veterans benefits.

## Re-Admission

Students in an inactive status or those formally withdrawn from the institution will submit the 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.



## 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.

## Institutional Transcript Request

Students may request an official transcript from the University by submitting the CSU Transcript Request Form. Please note only transfer credit submitted to the University via official documents will be included on the CSU transcript. Unofficial transfer credit is not notated on the CSU transcript. The transcript will be delivered to the institution or individual notated on the submitted form.

# 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/Financial/Office-of-Financial-Aid/Consumer-Information>

# 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:
  - a. The number of drug and alcohol related violations and fatalities that occur on the campus, or as part of any of the institution's activities and are reported to campus officials, and
  - b. The number and type of sanctions that are imposed by the institution as a result of drug and alcohol-related violations and fatalities on the institution's campus or as part of any of the institution's activities.

## Drug and Alcohol Policy

### I. Standards of Conduct

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/acas/codeofalabama/1975/21502.htm> — [Alcohol](#)
  - o Sections 28-1-1, 28-1-5, 28-4-20, and 28-3A-25
- <http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/acas/CodeOfAlabama/1975/coatoc.htm> — [Drug Offenses](#)
  - o Sections 13A-12-211 to 215, 13A-12-250, 13A-12-260
- <http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/acas/CodeOfAlabama/1975/coatoc.htm> — [Public Intoxication](#)
  - o Section 13A-11-10
- <http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/acas/CodeOfAlabama/1975/coatoc.htm> — [Driving while under the influence](#)
  - o 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.

### *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*

[www.alcoholics-anonymous.org](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org)

### *Narcotics Anonymous*

[www.na.org](http://www.na.org)

[www.24houraddictionhelp.com](http://www.24houraddictionhelp.com)

## 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
- Purpose of the disclosure
- Records that may be disclosed
- The party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made
- Signature and date

Recently, the FERPA regulations have been amended to allow that request to be made electronically. In addition to the aforementioned information, the consent form must:

- Identify and authenticate a particular person as the source of the electronic consent; and
- Indicate that person's approval of the information contained in the electronic consent.

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. Students are informed of those instances where FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent in the Catalog information (electronically and in 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. 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.

## YOUR RIGHTS UNDER FERPA

### FERPA Compliance

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

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

### Contact Us

Please contact the Office of the Registrar at 800.977.8449 or [registrar@columbiasouthern.edu](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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Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education. It reads: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

--Legal Citation: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. Part 106 (Title IX)

## Statement of Policy

It is the policy of Columbia Southern University to prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, sex or veteran’s status in regard to the administration of all programs, services and activities.

To ensure compliance with Title IX, the President of the University has designated the Title IX Administrator as the primary contact responsible for developing, adopting and/or assuring the dissemination of the University’s nondiscrimination policy and for making the policy available to the University community, to include students, faculty, staff, and to the public.

## Contact Information

Columbia Southern University students, faculty, and staff with inquiries concerning the application of Title IX to the University’s programs and activities, or for inquiries regarding allegations of discrimination or grievances concerning Title IX, are encouraged to contact:

Mona McPherson, B.S.  
Title IX Administrator  
21982 University Lane  
Orange Beach, AL 36561  
877.729.0718  
[mona.mcpherson@csegroup.com](mailto:mona.mcpherson@csegroup.com)

# 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 seven (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 four weeks or extend beyond the normal 10 weeks for an additional fee, but not to exceed 18 weeks. Students may enroll in 9 semester hours (3 courses) concurrently with Academic Advisor approval and must meet the following criteria:

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

- Must have a minimum established GPA of 3.0
- Must be maintaining 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

In order to promote the best opportunity for success, DBA students may enroll in a maximum of 3 semester hours concurrently.

*Note: 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 master's degree programs is considered a maximum of 6 semester hours and 3 semester hours for the DBA program. The Academic Advisor must approve all course loads over normal course load. Students requesting to exceed normal course load must submit the Course Load Waiver form and meet the following requirements:

Must have completed at least 12 semester hours at CSU in current degree program

- Must have a minimum established GPA of 3.0
- Must 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 student may not take courses in overlapping terms. Course grade reports will be issued at the end of the term.

In order to promote the best opportunity for success, DBA students may enroll in a maximum of 3 semester hours concurrently.

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

## Academic Integrity Policy

### Academic Integrity Definition

Academic Integrity is the demonstration of intellectual honesty by avoiding incidents including but not limited to cheating and/or plagiarism.

**A violation of the Academic Integrity policy includes, but is not limited to:**

- Using unauthorized materials (electronic or print) or receiving unauthorized assistance during an examination or in connection with any work completed (or submitted) for academic credit.
- Taking the work of another and offering it as one's own without proper acknowledgement of the true source, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form.
- Unauthorized collaboration on a project, homework, or other assignment unless otherwise allowed by a course instructor.
- Sharing, selling, or buying information related to any graded learning activities.
- Using another student's graded work to complete assignment without professor consent.
- Using professor feedback for another student as the basis for an essay response.
- Resubmitting any portion of a previously written work by the student without professor consent. Falsifying information.
- Accessing or using unauthorized materials (electronic or print) and/or websites.
- Use of an alternate, stand-in, or proxy during an examination.
- Use of sources deemed as inappropriate by the professor.
- Actions by a proctor or student deemed as inappropriate per CSU Final Exam Policy and procedures.



### APA Guidelines

Students are expected to follow the format of The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2009, 6th edition). The APA Publication 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, all sources used (directly or indirectly) must be referenced within the text and all appropriate sources shall be compiled together at the end of all applicable written works. Students and faculty should refer to all assignment instructions for specific guidelines. CSU has created a [Citation Guide](#) and other resources to assist students in complying with APA standards. These resources are all located in the student portal linked to the Learning Resources tab.

### Sanctions

Columbia Southern University regards violations to the Academic Integrity Policy as a very serious matter. Students who are found to be in violation of the Academic Integrity Policy are subject to penalties, which are based on the specific incident. The consequences can include point deductions, course failure, 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, either during the time in which the course in question is being offered or after the course has ended (and after the student has graduated.)

### 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 [academicintegrityappeal@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:academicintegrityappeal@columbiasouthern.edu) within seven calendar days of notification. The appeal will go through the university's student appeals process.

## 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 web site. 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 Administrator](#).*

## 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, [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 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, students should not contact these agencies unless 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 Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.

## 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 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.

## DBA Candidacy Status Policy

Students will have earned DBA Candidacy Status following the successful completion of either DBA 9101-Comprehensive Exams or DBA 9201-Comprehensive Review, depending on which option that students are enrolled within their program.

## DBA Continuous Enrollment Policy

The doctoral program requires students to maintain continuous enrollment to promote successful degree completion. Students enrolled in the LifePace Learning option must enroll within 2 weeks of their current course end date, and students enrolled in the Term or Veterans Advantage options must enroll in the subsequent term. Failure to maintain continuous enrollment will result in dismissal from the program. Dismissal due to 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 Leave of Absence (LOA) Policy.

## Final Examination Proctor Policy

Columbia Southern University (CSU) degree programs contain a variety of assignment types and methodologies. Comprehensive sets of questions or exercises are used to 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 defined as 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 elect to choose one or a combination of both available proctoring options based upon individual 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 "Request to take Final Examination Online Form" located in the myCSU Student Portal.
- Final Examinations must be submitted for grading by 11:59pm, Central Standard Time (CST), 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.
- Compliance with all identified final examination violations is required, as noted in the Exam Violations section of this policy.
- 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.
- Use of examination materials includes only a writing utensil, blank scratch paper, a course textbook or e-book, and a calculator. Online calculators or other software may be utilized, with the approval of the course professor or Office of Disability Services. Other materials are not permitted unless specified in the examination instructions or course syllabus.

- 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:

- Present valid credentials for proctor certification and have a valid e-mail address, preferably 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.
- Verify use of materials includes only a writing utensil, blank scratch paper, a course textbook or e-book, and a calculator. Online calculators may be utilized, with the approval of the course professor. Other materials are not permitted unless specified in the examination instructions or course syllabus.
- 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 Student Services 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.
- Student Services notifies both the student and proctor of approval/denial, via email within 2-3 business days.
- Upon approval, the student will submit the "Request to take Final Exam Online Form" located in myCSU Student Portal.
- Student Services 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. 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 "Request to take Final Exam Online Form", 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 Standard Time (CST), 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 registration process begins again.
- A password will be required to access the examination. Therefore, the student will need to click "Insert Exam Password" and then "Submit."
- 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.
- Use of materials or unapproved software/technology, other than a writing utensil, blank scratch paper, course textbook or e-book, calculator, or other examination specific materials outlined in the final examination instructions or course syllabus.
- Use of the Internet to access any site other than the Blackboard Learning Management System or RP Now Proctoring System, unless otherwise approved or stated in the examination instructions or course syllabus.
- Speaking with another individual or receiving unauthorized assistance regarding the final examination.
- Use of a cellphone or other technology in addition to the computer that is being used for 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.
- Lack of remaining visible 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 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 Student Services 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 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:

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
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

Final course grades of W, I, 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.

## 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 assignments types (e.g., research paper, case study, article critique). The rubrics are located in Blackboard with the assignment 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 is also a non-functional scoring rubric for written response assessment items for student review located within the [myCSU Student Portal](#). Faculty apply this rubric in scoring assessment items and provide feedback in the assessment.

## 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 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, Midnight (Central Time) and comment on another student's response by Tuesday, Midnight (Central Time).

- 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 Policy for Student Appeals.

## Graduation Requirements Policy

To graduate from Columbia Southern University, certain requirements must be met for degree conferral. 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.

## Undergraduate Requirements

Students enrolled in an undergraduate program must complete at least twenty-five (25) percent of the courses that comprise the

program 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. 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 at least 50 percent of the courses that comprise the program with CSU, which is 18 semester hours (6 courses). DBA students must complete 85 percent of the courses that comprise the program with CSU, which is 52 semester hours (17 courses plus DBA orientation). 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

In order for a student enrolled in a bachelor's degree program to graduate summa cum laude, magna cum laude, or cum laude honors, they must earn the following cumulative GPA:

Summa cum laude.....	4.0 cumulative GPA
Magna cum laude.....	3.8-3.99 cumulative GPA
Cum laude.....	3.5-3.79 cumulative GPA

Graduates must have no grades lower than a "C", and must not have repeated any course taken at CSU due to non-satisfactory grades. Honors are not awarded for graduate degree programs.

## Transcripts

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.

## Requesting a Transcript

Once a student has completed the first three credit hour course and course tuition is paid, the student may request an official CSU transcript. A \$10 transcript fee applies. A CSU transcript may be requested by using the Transcript Request Form. Please allow seven to 10 business days for processing.

The transcript will be sent as a sealed official transcript to the institution or person indicated on the Transcript Request Form. An unofficial transcript may be faxed if indicated on the request form. Please note, the \$10 transcript processing fee still applies whether the transcript is issued as official or unofficial.

## 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.

## Incomplete Course Policy

### LifePace Learning

Students requesting additional time, in excess of the prescribed enrollment period, to successfully complete coursework may apply for an Incomplete. Requests for an Incomplete should be the exception during a student's tenure; academic progress throughout coursework is expected as it promotes student success. Should circumstances prevent regular, on-time course completion, within the enrollment period, students meeting outlined criteria have the option to request an Incomplete or withdraw from the course. Academic and financial consequences should be noted when withdrawing from a course beyond the first week of the enrollment period. Prior to submitting the withdrawal request, students are advised to review the Course Drop/Withdrawal Policy; in addition, academic advisement should be sought.

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

- 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. Incomplete(s) cannot exceed sixty (60) days in length for each course.
- Students approved for an Incomplete forfeit the option to withdraw from the course, under the Course Drop/Withdrawal Policy; however, students may refer to the Withdrawal for Special Circumstances Policy should extenuating circumstances prevent course completion. Students may formally request an Incomplete through submittal of the Incomplete Course Request form or via telephone request to Student Services.
- A course grade of "I" will be assigned and may affect future course enrollments; academic advisement should be sought to discuss course load.
- Assignments not completed at the conclusion of the course 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.
- Fees associated with an Incomplete are non-refundable.

Students may submit an Incomplete Course Request Form through the myCSU Student Portal or via telephone request to Student Services. Students are expected to set realistic goals and timelines to complete outstanding course assignments. The approval process may take up to three (3) business days. Students will be notified of the status of the request via email; the correspondence will denote approval or denial. Students who are unable to complete their course due to an extenuating life circumstance, may choose to review the Incomplete for Special Circumstances Policy.

### Term and Veterans Advantage

Students requesting additional time, in excess of the prescribed enrollment period, to successfully complete coursework may apply for an Incomplete. Requests for an Incomplete should be the exception during a student's tenure; academic progress throughout coursework is expected as it promotes student success. Should circumstances prevent regular, on-time course completion, within the term period, students meeting outlined criteria have the option to request an Incomplete or withdraw

from the course. Academic and financial consequences should be noted when withdrawing from a course beyond the first week of the term period. Prior to submitting the withdrawal request, students are advised to review the Course Drop/Withdrawal Policy; in addition, academic advisement should be sought.

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

An Incomplete may be granted in accordance with the following matrix:

Additional Time Allotment	Qualification		Fee
45 Days	<i>Undergraduate</i> Course grade average of 60 percent	<i>Graduate</i> Course grade average of 70 percent	\$50
	Students cannot have a grade of "I" from a previous term.  Request for an Incomplete is to be submitted on or before the end date of the course, and only during weeks six, seven, or eight.		

- Students may only be approved for one (1) 45-day Incomplete per course.
- Students approved for an Incomplete forfeit the option to withdraw from the course, under the Course Drop/Withdrawal Policy; however, students may refer to the Withdrawal for Special Circumstances Policy should extenuating circumstances prevent course completion with an existing Incomplete. All requests are subject to approval by the course professor.
- A plan to complete outstanding course assignments must be presented by the student at the time of the request and followed. Assignment due dates are required; if more than one assignment remains at the time of the request, each assignment due date should be spaced one week apart in order to ensure successful completion.
- Students approved for an Incomplete must submit assignments for Units 6, 7, or 8 per the Unofficial Withdrawal Policy; failure to do so will result in a grade of "WF" as the final course grade.
- Students approved for an Incomplete will receive a course grade of "I" which may affect future course enrollments, Satisfactory Academic Progress hours attempted and Federal Student Aid (FSA) eligibility.
- 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".
- Fees associated with an Incomplete are non-refundable.

#### The following qualifications have been established to apply for an Incomplete:

- Students are required to formally request an Incomplete through submittal of the Incomplete Course Request form.
- Successful course progress at the time of the request is required. Students unable to meet the revised assignment due dates must contact their professor for late submission approval.
- Students should submit valid justification as to why the course could not be completed on schedule. Supporting documentation may be requested by the University.



Students who meet qualification criteria must submit an Incomplete Course Request Form through the myCSU Student Portal. Students are expected to set realistic goals and timelines to complete outstanding course assignments. The approval process may take up to three (3) business days. Students will be notified of the status of the request via email; the correspondence will denote approval or denial. Students who are unable to complete their course due to an extenuating life circumstance, may choose to review the Incomplete for Special Circumstances Policy.

## Incomplete for Special Circumstances Policy

### LifePace Learning

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. 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 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 the withdrawal request. Students requesting consideration must meet all established qualifications for Incomplete for Special Circumstances approval.

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

#### General Facts:

- An ISC, up to 120 days beyond the original course end date, is available upon qualification and approval. The amount of time granted is contingent upon the student's documented circumstance.
- Successful course progress may be taken into consideration when reviewing the request.
- 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. Refer to the Assignment Make-up Policy for further information on assignment re-submission.
- A maximum of two (2) ISC's will be granted, upon approval, per calendar year. Students are not granted in excess of one (1) ISC per course.
- ISC requests are not automatically granted and require approval.
- The decision to grant the request is based upon the student's justified hardship.
- Relevant support documentation should be provided to substantiate the hardship.
- 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.
- There is no fee requirement for an ISC.

#### Academic Facts:

- Students approved for an ISC forfeit the option to withdraw from the course, under the Course Drop/Withdrawal Policy;

however, students may refer to the Withdrawal for Special Circumstances Policy should further extenuating circumstances prevent course completion.

- A grade of "1" will be assigned to the course and may affect future course enrollments; please review the Course Load Policy for further clarification. In addition, the grade point average (GPA) and federal student aid (FSA) eligibility could be affected.
- Assignments not completed by the granted 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.
- All course requirements must be satisfied within the allotted time period; additional time will not be granted.

### The following qualifications have been established for an Incomplete for Special Circumstances application:

- A documented, extenuating circumstance will occur or has occurred during the duration of the course which will inhibit or has inhibited 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.
- The ISC request should be submitted prior to the course end date. Requests made after the end date will be considered on the basis of the circumstance.
- The ISC request should be accompanied by relevant support 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. Students should submit documentation within three (3) days of the request or notify [specialcircumstances@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:specialcircumstances@columbiasouthern.edu) of the date documentation will be available. Additional or alternate documentation may be requested for verification purposes.
- Required submission dates for all outstanding assignments are to be identified by the student when submitting the request. Individual assignment deadlines should be spaced apart, weekly, to allow adequate study and submission time.

Students meeting required qualifications may request an ISC through submittal of the online Incomplete for Special Circumstances Request Form. Upon receipt of all documentation and individual assignment deadlines, the request will be reviewed and a decision will be reached within five (5) business days.

All questions should be directed to the Student Services Department at 800.977.8449 ext. 6537, or by email at [specialcircumstances@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:specialcircumstances@columbiasouthern.edu).

### Term and Veterans Advantage

Columbia Southern University (CSU) recognizes students encounter life situations that may impede academic progress toward degree completion. The Incomplete for Special Circumstances (ISC) is for students encountering an extenuating circumstance, during a course, which inhibits regular, on-time course completion. 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

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 the withdrawal request. Students requesting consideration must meet all established qualifications for Incomplete for special circumstances approval.

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

#### General Facts:

- An ISC, up to 60 days beyond the original term end date, is available upon qualification and approval. The amount of time granted is contingent upon the student's documented circumstance.
- Successful course progress may be taken into consideration when reviewing the request.
- 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. Refer to the Assignment Make-up Policy for further information on assignment re-submission.
- A maximum of two (2) ISC's will be granted, upon approval, per calendar year. Students are not granted in excess of one (1) ISC per course.
- ISC requests are not automatically granted and require approval from the course professor.
- The decision to grant the request is based upon the student's justified hardship.
- Relevant support documentation should be provided to substantiate the hardship.
- Students approved for an ISC are not eligible to apply for a standard course Incomplete in the event additional time, beyond time already granted, is needed for course completion.
- There is no fee requirement for an ISC.

#### Academic Facts:

- Students approved for an ISC forfeit the option to withdraw from the course, under the Course Drop/Withdrawal Policy; however, students may refer to the Withdrawal for Special Circumstances Policy should extenuating circumstances prevent course completion.
- A grade of "1" will be assigned to the course and may affect future course enrollments; please review the Course Load Policy for further clarification. In addition, the grade point average (GPA) and federal student aid (FSA) eligibility could be affected.
- Assignments not completed by the granted 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.
- All course requirements must be satisfied within the allotted time period; additional time will not be granted.
- Students approved for an ISC are still expected to participate during the adjusted period by submitting assignments in Units 6, 7, or 8 per the Unofficial Withdrawal Policy; failure to do so may result in a grade of "WF" as a final course grade.
- The following qualifications have been established for an Incomplete for Special Circumstances application:
- A documented, extenuating circumstance will occur or has occurred during the duration of the course which will inhibit or has inhibited 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.

- The ISC request should be submitted prior to the course end date. Requests made after the end date will be considered on the basis of the circumstance.
- The ISC request should be accompanied by relevant support 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. Students should submit documentation within three (3) days of the request or notify [specialcircumstances@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:specialcircumstances@columbiasouthern.edu) of the date documentation will be available. Additional or alternate documentation may be requested for verification purposes.
- Required submission dates for all outstanding assignments are to be identified by the student when submitting the request. Individual assignment deadlines should be spaced apart, weekly, to allow adequate study and submission time.

Students meeting required qualifications may request an ISC through submittal of the online Incomplete for Special Circumstances Request Form. Upon receipt of all documentation and individual assignment deadlines, the request will be reviewed by the course professor and a decision will be reached within five (5) business days.

All questions should be directed to the Student Services Department at 800.977.8449 ext. 6537, or by email to [specialcircumstances@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:specialcircumstances@columbiasouthern.edu).

## 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: This does not apply to students enrolled in doctoral programs. Doctoral requirements are noted below.*

*\*\*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.*

### Doctoral Programs

A doctoral student may be placed on academic probation due to violation of academic integrity or whenever his/her grade point average (GPA) falls below 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. The conditions of academic probation are specified to the student in writing by the Office of the Registrar. Once placed on academic probation, a doctoral student has six credit hours to raise his/her GPA to 3.0 or higher. If a doctoral student does not achieve a GPA of 3.0 or higher, he/she is subject to academic dismissal from the program. The conditions of academic probation are submitted to the Program Director of Doctoral Programs by the Office of the Registrar. The Program Director of Doctoral Programs, with appropriate consultation, will determine the enrollment status of the student.

### 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.

*Note: Academic Suspension Policy does not apply to students enrolled in doctoral programs.*

### 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.

## 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 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. Doctoral students who are enrolled in the Term option may request to take a LOA for one term only within a 12 month period not to exceed three terms during their academic program. Doctoral students who are enrolled in the LifePace Learning option may request to take a LOA for one enrollment period within a 12 month period not to exceed three enrollment periods during their academic program. A student may return from a LOA early and resume enrollment in the next available term or enrollment 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, Graduate and Doctoral 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.

## 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 do not appear on student's official transcript nor do they 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 Institutional Academic Progress Policy.

## Policy for Student Appeals

Columbia Southern University 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 decision made based upon an academic policy or university requirement. The decision to approve or deny an appeal will be 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

Students have 5 business days from the date of the original decision to file an appeal, outlined in the Appeals Process. Appeals will be categorized as academic or administrative and follow the appropriate appeal track. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) decisions and Student Complaint and Grievances have specific appeal processes; therefore, exempt from the Policy for Student Appeals. The scope of the Policy for Student Appeals is limited to requests to reconsider a decision



made in alignment with Academic and Student Affairs policies and/or other university requirements. In the event students wish to file a complaint, please refer to the Student Complaint and Grievance Policy.

## Appeals Process

### Level I. Appeal

- \* Students appealing a previous decision should submit a formal letter, identifying the basis of the appeal, directly to [studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu) within 5 business days of the original decision. Relevant documentation will be taken into consideration and should accompany the formal letter.
- \* An appeal decision will be sent to the student via e-mail within 5 business days.

### Level II. Appeal

- \* Students unsatisfied with the appeal decision may petition to the Student Resolution Manager, [studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu). Level II Appeals must be received within 5 business days of the Level I notification date.
- \* The Student Resolution Manager will conduct a secondary review of the appeal and notify the student of the Level II decision within 5 business days.

### Level III. Appeal

- \* Students unsatisfied with the Level II appeal decision may petition to the appropriate vice provost, [studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu). Level III Appeals must be received within 5 business days of the Level II notification date.
- \* The assigned vice provost will conduct a final review of the appeal. Notification of a decision will be sent within 5 business days. The decision rendered by the assigned vice provost denotes a final decision.

## 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 Code of Conduct

Ethical conduct is the foundation upon which a successful academic career at Columbia Southern University rests. 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 the ethics that are the basis of Columbia Southern University's Student Code of Conduct and is subject to disciplinary actions.

It is each student's responsibility to know and comply with the Student Code of Conduct and other Academic and Student Affairs policies of Columbia Southern University. Students are expected to demonstrate honesty and integrity when interacting with faculty, staff and other students of the university.

Students should reference the Academic Integrity Policy to understand expectations of academic honesty in submitting assignments with appropriate references for work that is not the student's own.

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

- Academic dishonesty to include plagiarism, collusion, and/or cheating
- Disrespect for university faculty and staff
- Inappropriate content posted to discussion boards and other university forums
- 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

Students will receive written notice in the event that the university deems the student's conduct warrants disciplinary action and/or expulsion. Students dismissed due to misconduct will be withdrawn from enrolled courses effective on the dismissal date. A grade of W will be recorded in the student's record. Conduct dismissals are not eligible for tuition refunds. Students have the right to appeal the university's decision within 10 business days by submitting a formal appeal to the university through the Student Appeals process, [studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu). The student should include justification of why the decision rendered should be overturned as well as corresponding documentation that will support their request. The university will respond to the formal appeal within 10 business days.

## 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

## 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 or correspondence 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 or correspondence education are subject to one or more of the following student identity verification methods:

### **A. Government-Issued Photo Identification**

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 \$20 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 Success Course Policy

Columbia Southern University's Learning Strategies for Success courses are designed to prepare students with preparatory skills considered to be essential for college success and life-long learning.

Undergraduate students who meet the following criteria may not be required to complete the Learning Strategies for Success course:

- Have post-secondary experience (*not a first-time in college student – FTIC*)
- Transfer credits of 12 or more hours accepted to CSU
- English Composition I or equivalent requirements met
- Admitted under a non-probationary status

Undergraduate students who are not required to complete the student success course have the opportunity to register for the course if desired. Learning Strategies for Success satisfies 3 semester hours of the humanities requirement in the event a student feels they require preparatory skills for success.

Graduate students who meet the following criteria may not be required to complete the Learning Strategies for Success course:

- Have successfully completed 6 semester hours in a graduate level program with a GPA of 3.0 or better

Both undergraduate and graduate students who are not required to complete the student success course are encouraged to access the CSU Online Library to learn more about success tips. Students are encouraged to seek counsel with their Academic Advisor for all course selections.

## 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:

<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:

<https://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 (Federal 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 Policy

Textbooks are provided for all programs at no cost through the Columbia Southern University Book Grant or Loan-a-Book. The University will determine whether the Book Grant or Loan-a-Book will be utilized. Books may be in new or used condition and may be in print or electronic format.

### Book Grant

The Book Grant provides textbooks at no cost. Textbooks are not required to be returned with the Book Grant; however,

students must meet course completion requirements. Successful course completion is defined as earning a passing grade or not dropping/withdrawing from the course in which the textbook was granted. When a student drops, withdraws, is institutionally withdrawn, or fails a course, a charge for the textbook and shipping will be posted to the student's account. The student may return the text postmarked within 30 days to have the charge reversed. The charge will be based on the retail textbook price listed at the CSU website or 70% if student was issued a used textbook. Additionally, \$12 shipping for each course will be charged. Alternatively, the student may re-enroll in the same course for the next consecutive term or enrollment period and indicate on the Course Re-take Form that the previously provided textbook will be used. As long as the next course enrollment is submitted within 30 days of the course failure or drop/withdrawal, the textbook and shipping charges will be reversed. Students enrolled in the Term option or Veterans Advantage option should return the text if the course is not available in the next consecutive term.

Students not successfully completing a course should access the Textbook Return Form in the myCSU Student Portal and enclose with the returned textbook. Students who return textbooks without the proper paper work to identify themselves will not receive credit for the return. Students who do not return the textbook and do not pay the textbook charge, may not be allowed to enroll in future courses.

### Loan-a-Book

Loan-a-Book provides textbooks for select courses, at no cost. Textbooks are required to be returned to Columbia Southern University through the provided return label, upon course completion. Students will be provided detailed textbook return instructions via e-mail. Alternatively, the student may re-enroll in the same course for the next consecutive term or enrollment period and indicate on the Course Re-take Form that the previously provided textbook will be used. Textbooks not returned will be charged to the student's account. The charge will be based on the retail textbook price listed at the CSU website or 70% if student was issued a used textbook. Additionally, \$12 shipping for each course will be charged.

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 standard Loan-a-Book. Textbooks not returned will be charged to the student's account.

## Unofficial Withdrawal Policy

This policy affects any student enrolled in the Term Enrollment System 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.

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 and Withdrawal Policy and Returning Textbooks for Dropped/Withdrawn Courses 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.

## 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



## XII. 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 Center

Academic Advisors are here to help you with your academic needs whether it is your first time enrolling at Columbia Southern University or you are a returning student. Part of CSU's mission is to meet the unique educational needs of adult learners, as well as those of more traditional students, in a way that is unmatched in higher education. In addition, academic advising is an important part of CSU's mission to change lives through education. Advising involves an interactive process designed to facilitate student development through the timely and professional communication of accurate information regarding degree programs, courses, resources, and college policies/procedures, all with the objective of helping students attain their educational goals. Our goal is to enable you to discover your skills and abilities through education and apply those attributes to your everyday life.

Academic Advisement provides academic support in accordance with the following:

- Advisement on degree plans and course selection
- Relays information regarding institutional policies and procedures
- Program requirements
- Creates a degree action plan (DAP) with specified courses for the next enrollment
- Academic policies and procedures
- Approves Course Load Waivers

Academic Advising is a necessary resource while progressing through a degree program.

### Student Services

Student Support Specialists are here to provide support and encouragement to you throughout your educational journey. The specialists take pride in assisting you with exceptional student service through all correspondence, ensuring your needs are attended to with the utmost care. Whether we are assisting with how to select a proctor or how to navigate our Learning

Management System, we are here for you and want to see you reach your educational goals and dreams. In addition, Student Services provides the following support services:

- Serves as a point of contact for students with questions or concerns, and conducts research to assist in resolution
- Provides navigation assistance with the myCSU Student Portal and Blackboard
- Assists students with university policies and procedures
- Encourages and motivates
- Proactively reaches out to students, offering information that guides students along the path to degree completion
- Assists with obtaining qualified proctors and processing final exams
- Assists with arranging an Incomplete course
- Connects students with appropriate department, faculty or staff members as needed

### Success Center

#### Writing/Math Center

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

- Academic support in the area of writing and math 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 writing, math, APA, and basic course concepts
- Readiness self-assessments for math and writing intensive courses
- Individualized writing or math sessions utilizing interactive technology
- Guidance regarding 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 partake and 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 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 Disability Services Coordinator 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).

## CSU Online Library

The CSU Online Library is designed to provide students with a broadscope of research options, as well as reference assistance.

- Professional librarians are available seven days a week to help with research

- Short video tutorials demonstrate a variety of library and research skills
- Subject Research Guides organized by CSU degree programs identify the best sources for starting research on a chosen topic
- A collection of scholarly online resources is linked from the CSU Online Library webpage. This collection includes:
  - \* Databases that contain articles from academic journals, magazines, newspapers, reference works, and other authoritative sources such as SWOT analyses and market profiles
  - \* Over 100,000 online academic ebooks
  - \* Electronic journal subscriptions in specialized fields of study
  - \* CSU Doctoral Dissertations and Research Projects
  - \* Other tools for research support such as compiled information on the APA rules of style
- Contact information is listed for reaching a member of the library staff seven days a week

## 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.

## 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](#)
- Official Blackboard Resources
  - \* [Ask Dr. C Student Forums](#)
- FAQ
  - \* Frequently Asked Questions

## 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

## 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.

## Office of Student Resolution

The Office of Student Resolution 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 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, please contact us at 877-845-7926 or [studentresolution@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:studentresolution@columbiasouthern.edu).

## Business Affairs

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

## 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.

## Office of Financial Aid

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

## 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

# XIII. 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
- Access the CSU Online Library
- View degree-specific information such as a Comprehensive Degree Report
- Verify course start and end dates
- And much more

## Term Course Schedule

Students enrolled in the Term Enrollment System 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.

## Gainful Employment Disclosure

Columbia Southern University (CSU) self-discloses information pursuant to Gainful Employment Regulations as required by the U.S. Department of Education. 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>.

For assistance on determining what program best suits you and what jobs to apply for, view the following links:

(Students are encouraged to do industry and job market research in addition to reviews of national statistics and related information.)

### Choosing a Concentration:

<http://www.degreesfinder.com/information-online-degree-programs/faq/>

### Job Shadowing and Industry Information:

<http://www.jobshadow.com>

### Occupation Finder:

<http://www.onetonline.org/find/>

## Graduation Information

### Commencement Ceremonies

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. The complete grading rubric is located in the myCSU Student Portal.

## Additional Tutorials & Resources

### Citation Guide

This [Citation Guide](#) will provide you 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 you with 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, you can watch and hear a presentation on this material.

### CSU Success Guide

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

## CSU Online Library

The [CSU Online Library](#) is designed to provide students and faculty with a variety of research options, all chosen to support the programs of study at Columbia Southern University.

## 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.

## 2014-2015 TERM ENROLLMENT

### Track A

Semester	Term	Registration	Start Date	Drop Date	End Date
Summer	1A15	04/30/14 to 07/01/14	07/16/14	07/22/14	09/09/14
Fall	2A15	07/02/14 to 09/02/14	09/17/14	09/23/14	11/11/14
Fall	3A15	09/03/14 to 11/04/14	11/19/14	11/25/14	01/20/15
<b>Christmas Break – During Term 3A (12/24/14 to 12/30/14)</b>					
Winter	4A15	11/05/14 to 01/13/15	01/28/15	02/03/15	03/24/15
Spring	5A15	01/14/15 to 03/17/15	04/01/15	04/07/15	05/26/15
Summer	6A15	03/18/15 to 05/19/15	06/03/15	06/09/15	07/28/15

### Track B

Semester	Term	Registration*	Start Date	Drop Date	End Date
Summer	1B15	05/28/14 to 07/29/14	08/13/14	08/19/14	10/07/14
Fall	2B15	07/30/14 to 09/30/14	10/15/14	10/21/14	12/09/14
Winter	3B15	10/01/14 to 12/02/14	12/17/14	12/23/14	02/17/15
<b>Christmas Break – During Term 3B (12/24/14 to 12/30/14)</b>					
Winter	4B15	12/03/14 to 02/10/15	02/25/15	03/03/15	04/21/15
Spring	5B15	02/11/15 to 04/21/15	05/06/15	05/12/15	06/30/15

\*Refer to our website for the most current academic calendar. Please note a late fee of \$50.00 will be due for enrollments received after Registration end date.

# XIV. Acronymns/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	ISIR	Institutional Student Information Record
AU-ABC	Air University-Associates to Bachelors Cooperative	LOA	Leave of Absence
BS	Bachelors of Science	MBA	Masters of Business Administration
BSBA	Bachelors of Science in Business Administration	MPN	Master Promissory Note
CCAF	Community College of the Air Force	MS	Masters of Science
CHEA	Council for Higher Education	MyCAA	Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts
CLEP	College Level Examination Program	NSLDS	National Student Loan Data System
CSU	Columbia Southern University	POST	Peace Officer Standards and Training Council
DANTES	Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support	R	Placeholder for a Retake
DAP	Degree Action Plan	SAP	Satisfactory Academic Progress
DBA	Doctorate of Business Administration	SMART	Sailor/Marines American Council on Education Registry Transcript
DC	Dropped due to course being closed	SOCAD	Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Army Degree
DEAC	Distance Education Accrediting Commission	SUB	Subsidized Federal Stafford Loan
DN	Dropped due to Non-Attendance	TA	Tuition Assistance
DoE	Department of Education	TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
DP	Student dropped course before start date or within 1st week of course	UNSUB	Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loan
EFA	Estimated Financial Assistance or Estimated Financial Aid	VA	Veteran's Affairs
EFC	Expected Family Contribution	W	Withdrawn
FA	Financial Aid	WF	Withdrawm/Failure
FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid		