

# Undergraduate Academic Regulations

All enrolled students are required to comply with the university's Academic Regulations, as well as official University Policies ([www.cmu.edu/policies](http://www.cmu.edu/policies)). Students are expected to familiarize themselves with these regulations and are also advised to pay special attention to all academic dates and deadlines ([www.cmu.edu/hub/calendar](http://www.cmu.edu/hub/calendar)). The university reserves the right to changes regulations and policies whenever such action is deemed appropriate or necessary.

Academic regulations are compiled by the University Registrar's Office. Students who have questions regarding these regulations should consult with their academic advisor.

## Courses & Registration

### Availability of Required Courses

In order to insure that students do not have to compete for access to their required courses, registration priority is given to students who are registering for courses in their primary major. Although the University encourages the exploration of other disciplines, access to courses outside a student's primary major (including those courses that fulfill requirements for an additional major, minor, etc.) is on a space-available basis and is not guaranteed.

### Change in Schedule (Add/Drop)

Scheduling changes must be made within the period in the semester as established in the Official University Calendar. A student **cannot** drop a course by simply notifying the instructor(s) or by ceasing to attend class(es). A student dropping all of his/her courses (with the intent of leaving the university) must file an Application for Withdrawal or an Application for Leave of Absence (see the "Student Leave Policy" for more information).

Undergraduate students at Carnegie Mellon may drop a course by following the instructions for dropping a course in Student Information Online (SIO) on or before the appropriate deadline as published in the Official University Calendar. When a course is dropped by the drop deadlines, the course is removed and does not appear on the academic record. When a course is withdrawn by the course withdrawal deadline, a W grade appears on the academic record. Undergraduate students who wish to withdraw from a course after the drop deadline must complete a Course Withdrawal form and **must** obtain their academic advisor's signature. The advisor will indicate whether they "recommend" or "not recommend" withdrawal from the course on the form, sign the petition, and assign the "W" (withdrawal) grade in S3. The "W" grade will appear on the academic record. Students may use a late drop voucher for a limited number of course drops after the deadline during the pursuit of their degree. This action must be taken through consultation with their academic advisor or associate dean. Undergraduate students will receive three (3) course drop vouchers over their undergraduate academic career and Masters students will receive one (1) voucher per 12 months of study, and each may only use one drop voucher per semester.

After the Add/Drop deadlines, or to drop below 36 units, students must see their advisor and submit a Course Withdrawal form.

The Late Add Form is used for adding a course or switching sections after the established add period and during the semester in which the course is offered. Students can check SIO to see if the appropriate schedule changes have been made. Undergraduate students who add a course or switch a section after the established add period are required to obtain the permission of their home Dean's Office or the Head of their School. If adding a course would result in a schedule overload, the permission of the student's advisor is also required. Graduate students must have the permission of their department.

- If adding a course would result in a schedule overload, the signature of the student's advisor is also required if requested by Associate Dean/ Department Head.
- Graduate students must have the permission of their department.
- International students who wish to drop below full-time must consult the Office of International Education.

### Free Electives

A free elective is any Carnegie Mellon course that a student completes that is not being used to fulfill a college, school, major or minor requirement. A

maximum of nine units of physical education and/or student-taught (StuCo) courses may be included in the tally of units required for graduation.

### Overloads

The University is committed to insuring that each degree candidate has access to a normal course load before it permits other students to register for a greater than normal number of units. A normal course load has been established by each academic department. Students should check with their academic advisor, department head, or dean's office for the definition of a normal course load. Individual colleges may have overload policies that are more restrictive, therefore students should consult with their advisor when considering an overload. Students may register for an overload up to 12 units with the approval of their academic advisor if they have demonstrated their ability to successfully complete a normal course load. Successful completion of a normal course load is defined as having earned at least a 3.00 (3.50 for students in ECE) cumulative QPA through the preceding semester or at least a 3.00 (3.50 for students in ECE) semester QPA in the current semester (in which case all final grades must be recorded before the student can register for the overloaded class). Overloads greater than 12 units or other exceptions must have the approval of the student's Associate Dean. Freshmen and transfer students are limited to a normal course load in their first semester of attendance.

### Summer Classes

Per the Associate Deans' Council, undergraduate students are now limited to registering for 24 units in summer sessions without advisor approval.

If the advisor wishes to approve additional units, after consulting with the student, advisors can increase the max units in the S3 Admin Console on the registration page.

### Conduct of Classes

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes unless the instructor explicitly informs the class that other ways of doing the work are acceptable. The action to be taken in regard to tardiness, absence from class or making up late work is the responsibility of the individual instructor; the instructor should consult with the department head and the student's dean if major action, such as dropping the student from the course, is being considered.

All classes will be held at their scheduled hour on days immediately before and after all holidays and recesses. Both faculty and students are expected to be present.

Members of athletic teams and other student organizations are permitted to be absent from classes to participate in authorized contests and presentations, either at home or out of town, provided the following conditions are met:

- All work missed must be made up to the satisfaction of the instructor(s) concerned;
- No trip shall involve an absence of more than two days, excluding days when classes are not scheduled;
- The total number of days of absence shall not exceed six per sport or per organization annually;
- Each student will obtain an absence authorization signed by the director or sponsor of the organization involved and by the Dean of Student Affairs. The student will present this authorization to the instructor. This is not an excuse for work missed.

Technology affords many students access to portable devices including cell phones, PDAs, and laptops. It is expected that students will respect the wishes of faculty with regard to the use of electronic devices within the academic environment.

Students who, because of religious beliefs, cannot attend class may arrange as individuals to be absent, provided the work missed is made up in a manner satisfactory to the instructor(s) of the class(es) missed.

No student shall leave a scheduled exercise because of the absence of the instructor until a reasonable time has passed. By tradition and as a matter of courtesy a student should wait 10 minutes before leaving.

## Course Attendance and Enrollment

A student is responsible for the payment of charges incurred at the university by the stated payment deadline. The purpose of this policy statement is to detail the specific process and action steps to be used to resolve any outstanding student account balance.

Students will be held financially and academically accountable for course(s) which they attend or for which they are enrolled. Enrollment in a course which is not actively taken, or contrarily, the taking of a course for which enrollment has not been completed, will result in the assignment of a grade and responsibility for applicable tuition charges.

Students who fail to resolve their enrollment and balances will be prohibited from using university academic and administrative services. The services include, but are not limited to, computing facilities, library services, housing, dining, career center services, degree verification and the release of academic transcripts for the upcoming semester.

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## Undergraduate Course Meetings

Usually, no undergraduate classes, exams, academic, or artistic activities (including extra help sessions, rehearsals, ROTC drill, make-up exams, etc.) are scheduled on weekdays between 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. On occasion, some courses may be scheduled during these hours by the University Registrar's Office when they also are offered at other times: students may elect to take such courses during the 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. period.

## Grades, Transfer Credit, Advanced Placement

### Grading Policy

[www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/grading.html](http://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/grading.html)

This policy offers details concerning university grading principles for students taking courses, whether those students are undergraduates, non-degree students or graduate students. This policy covers the specifics of Assigning and Changing Grades (including Final and Mid-Semester grades, In-completes and Conditional Failures), Grading Options (Audit and Pass/Fail), Drop/Withdrawals, Course Repeats, and defines the undergraduate and graduate Grading Standards.

Questions about grading for a specific course should be addressed to the instructor of the course in question. Graduate students with questions about Pass/Fail and Drop/Withdrawal should contact their individual programs. Appeals for an exception to any grading policy may be made by the dean's office of the student's home college.

### Definitions

Certain terms are used in this document with specific meanings, as defined in this section.

Student means any full-time or part-time degree-seeking undergraduate or graduate student, or full-time or part-time non-degree student.

Non-degree student means a student who is not in a university degree program.

Faculty means members of the university's Faculty Organization as defined in the Faculty Handbook, plus instructors and special faculty appointments (even in the first year), and part-time faculty.

Instructor means a faculty member, teaching assistant, and/or lecturer who is the instructor of record, as recorded in the Student Information System (S3).

### Policy Provisions

#### Assigning Grades

Final grades are awarded to each student, in each course scheduled, at the end of the semester, mini-semester or summer session. All students taking a course at Carnegie Mellon must be assigned grades.

The University Registrar's Office will query instructors who do not assign a grade to a student. Copies of the query regarding the lack of grade will be sent to the student, to the dean and to the department head. If the instructor does not assign a letter grade or an incomplete grade within one month of Enrollment Services query, the department head will be responsible for insuring that a grade is assigned.

#### Changing a Grade

A student who believes that an assigned grade is incorrect, may request that a final grade be changed. Final grades will be changed only in

exceptional circumstances and only with the approval of the instructor and, for undergraduates, with the approval of the dean's office of the college/school offering the course; for graduate students, department approval is required. The intention of this policy is to insure that, under normal circumstances, all students in a class are treated equally and no student is unduly advantaged.

#### Mid-Semester Grades

Mid-semester grades provide valuable feedback to students as they assess their performance in courses. Furthermore, mid-semester grades and the QPA's they generate are used by Deans and advisors in identifying and dealing in a timely way with students in academic trouble. Therefore it is imperative that mid-semester grades accurately reflect student performance and are turned in on time.

Mid-semester grades are not permanent and are kept only until final grades are recorded. Because mid-semester grades are not permanent, changes of mid-semester grades as a rule will not be accepted.

#### Incomplete Grades

Carnegie Mellon students are expected to complete a course during the academic semester in which the course was taken. However, if the instructor agrees, a grade of I (incomplete) may be given when a student, for reasons beyond his or her control, has been unable to complete the work of a course, but the work completed to date is of passing quality and the grade of incomplete provides no undue advantage to that student over other students.

In awarding an I grade, an instructor must specify the requirements for completing the work and designate a default letter grade where no further work is submitted. Students must complete the required course work no later than the end of the following academic semester, or sooner if required by prior agreement. The instructor must record the permanent grade by the last day of the examination period of that following semester, or Enrollment Services will administratively assign the default grade.

#### Pass/No Pass Grades

Undergraduate students may elect to take a free-elective course pass/no-pass unless precluded by the course, the course's department or the student's home department/college. Policies for graduate students vary and students should be advised to check with their individual colleges/departments/programs for details.

A student must submit a Pass/No-Pass Form to the University Registrar's Office indicating the course they are electing as pass/no-pass before the end of the university's drop period. This decision is irreversible thereafter. No information regarding the student's decision will be passed on to the instructor. Instructors will submit letter grades, which will automatically be converted to pass/no-pass.

A through D work will receive credit for units passed and be recorded as P on the student's academic record; below D work will receive no credit and will be recorded as N on the student's academic record. No quality points will be assigned to P or N units; P or N units will not be factored into the student's QPA.

In exceptional circumstances, departments may ask to designate a course pass/no-pass or request that the course be evaluated only with letter grades. The College Council must approve designating a course as pass/no-pass only or as graded only. If such a decision will have an adverse effect on the requirements of any other college, Academic Council must review the decision. The decision to designate a course as graded or pass/no-psdd must be made before the add period for the course and is irreversible thereafter.

#### Audit Grades

Auditing is presence in the classroom without receiving academic credit, a pass/fail or a letter grade. The extent of a student's participation must be arranged and approved by the course instructor. A student wishing to audit a course is required to register for the course, complete the Course Audit Approval Form, obtain permission of the course instructor and their advisor, and return the form to The HUB prior to the last day to add a course.

Any student enrolled full-time (36 units) may audit a course without additional charges. Part-time or non-degree students who choose to audit a course will be assessed tuition at the regular per-unit tuition rate.

#### Drop/Withdrawal Grades

Students at Carnegie Mellon may drop a course by accessing on-line registration on or before the drop deadline as published in the official university calendar. Policies for graduate students vary and students should be advised to check with their individual colleges/departments/programs for details. When a course is dropped by these deadlines, the course is removed and does not appear on the academic record.

Undergraduate students who wish to withdraw from a course after the drop deadline must complete a Course Withdrawal form and **must** obtain

their academic advisor's signature. The advisor will indicate whether they "recommend" or "not recommend" withdrawal from the course on the form, sign the petition, and assign the "W" (withdrawal) grade in S3. The "W" grade will appear on the academic record. Withdrawal grades do not apply to graduate students, except in CIT, HC, MCS, and TSB. Students may use a late drop voucher for a limited number of course drops after the deadline during the pursuit of their degree. This action must be taken through consultation with their academic advisor or associate dean.

Undergraduates who are registered as full-time students as of the 10th day of classes are expected to remain full-time for the duration of the semester. Full-time is defined as registered for a minimum of 36 units. Permission to drop below the 36-unit minimum can only be granted in extraordinary circumstances by the student's home Associate Dean. Undergraduates who are registered as part-time are also subject to the above deadlines to drop or withdraw from a course.

### Course Repeats

When a course is repeated, all grades will be recorded on the official academic transcript and will be calculated in the student's QPA. This is the case regardless if the first grade for the course is a passing or failing grade, including Pass/Fail.

Undergraduate students who wish to repeat a course already passed must obtain approval from the student's Dean or Department Head. When a student takes a course s/he has already passed, only one set of units will count towards graduation requirements.

### University Grading Standards

The undergraduate student Grading Standard is as follows:

Grade	Quality Points	Definition
A	4.0	Excellent
B	3.0	Good
C	2.0	Satisfactory
D	1.0	Passing
R	0.0	Failure
X	0.0	Conditional Failure
P	Non-Factorable	Passing
N	Non-Factorable	Not Passing
O	Non-Factorable	Audit
W	Non-Factorable	Withdrawal
I	Non-Factorable	Incomplete
AD	Non-Factorable	Credit granted for work completed at another institution or examination credit

This grading standard is for all students classified as seeking an undergraduate degree and special students taking undergraduate courses.

Any +/- grades received by undergraduate students when taking graduate-level courses will automatically convert to the corresponding letter grade as listed in the scale above.

The graduate student Grading Standard is as follows:

Grade	Quality Points	Definition
A+	4.33	(Not applicable to CIT or Dietrich College)
A	4.0	
A-	3.67	
B+	3.33	
B	3.00	
B-	2.67	
C+	2.33	
C	2.00	
C-	1.67	
D+	1.33	(Not applicable to Tepper School, Heinz College, or Dietrich College)
D	1.00	(Not applicable to Tepper School, Heinz College, or Dietrich College)
R	0.0	Failure
X	0.0	Conditional Failure
S	Non-Factorable	Satisfactory

P	Non-Factorable	Passing
N	Non-Factorable	Not Passing
O	Non-Factorable	Audit
W	Non-Factorable	Withdrawal
I	Non-Factorable	Incomplete
AD	Non-Factorable	Credit granted for work completed at another institution or examination credit

Grading standards are based upon a student's home academic program and is defined by their home college. The college's standards determine if certain grades are applicable and if undergraduate course are factored into their mid-semester and final semester quality point averages (QPA). Otherwise, the university policy is that only graduate courses (700 level and higher, unless a department specifies 600 level as graduate) are factored into the semester QPA.

Pass/Fail policies for graduate students vary and students should be advised to check with their individual college/department/program for details.

Minimum passing grades in graduate courses are determined by the department and college policy. Any course that a graduate student completes will be graded using this scale.\* This includes undergraduate courses taken by graduate students, and non-degree students taking graduate courses.

### Contact

Questions concerning this policy or its intent should be directed to the University Registrar's Office, 412-268-7404.

### Units and Quality Points

Carnegie Mellon has adopted the method of assigning a number of "units" for each course to represent the quantity of work required of students. For the average student, one unit represents one work-hour of time per week throughout the semester. The number of units in each course is fixed by the faculty member in consultation with the college offering the course. Three units are the equivalent of one traditional semester credit hour.

Hence, a 9 unit semester-long course should require 9 hours of student engagement, on average, including class time; if the instructor requires 3 hours of lecture and 1 hour of recitation, they can expect students to spend 5 hours outside of class engaging in class work. For mini courses that run for only seven weeks, the conversion from units to number of hours per week during the mini involves multiplying by 2. For example, a 6 unit mini course should on average involve 12 hours of student engagement; if the instructor requires 3 hours of lecture and 3 hours of lab, they can expect the students to spend 6 hours outside of class.

Final grades are given "Quality Point Values" as follows:

Grade	Meaning	Quality Point Value
A	Excellent	4
B	Good	3
C	(satisfactory)	2
D	Passing	1
R	Failure	0

Units earned for a course multiplied by the Quality Point Value of the grade given for that course equals the Quality Points for that course. For example, a 9-unit course assigned a "C" grade is awarded 18 quality points (9 units x 2 quality points = 18 quality points). Total Quality Points divided by Total Units Factorable equals the Quality Point Average.

For example, a student's record in one semester might be:

11 units x 4 quality points	=	44 quality points
10 units in Physics "R"		
10 units x 0 quality points	=	0 quality points
9 units in Chemistry "B"		
9 units x 3 quality points	=	27 quality points
9 units in History "C"		
9 units x 2 quality points	=	18 quality points
9 units in English "D"		
9 units x 1 quality point	=	9 quality points
<b>Total Units = 48</b>		

**Total Quality Points = 98**

Quality Point Average  
(98 divided by 48) =  
2.04

"I" (incomplete), "P" (pass), and "W" (withdrawal) grades are not awarded quality points and are not considered as "factorable" units when calculating the QPA.

The same procedure is applied to all grades earned at the university to establish the Cumulative Quality Point Average.

**Dean's List**

Undergraduate students who meet specific academic requirements are added to their home college's Dean's List each semester. This is noted on the student's transcript for applicable semesters. Each college may have its own requirements for Dean's List qualification; these are described in the individual college sections of the catalog.

Note: Only undergraduate *degree-seeking* students may earn a place on the Dean's List. Non-degree students are not eligible.

**Transfer Credit Evaluation and Assignment Policy**

The Policy on Grades for Transfer Courses, originally dated January 13, 1993, and approved by the Committee on Educational Programs and Student and Faculty Affairs states:

"Carnegie Mellon University offers students the opportunity to take courses for credit through a cross-registration program and through the receipt of transfer credit from other accredited institutions. The Carnegie Mellon University transcript will include information on such courses as follows:

Carnegie Mellon courses and courses taken through the university's cross-registration program will have grades recorded on the transcript and be factored into the QPA. All other courses will be recorded on this transcript indicating where the course was taken, but without grade. Such courses will not be taken into account for academic actions, honors or QPA calculations. (Note: Suspended students may take courses elsewhere; however, they may receive transfer credit only if their college's and department's policies allow this).

**Definitions**

A Carnegie Mellon course is one conducted under Carnegie Mellon University regulations regarding course content and grading and taught by faculty under the supervision of a Carnegie Mellon academic unit. Courses taught by Carnegie Mellon faculty on the Carnegie Mellon campus qualify. Courses that are part of the regular offerings of other universities do not qualify, unless faculty at the other universities receive appointments at Carnegie Mellon and handle Carnegie Mellon students under Carnegie Mellon academic regulations.

Courses offered for cross-registration are those taken under the PCHE (Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education) agreement during the regular academic year."

Only official and final college or university transcripts will be accepted for the awarding of transfer credit. Grade reports, letters and the like are not acceptable. It is the responsibility of the Office of Undergraduate Admission and the University Registrar's Office to verify official transcripts. Official transcripts for the awarding of transfer credit will reside in the student's permanent university academic folder in the University Registrar's Office.

It is the responsibility of each academic department to review and establish transfer course credit for their degree-seeking students.

**Transfer Credit Evaluation Procedure****External Transfer Students**

External applicants applying for transfer to Carnegie Mellon will arrange for submission of:

- official transcripts to the Office of Undergraduate Admission as part of the admission process.
- official, final transcripts to the Office of Undergraduate Admission once they are admitted and prior to their beginning coursework at Carnegie Mellon.

As part of the admission process, Admission will verify the official final transcripts, and then send them to the appropriate academic unit responsible for college/department acceptance decisions. Each unit will be

responsible for student's review of transfer credit and the establishment of transfer course credit for each individual student.

**Current Students**

Current Carnegie Mellon students taking courses at other accredited institutions (colleges and universities), during either summer semesters or as part of exchange programs or other departmentally approved programs, or while on leave from Carnegie Mellon, must arrange for the submission of official final transcripts to the University Registrar's Office.

Upon receipt, Enrollment Services will verify these official transcripts and send a copy of the transcript to the appropriate academic unit responsible for that student's college/department transfer credit decisions. The official transcript will reside in the student's university academic folder in Enrollment Services. Each unit will be responsible for its students' transfer credit review and the establishment of transfer course credit for each individual student. Should a unit receive the official transcript, it must be sent immediately to the University Registrar's Office.

**Standard Course Equivalents for Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate Units Policy**

The university has standard units assigned to Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) credits for all majors. Standard course equivalencies for each exam will be determined by "expert departments" in each college for each acceptable AP/IB score.

Under this procedure, students' AP or IB credit for a particular course will only go toward their degree requirements if allowed by the home department or college policies. Should a student decide to transfer to another major and/or academic unit within the university, AP/IB credits applicability to new degree requirements will depend upon the requirements of the new home department (or college). Students may only be granted credit for the Higher Level IB exams. This policy assumes no significant AP and/or IB exam changes. In the event of significant exam changes, students will be notified of any resulting policy changes no later than July 30 prior to their enrollment to take effect the fall of that year.

**Rank in Class**

Undergraduates at Carnegie Mellon pursue degrees in one or more of our ten schools or colleges. They may choose to pursue coursework, majors and minors within and between schools/colleges. In an institution where students' educational experiences are so varied, class rank is not a meaningful way to measure achievement.

Carnegie Mellon and Enrollment Services does not report nor record students' rank in class, rank in college and rank in department. For those graduate school and/or employment requests that request a students' rank, they will be completed with the statement "Carnegie Mellon does not report rank in class."

**Transcripts & Verifications****Transcripts**

The student's official transcript is to be considered the official record for all degree(s), major(s), minor(s), and honors. The official Carnegie Mellon transcript includes both the undergraduate and graduate record. All transcripts come in individually sealed envelopes, unless otherwise specified. Transcript requests are not processed if the student has an outstanding obligation, financial or otherwise. We cannot accept phone or email requests. We will not fax a transcript under any circumstances.

Visit [www.cmu.edu/hub/registrar/student-records](http://www.cmu.edu/hub/registrar/student-records) for complete information, including how to order a transcript.

**Verifications**

Enrollment/degree verifications are available for currently enrolled Carnegie Mellon students and Carnegie Mellon Alumni.

An enrollment/degree verification officially confirms information about you. Please note that we cannot fax your QPA or verifications that contain anything besides the following:

- Name
- Local address
- Local phone number
- Email address
- Class

- College
- Department
- Dates of attendance
- Date(s) of graduation
- Degree(s) awarded

The most common reasons for requesting a verification are:

- Student loan agencies and insurance companies wanting to know if a student is enrolled.
- Scholarship committees wanting to know if a student maintained a certain QPA.
- Potential employers wanting to know if a student graduated with a certain degree.

### Online Verification Ordering

Currently enrolled Carnegie Mellon students may order enrollment verifications via Student Information Online (SIO) (<https://s3.as.cmu.edu/sio>). Additional information can be found at [www.cmu.edu/hub/registrar/student-records](http://www.cmu.edu/hub/registrar/student-records).

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### Full-Time Status

Undergraduates who are registered as full-time students as of the 10th day of classes are expected to remain full-time for the duration of the semester. Full-time is defined by a minimum of 36 units. Permission to drop below the 36 unit minimum must be granted by the student's Associate Dean. Undergraduates who are registered as part-time are also subject to the above deadlines to drop or withdraw from a course.

Students carrying a full-time course load as of the 10th regularly scheduled class day are not ordinarily permitted to drop below 36 units after that time. Exceptions must be authorized by the student's Associate Dean.

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### Status, Class Standing

Students should refer to the sections of the catalog pertaining to their college and/or department to determine the number of units required each academic year by their specific curriculum. Students must achieve passing grades in order to earn units; students do not earn units for incomplete or failed courses.

A freshman student becomes a sophomore after earning passing grades in three-fourths of the units required by his/her freshman curriculum.

A sophomore student becomes a junior after earning the number of units required by his/her curriculum for the freshman year plus three-fourths of the number of units for the sophomore year.

A junior student becomes a senior after earning the number of units required by his/her curriculum for the freshman and sophomore years plus three-fourths of the number of units for the junior year.

Classification of students is made only at the time of their first registration in any academic year and remains unchanged throughout the rest of that academic year.

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### Course Description Requests (for prior years)

Please note that University Archives does not have access to transcript and verification information. They maintain only the course description archives. If you call or email this office, your request will not be processed. Please contact:

Archives/Art Inventory Specialist  
Carnegie Mellon University Libraries  
4909 Frew St.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
412-268-5021 (phone)  
412-268-7148 (fax)

## Graduation & Diplomas

### Degree Requirements

Students are responsible for checking to ensure that the degree requirements (as listed in the appropriate catalog at the time of their matriculation) have been met. They may also refer to the Stellic (<https://academicaudit.andrew.cmu.edu>) online degree audit application. If the degree requirements have been modified by College Council action, the

student is responsible for checking to ensure that the modified requirements have been met.

To be eligible to graduate, undergraduate students must complete all residence and course requirements for their program with a cumulative Quality Point Average of at least 2.0 for all courses taken. For undergraduate students who enrolled at Carnegie Mellon as freshmen and whose freshman grades cause the cumulative QPA to fall below 2.0, this requirement is modified to be a cumulative QPA of at least 2.0 for all courses taken after the freshman year. Note, however, the cumulative QPA that appears on the student's final transcript will be calculated based on all grades in all courses taken, including freshman year. Some programs may have additional QPA requirements in order to graduate. Students are encouraged to confirm all graduation requirements with their academic advisor.

No student may receive a diploma until all financial obligations to the university have been met.

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### Residency Requirement

A candidate for the bachelor's degree must complete at the university a minimum of four semesters of full-time study, or the equivalent of part-time study, comprising at least 180 units of coursework. Note that these are minimum residency requirements applicable to all university undergraduates. Some of the university's colleges and departments have developed more restrictive requirements in this area. Students should consult that section of the catalog in which their college or department's academic regulations are presented for the residency requirements applicable to them. Deviation from these policies requires action by the Dean of the student's home college.

Implications of Residency Requirements for transfer students seeking second undergraduate degree: Students who received degrees from other universities could have up to 2 years of credits earned elsewhere applied to their Carnegie Mellon degree requirements and would need to meet Carnegie Mellon's Residency Requirement and complete at the university a minimum of four semesters of full-time study, or the equivalent of part-time study, comprising at least 180 units of coursework. Deviation from these policies will require action by the Dean of the student's home college.

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### Diplomas

A Carnegie Mellon diploma is a student's certificate of accomplishment. The diploma is printed with the name the student approved within Graduation On-Line, along with the student's primary degree (i.e., Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing). Minors are not listed on a diploma, although they do appear on an official transcript.

Diplomas are distributed to graduates during or immediately following the commencement ceremony. Certain circumstances will result in students receiving their diplomas at a later date, and such students will be informed of this well before the ceremony. If a student is unable to attend the ceremony, diplomas will be available for pick-up or mail-out in the weeks following commencement. Diplomas are not available prior to the stated date of graduation.

The diploma is 14x17 inches and is marked with a multi-colored and gold seal.

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### Graduation with University Honors

In recognition of exemplary academic achievement as undergraduates, some candidates for undergraduate degrees will be named to the University Honors List. Each of the undergraduate colleges will select students for honors on the basis of a cumulative grade point average (typically when cumulative QPA is greater than 3.5) and/or recommendation of the faculty.

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### Standard Degree Terminology

Carnegie Mellon University offers a wide variety of programs; the opportunities vary greatly between and among the colleges. For the purposes of clarification, this section defines:

- standard degree terminology;
- changes to the existing degree declaration process;
- the existing procedure for creating new degrees, majors and minors.

### Degree

Examples: B.S. (Bachelor of Science); M.F.A. (Master of Fine Arts); Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy)

**Major**

Field studied in greatest depth by fulfilling a department-determined set of course requirements. The primary major is the field in which the degree is granted.

Example: Creative Writing; Physics; Marketing

Students may pursue an additional major(s) in a single degree program.

**Minor**

Field(s) studied for educational enrichment by fulfilling a department-determined set of course requirements. Graduate students may not pursue Minors. Minors are not listed on the diploma but appear, instead, on the student's transcript. The type of degree sought is determined by the major (that of the home department), not the minor(s). Examples: Film Studies; Game Design

**Option**

(Now referred to variously as track, option, etc.)

A specific area of study associated with the major or additional major(s), which transforms the title of the major or additional major.

Examples: Civil Engineering (Biomedical Engineering Option) Physics (Computer Science Option)

**Concentration**

(Now referred to variously as track, option, etc.)

A specific area of study generally associated with a major or an additional major, which appears only on the transcript.

**Home College**

The college into which the student was originally admitted or into which the student formally transferred.

**Home Department**

The department into which the student was originally admitted or the department offering the major which the student has declared.

**Concurrent College/Department**

College/department other than the home college/department, granting the second of multiple degrees, or offering the additional major(s) of double or triple major, or minor.

**Single Degree/Major**

One diploma, stating the degree and the major field of study. Currently, the Statute of Limitations on earning an undergraduate degree is eight years.

Examples: B.A. in Psychology; M.S. in Industrial Administration

Requirements: Fulfillment of all requirements of the home college.

Declaration: At least by registration time (early November), first semester junior year.

Certification: Home college, home department

**Major-Declaration Process**

For undergraduates, depending on the student's college, the major is usually declared at the end of the freshman or sophomore year. Departments enter the appropriate majors upon declaration.

For graduates, the major is usually indicative of the department and is supplied by the department.

**Joint Degree**

Degree program offered between two or more colleges/departments or offered in conjunction with an outside University.

Examples: M.S. in Colloids, Polymers, and Surfaces (Chemistry and Chemical Engineering); B.H.A from College of Fine Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences.

**Multiple Degrees**

More than one degree granted by the university (whether simultaneous or sequential). One diploma for each degree. When awarded simultaneously, two degrees are referred to as dual degrees, three degrees as triple degrees. Multiple graduate degrees may be given in conjunction with (an) outside University(ies).

Examples of how such degrees appear on the respective diplomas:

- Bachelor of Fine Arts in the field of Art; Bachelor of Science in the field of History

- Bachelor of Science in the field of Physics; Bachelor of Science in the field of Computer Science

Requirements: Multiple bachelor's degrees

Declaration: Undergraduates: at least by registration time (early November), semester junior year

To receive multiple bachelor's degrees the student must:

- satisfy all requirements for each degree.
- complete an aggregate number of units that exceeds, by at least 90, the minimum unit requirement for the degree with the smallest such requirement (e.g., if the one of the degrees requires a minimum of 360 units and the other requires 380 units, a total of at least 450 units (90 plus 360, the smallest of the two) is required to obtain both degrees).
- comply, for each degree, with the statute of limitations regarding the time at which units are earned.
- while working towards more than one degree simultaneously, designate one of the departments (and if necessary colleges) as the home college/department.

**Additional Major**

One degree, stating the major in the home department first and the additional major second. The type of degree given (B.A., B.S.) is determined by the major of the home department.

For example, a student whose home department is Physics:

This degree is valid: B.S. in Physics with an additional major in History

This degree is not valid: B.S. in History with an additional major in Physics

The intent of a double major is an in-depth understanding of two major fields. Students may pursue a second major in a field where the primary degree is different from the degree associated with the additional major: e.g., B.S. in Economics with an additional major in History.

Requirements: If the double majors involve two different colleges OR the same college, the student must fulfill:

- all requirements (including core) for the first major degree as defined by the home college;
- all major requirements (including core prerequisites) for the additional major;
- any specific requirements for double majors imposed by the department(s)/college(s) involved.

Declaration: At least by registration time (early November), first semester junior year.

Certification: Home college, home department; concurrent college (if any), concurrent department (if any).

**Additional Majors**

One degree, stating the major of the home departments first, the second and the third major afterwards. The type of degree sought (B.A., B.S.) is determined by the major in the home department.

For example, a History student, this degree is valid: B.A. in History with additional majors in Professional Writing and in Hispanic Studies. This degree is not valid: B.A. in Professional Writing with additional majors in History and in Spanish.

Requirements: If the triple major involves two or three different colleges OR the same college, the student must fulfill all requirements listed for each additional major.

Declaration: At least by registration time (early November), first semester junior year.

Certification: department

Concurrent college (if any), concurrent department (if any)

Second concurrent college (if any), second concurrent department (if any)

**Minor**

One degree, stating the major first and the minor second (or third, if there is also (an) additional major(s) involved). The type of degree sought (B.A., B.S.) is determined by the major (that of the home department). Minors are not listed on the diploma, but appear on the transcript.

Examples: B.F.A. in Music Performance (Voice) with a minor in Theatre Arts; B.S. in Applied History with an additional major in Information Systems and a minor in Mathematics.

Requirements: The student would generally take 45 units pertaining to the minor, in addition to fulfilling all requirements for the major degree (as

defined by the home college). The "minor" courses are negotiated between the student and the department certifying the minor.

Declaration: At least by registration time (early November), first semester junior year.

Certification: department

#### Options (Tracks, Specializations, Area Cores, etc.)

These concentrations will not be considered part of the student's degree title unless included are part of the major or (an) additional major(s) field title.

#### Additional Majors/Minors Declaration Process

For undergraduates, all variations on a student's sought degree and major field must be declared by the end of the first semester of the student's junior year. Having already declared a major, students should be well prepared by this time to choose additional majors and/ or minors.

It is assumed that by these proposed deadlines, the student will have taken a majority of degree requirements and electives. The student can then, in conjunction with an advisor, review his/her course history and decide which options may or may not apply towards the desired degree and field(s).

A student who wishes to pursue additional majors and/or minors should consult with his/her advisor and receive a detailed curriculum for attaining the additional desired degree, major or minor. The student should then notify the college/department offering the additional program. Upon receipt of this notification, the college/department will update the Student Information System which will reflect this information to the Commencement System for graduation. This procedure ensures that when a student is expected to graduate, all degree/major information is immediately accessible, and certification of the degree is simplified.

#### Multiple Degrees Involving Graduate Degrees

Policies involving multiple graduate degrees or a graduate/undergraduate degree program or sequence are dictated by each college involved.

Examples: M.S. in Public Management and Policy and the degree of Juris Doctor (Heinz College/University of Pittsburgh School of Law).

Declaration: Undergraduates: at least by registration time (early November), first semester junior year.

Declaration: Graduates: upon admittance OR by the end of the semester preceding the expected graduation date.

Certification: Home college, home department and concurrent college (if any), concurrent department (if any).

## Academic Actions

Each college may have its own regulations and procedures regarding academic actions, but in general, the following apply to all undergraduate students.

### Student Suspension/Required Withdrawal Policy

#### Policy Statement

University Suspension is a forced, temporary leave from the university. There are three types of suspension for students that apply to both graduate and undergraduate students:

- **Academic Suspension** is the result of poor academic performance or violation of academic regulations and is imposed by the student's college or academic department (see university and college academic policies).
- **Disciplinary Suspension** is the result of serious personal misconduct and is imposed by the Office of Student Affairs (see The Word/Student Handbook (<https://www.cmu.edu/student-affairs/theword>)).
- **Administrative Suspension** is the result of failure to meet university financial obligations or failure to comply with federal, state or local health regulations and is imposed by Student Financial Services (see Student Financial Obligation Terms (<https://www.cmu.edu/sfs/billing/sfo.html>)).

Suspended students may not:

- register for courses
- attend classes
- live in residence halls or Greek housing
- use campus facilities, including athletic facilities, libraries and computer clusters

- participate in student activities
- be members of student organizations
- have student jobs\*

\*Students on academic suspension may have a summer campus job if they accepted the job before they were suspended.

#### Employment

Although suspended students may not hold student jobs, students on academic suspension may, under certain circumstances, have a non-student job with the university; students on disciplinary or administrative suspension may not.

To have a non-student job, students on academic suspension must receive approval from their associate dean (undergraduate students) or department head (graduate students) to ensure that the job will not violate their suspension terms. Students in violation of this will lose their degree student status, meaning they would have to reapply for admission to Carnegie Mellon through either Undergraduate Admission or the appropriate graduate department.

#### Transfer Credit

Suspended students may take courses elsewhere; however, they may receive transfer credit only if their college's and department's policies allow this.

#### Appeals

To appeal any action of this policy, the student may write to the following individuals:

- Academic Suspension - Associate Dean (undergraduate students) or Department Head (graduate students)
- Disciplinary Suspension - Dean of Student Affairs
- Administrative Suspension - Associate Vice President & Director of Enrollment Services, and the Dean of Student Affairs, in consultation with the student's Associate Dean

#### Returning from Suspension

In order to return from a suspension, a student must have the following approval:

- Academic Suspension - Associate Dean (undergraduate students) or Department Head (graduate students)
- Disciplinary Suspension - Dean of Student Affairs
- Administrative Suspension - Associate Vice President & Director of Enrollment Services, and the Dean of Student Affairs, in consultation with the student's Associate Dean

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### Procedure for the Appeal of Grades & Academic Actions

In the event a student believes an assigned grade or an imposed academic action is incorrect or not appropriate, the student may follow the processes outlined below to seek prompt and equitable resolution of the matter.

If a student believes a grade has been incorrectly assigned, the student should:

1. Present the case to the faculty member responsible for the course, providing all supporting data concerning the nature of the discrepancy.
2. If, after a decision is rendered, the student believes that his or her concerns have not been adequately resolved, the student may pursue a formal appeal with the department responsible for the course. To appeal to the department, a student must present a written statement detailing the grounds for the appeal with appropriate documentation to the head of the department responsible for the course. This appeal must be submitted within seven (7) days of receipt of the faculty member's decision. The department head will provide a written decision, including the basis for it, within thirty (30) days, or as soon thereafter as practical.
3. If the student is not satisfied with the department head's resolution, the student may pursue the appeal at the college level. To appeal at the college level, the student must present copies of all documents originally sent to the faculty member and department head, along with a formal letter of appeal, to the dean of the college responsible for the course. This appeal must be submitted within seven (7) days of receipt of the department head's decision. The dean, or the dean's designate, will review the appeal and will render a written decision, including the basis for it, within thirty (30) days, or as soon thereafter as practical.

If a student believes an academic action is inconsistent with the policies of the college or merits additional review, a student should:

1. Submit a formal written appeal, as specified in the initial academic action, to the associate dean of the college responsible for the decision, with a copy to the dean, requesting review of the action including all relevant materials to substantiate their case and support their concerns.
2. The dean of the college, or the dean's designate, will review the appeal and issue a decision and the basis for it within thirty (30) days.

If, after carrying out the steps of either process described above, the student believes that the matter has not been adequately resolved, or if no decision has been rendered by the appropriate date, the student may appeal at the university level. To appeal at the university level, the student must present copies of all previously submitted documents and a formal letter of appeal to the provost. The provost or another designated university officer will respond in writing with a final resolution, including the basis for it, within thirty (30) days, or as soon thereafter as practical.

## Other Academic Regulations

### English Fluency for Non-Native English Speakers

To be successful at Carnegie Mellon University, students who are nonnative speakers of English need to begin their undergraduate work with a strong foundation in academic English and a high level of proficiency with speaking, reading and writing in English. The importance of English language abilities cannot be overstated since there are no basic ESL language courses at Carnegie Mellon. All students will have sufficient English language proficiency to be able to participate fully in the academic work and to interact in daily life outside of the classroom.

Students' English fluency will enable them to handle the demands of academic work, including the ability to comprehend, process, and master complex material presented in English, both in written and spoken form. Students will possess the fluency to communicate their ideas and questions to faculty, classmates, and others, in a classroom environment that is often highly participatory. For example, many classes require group discussion, team projects, oral presentations, and/or independent research. In addition to fluent English skills, studying in a new culture requires openness and flexibility to adapt to a new, and often very different, academic system.

To assess the language of nonnative speaking applicants, a minimum TOEFL score of 600 (paper based, PBT), or 100 (internet based, iBT) has been established as the standard for admission. This minimum score indicates that an applicant has the fundamental building blocks of language needed for academic tasks and for continued language development. Since neither the PBT or CBT versions of TOEFL access speaking, students who took these tests should additionally seek feedback on their speaking skills and work to improve conversational skills before beginning academic work.

### Exchange Students

Each term, Carnegie Mellon welcomes exchange students from partner institutions around the world. Exchange students enrich the learning experience at Carnegie Mellon and are expected to be full participants in the curricular and metacurricular life. Therefore, their admission should adhere to the English language guidelines described above. Exchange students submit standardized English language testing scores (such as the TOEFL) as part of the Exchange application process, and present the same high level of English language abilities as degree-seeking students. With exchange students, high-level English abilities are particularly critical since academic, personal and extracurricular experiences must be maximized in a short period of time sometimes only four months in duration.

### Withdrawal of a Degree

The university reserves the right to withdraw a degree even though it has been granted should there be discovery that the work upon which it was based or the academic records in support of it had been falsified. In such a case the degree will be withdrawn promptly upon discovery of the falsification.

### Information for Graduates

Graduating students may wear one stole ONLY with their academic regalia. Students are certainly permitted to receive/purchase more than one stole if they are a member of multiple organizations that issue stoles and may chose to wear a particular stole to the main commencement ceremony and another to their diploma ceremony.

Graduating seniors that are a member of a club/organization that issues a pin to designate affiliation are permitted to wear more than one pin with the academic regalia in addition to one stole.

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## Retention of Student Work

The university reserves the right in all colleges to retain indefinitely any student work the faculty may select. All work not retained by the university must be claimed at the time specified on the bulletin boards (or other forms of communication) of the department concerned; otherwise, the work will be destroyed.

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## Degree Statute of Limitations

<https://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/ug-statute-of-limitations-student.html>

All units required for an undergraduate degree, whether earned in residence, transferred from another institution or granted via advanced placement, must have been earned within eight years of the date on which the degree is granted. This statutory period can be extended by the Dean of the student's college under the following conditions:

- the courses taken prior to the statutory period still represent a reasonable part of the student's total academic program;
- the prior courses provide adequate preparation for courses which must still be taken to fulfill the degree requirements;
- there is a legitimate reason(s) for the student not completing the academic program within the statutory period.

A request for a waiver of the statute of limitations must be submitted to the Dean of the student's college. The request for a waiver should address all of the above conditions for an extension. For cases in which a waiver is granted, the waiver covers specific courses and is intended for a specific period during which the program must be completed.

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## Transitional Student Status

Transitional student status has been instituted by the university to assist students who have changed their minds about their original field of study or who have been judged unlikely to make satisfactory progress in their chosen field. Becoming a Transitional Student gives a student an opportunity to maintain a relationship with the home college while re-orienting academic plans and goals. It also gives a student time to explore his/her options and/or enhance admissibility to another college in the university, or to another institution. Ordinarily, a student will be permitted to register as a Transitional student for no more than one semester. Although, in exceptional circumstances, a student may be allowed to extend the status beyond one semester. A student must obtain the permission of his/her home college Associate Dean to initiate this option.

Transitional student status may be available to students upon the advice of their advisor, or upon their own request. Interested students must make an appointment with the Associate Dean of their home college to discuss this option.

Note: Students at Carnegie Mellon in good academic standing may transfer from one program to another as long as they meet curricular or artistic requirements and as long as there is space in the program into which they wish to transfer.

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## New Degree, Major, or Minor

Departments proposing new degrees, majors, additional majors, and/or minors must complete a New Degree/Major/Minor Request Form. This should include any and all notations to the university diploma and/or transcript (new degrees, majors, minors, options). Departments proposing to offer a new degree, major, additional major and/or minor must follow university policies for approval as follows:

- Document the Program by completing the New Degree/Major/Minor Request Form. Departments proposing new degrees and majors must complete this form and attach course descriptions, curriculum proposal, list of present faculty who will support the Program, and verify the availability of other units' courses. This documentation must indicate the starting semester for the Program, and in the case of new majors, also indicate if it is available only as a major/additional major/minor, or in combination.



- Receive Department approval.
- Receive Dean and College Council approval.
- Submit all Program documentation complete with College Council approval to the Vice Provost for Education. New majors or degrees will not be processed without the approval of the Provost's Office.
- Submit all Program documentation complete with College Council approval to the Vice Provost for Education. New majors or degrees will not be processed without the approval of the Provost's Office.
- The Provost's Office will approve or deny, and inform the sponsoring Department and Enrollment Services.
- The Department may then publicize and offer the program for student enrollment.