



Columbian College
Office of Graduate Studies

**Graduate Student Handbook
2019-2020 Academic Year
Master's and Certificate Students**

**Columbian College of Arts and Sciences
George Washington University**

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About

The Columbian College of Arts and Sciences (CCAS) is GW's intellectual and creative backbone—a place where research thrives, critical thinking is encouraged, collaboration is constant and real-world training goes hand-in-hand with learning.

As pioneers of the Engaged Liberal Arts, we equip students with the skills and competencies needed to be effective, responsible 21st-century citizens.

Columbian College is GW's largest and most comprehensive academic unit. It is home to 42 academic departments, three affiliated schools, 8,000 undergraduate and graduate students, 28 research centers and nearly 500 full-time faculty—including Fulbright and Guggenheim scholars, award-winning artists, cutting-edge scientists and critically acclaimed authors.

Your CCAS Contacts

Your Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)

Each graduate program has a Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) who will be your main point of contact regarding your academic program requirements.

You must meet with your DGS before registering for courses in the first semester to ensure you are informed of exactly which courses you need to take and what is required to complete your graduate program. Your DGS' contact details can be found in the Graduate Program Director listing on the [Office of Graduate Studies Contacts page](#).

You should also discuss the possibility of transferring any graduate credit earned at other institutions with your DGS, and submit the necessary paperwork to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Program of Studies

When you meet with your DGS, you will draw up a program of studies. This is a detailed plan of your degree program. It should include a list of all courses that you will take each semester and a list of non-course requirements that you must complete, with dates by which you intend to complete them. You should keep a copy of your Program of Studies and consult it regularly as you progress through the program. The program of studies may be modified, with the approval of your DGS, during your time in the program.

Your OGS Student Services Coordinator

Each CCAS graduate program has an assigned Program Coordinator who is your main point of contact within the Office of Graduate Studies. Your Program Coordinator administers the enrollment and academic standing policies and procedures that all graduate students must maintain. Your Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) addresses any academic advising questions related to course selection and other degree requirements. If an administrative question ever arises in relation to the policies in this Handbook, please feel free to contact your Program Coordinator. Please check the [Office of Graduate Studies Contacts page](#) for a list of Program Coordinators. Your coordinator can be reached at ccasgradserv@gwu.edu or in person in Smith Hall 118 on the Foggy Bottom campus.

Your GW email address

All email correspondence will be sent to your GW email address. As a student, your email address ends in “@gwmail.gwu.edu” but you will still receive mail addressed to “@gwu.edu”. However, if you are a GW employee, or at any point you become a GW employee (including as a Graduate Assistant) you will also have an email address that ends in “@email.gwu.edu.” If you are both a student and an employee, email sent to “@gwu.edu” can only be forwarded to one of the two accounts. You will either need to check both accounts regularly, or contact the Division of Information Technology to ensure that email sent to “@gwu.edu” forwards to the correct account (although you should still check your second account to make sure you do not miss any important information).

DegreeMAP

[DegreeMAP](#), the University’s advising tool, maps out each student’s degree program requirements and completion status, and should be used in conjunction with your Program of Studies to track your program progress.

DegreeMAP is accessed via GWEB. Students and advisors are strongly encouraged to consult DegreeMAP each semester to ensure degree program requirements are being met. Occasionally, course substitutions (petitions) are needed to update your DegreeMAP record. Only your DGS can submit these petitions. In order to be cleared for graduation your DegreeMAP must reflect 100% completion.

Registration

General registration opens for the Fall and Summer semesters in late March or early April, and for Spring semester in early November. All initial registrations made on or after the first day of classes of a semester will be charged a late registration fee. Registration dates and deadlines can be found on the [Registrar's website](#).

All CCAS graduate students are required to register continuously each Fall and Spring semester until the completion of their program. Registration during the summer is optional except for those who plan to complete their degree requirements in the summer semester and whose program of studies requires summer registration. Failure to register may require that a student apply for readmission. Readmission is not guaranteed.

Workload

You must register for **at least 3 credits each Fall and Spring semester**, unless you have completed all of your coursework (see the Continuing Research/Continuous Enrollment section of this handbook) or are on an approved Leave of Absence (see the Leave of Absence section of this handbook). The credit hours required for half-time and full-time status are below:

Minimum: 3 credits per semester

Maximum: 15 credits per semester. More than 15 credits require approval from your DGS and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.

Less than half-time: 3-4 credits per semester

Half-time: 5-8 credits per semester

Full-time: 9-12 credits per semester

Students who work more than 20 hours a week should not register for more than 6 credits.

Failure to register for the minimum number of credits may lead to problems with student loans, with your degree completion deadline, or (for international students) with your student visa.

Half-Time / Full-Time Certification Request

There are times when a student is enrolled in fewer than the credit hours required for half-time or full time status, but because they are engaged in one of the following academic activities, they can request half-time or full-time certification: thesis research, capstone, cooperative education, preparing for comprehensive examination, and required internship/externship/practicum. The Half-Time/Full-Time Certification Request form is available on the [Registrar's website](#). This form needs to be signed by your DGS before being submitted to your CCAS Program Coordinator.

International students on an F-1 or J-1 visa must remain as full-time students for visa purposes. You should complete the Full-Time Certification Request form or the Reduced Course Load form, depending on your situation, available on the [International Services Office website](#).

You must be registered for the applicable semester before submitting your request.

Continuing Research (CR) and Continuous Enrollment (CE)

If you have completed all of your required course work, all special departmental requirements, and all thesis research requirements and are within the deadline to complete your program (see the Timeframe section of this handbook) you may register for one credit of Continuing Research (CR) each Fall and Spring semester until the completion of your degree. Continuing Research is listed in the [Schedule of Classes](#) under Columbian College as CCAS 0920 for Master's students.

Students must be enrolled in their final semester, so if you are completing your program in the Summer semester you may register for Continuous Enrollment (CE). Continuous Enrollment is a 0 credit course, so there is no tuition charge. To register for CE you must contact your CCAS Student Services Coordinator.

There is a special section of Continuous Enrollment designed for international students completing their degree requirements in the summer. While it is still zero credits, in order to comply with visa regulations the title of the course is Continuing Research. This is different from the 1 credit Continuing Research course (CCAS 0920) mentioned above, and you will need to contact your CCAS Student Services Coordinator in order to register.

Leave of Absence (LOA)

A Leave of Absence (LOA) is a period of time where you may be permitted to pause your study due to various reasons including financial difficulty, work commitments, medical emergencies, military deployment etc. Students will be permitted a LOA for no more than 2 semesters unless it is for a medical/family emergency or military deployment. You must apply for a LOA before or during the applicable semester. Retroactive LOA's will not be approved.

If your LOA request is approved, your Student Services Coordinator will inform you and submit the required registration paperwork to the Office of the Registrar. You will not have access to University facilities or resources, during an LOA.

You are not required to pay any tuition for an LOA.

Dropping and Adding Courses

If you drop a course or withdraw from your program before first day of classes of a semester, you will get a full refund, including all tuition and related fees. If you drop or withdraw after the start of the semester, the following financial penalties apply:

<i>Fall and Spring semester</i>	What you will be refunded
On or before the end of the 1 st week of the semester	90%
On or before the end of the 2 nd week of the semester	60%
On or before the end of the 3 rd week of the semester	40%
On or before the end of the 4 th week of the semester	25%
After the 4 th week of the semester	0%
<i>Summer semester</i>	What you will be refunded
Within the 1 st 7 calendar days of the summer session	85%
After the 1 st 7 calendar days of the summer session	0%

Off-campus courses and courses that do not follow the traditional semester may have a different refund schedule.

You may make adjustments to your registration by dropping and adding an equal number of credit hours, without penalty, during the first four weeks of the semester. **To ensure you are not charged you must drop a course and add an equivalent credit hour course within the same week, and you must do so using the same method, either through GWEB, or by using a Registration Transaction form available on the [Registrar's website](#).**

You may continue to adjust your schedule within the first 4 weeks of the semester. If you drop a course after the 4th week you will receive a grade of W (Withdrawn). You may not drop any classes after the 10th week.

Withdrawing from your Program

If you find it necessary to withdraw completely from the University you must notify the Office of Graduate Studies in writing. If you want to resume your degree at a later date, you will be required to reapply for admission. If you wish to resume your degree within 2 years of leaving the program, you may be required to back register for one credit hour for each semester spent away from the program.

Tuition

Students will be billed for tuition by the Office of Student Accounts after registering for courses. Tuition is program based so you pay tuition based on your program. Tuition rate is charged by credit hour. For example, students admitted to Foggy Bottom campus programs pay the on-campus tuition rate for any courses they register for, regardless of course format or location. Tuition rates can be found [here](#).

Academic Standing

All CCAS graduate students are required to maintain a cumulative degree/certificate GPA of at least 3.0 (B). However, there are some programs which may require a higher cumulative GPA. Please refer to the [Graduate Bulletin](#) for the minimum GPA requirement for your program.

Deficiency and prerequisite coursework (if required) are not included in calculating your cumulative degree GPA even though they may appear on your graduate transcript. These courses also do not count towards the credits required for your graduate degree/certificate.

Maintaining satisfactory academic standing is separate from the [Financial Aid](#) office satisfactory academic progress policy (SAP). SAP is required for all students who receive a federal loan. The SAP policy refers to your ability to access federal loans only and should not be confused with the Academic Standing Policy.

Probation and Termination

If you do not meet the minimum cumulative degree GPA required by your program, you may be put on academic probation or be terminated by your program. While on probation you may be limited in the number of credits you may take and you may no longer be able to receive any failing or incomplete grades. You will be informed by the Office of Graduate Studies of the conditions that have been attached to your probationary period.

Your cumulative degree/certificate GPA will be reviewed after your probationary period. If you have not met the conditions of your probation and increased your degree GPA to at least a 3.0, you may be terminated from your program. If you meet the requirements of your probation, you may be reinstated to good academic standing or remain on extended probation pending the recommendation of your academic department.

Your University transcript indicates your academic standing for the Fall and Spring semesters. If you maintain the minimum required GPA, your transcript will indicate *Good Standing*. If you are placed on probation, your standing will change to *Probation*. If you are terminated, no standing will appear on your transcript.

Degree Timeframe

All Master's students must complete all degree requirements within four years (8 semesters, not including summer). Certificate students must complete all academic requirements within a maximum of three calendar years (6 semesters, not including summer) from admission.

Students who have exceeded their CCAS program time limit must request an extension of time to degree in order to remain in the program. Requests for an extension on the completion of your degree requirements must include a detailed timeline for completion and must be approved by your DGS and forwarded to the Office of Graduate Studies for review by the Associate Dean. If your extension request is not approved, your degree candidacy will be terminated.

Transfer Credit

A maximum of one-quarter (25%) of the credit hours of graduate coursework required for your degree may be approved for transfer to a graduate program in Columbian College. These credits may come from enrollment in non-degree coursework at GW, or from another degree-granting school of GW, or another accredited college or university. For a transfer of credit to be approved, all of the following conditions must be met:

- Must be graduate-level work from an accredited institution
- Must have a grade of B or better
- Must have been taken no more than five years prior to admission
- Must not have been applied to the completion of requirements for another degree
- Must have approval from your Director of Graduate Studies
- An official transcript showing completion of the course work must be on file in the Office of Graduate Studies before the request can be considered

Requests for transfer credit must be submitted in writing and approved by your DGS and forwarded to the Office of Graduate Studies for review by the and the Associate Dean **during the first year in your program.**

Grades from transfer credit are not included in the calculation of your degree GPA unless they are courses taken at GW.

You are not permitted to transfer coursework taken outside the University once you have enrolled at GW, except under extraordinary circumstances; permission must be sought from your DGS and the Associate Dean in advance of registering for the course.

Double Counting Credit

Double counting credit are courses taken for more than one degree program simultaneously. Students must have been approved to be in a dual program before applying for double counted

credit. All courses have not yet been taken or are in progress (ungraded). Double counted credit must follow the criteria below:

- Students must apply for double counted credit in advance. Double counted credit will not be approved for courses already completed. Transfer credit rules will apply;
- Doubled counted credit will count towards the program requirements and program GPA;
- Students are not permitted to double count more than 25% of the credit required for the program;
- Double counted credit only works one-way i.e. you cannot double count courses from program 1 to program 2 and program 2 to program 1.

For example Program 1 is a 36 credit Masters program and Program 2 is a 12 credit Graduate Certificate program. Students have the option to double count 9 of the Graduate Certificate program into the Masters program OR 3 credits of the Masters program into the Graduate Certificate program. Should option 1 be used then all 9 credits may count only if the courses have not yet been completed. If some of the graduate certificates courses have been completed then only 3 credits (25%) will be accepted and it must be a grade of B or better.

Consortium Courses

GW is part of the Washington Metropolitan Area Consortium of Universities, which allows you the opportunity to enroll at other member institutions for courses that are not available at GW.

Participation in this program is open only to students who are located at the Foggy-Bottom or Mt. Vernon campuses (with the exception of Corcoran students). You must be in good academic standing in order to participate. With prior approval, **up to 9 credits** toward a master's degree. may be taken through the consortium. **In all cases, at least one-half (50%) of the hours counting toward your degree must be taken at GWU.** For example, if you receive 7 transfer credits to a 30 credit hour program, then you may only take 8 consortium credits.

Access to Consortium courses is not guaranteed as priority is given to students enrolled at the home institution. DGS approval and the GWU equivalent course number on the Consortium Registration form are required for the Associate Dean's review. Please visit the [Registrar's website](#) to obtain the form and for more information on Consortium courses.

Transferring Programs/ Dual Enrollment

Transferring Programs

If you are contemplating a transfer to another school or program within GWU you must consult with your current Director of Graduate Studies as well as with the Director of Graduate Studies in the program to which you are considering transferring. Transfers to another program within the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences require the submission of a petition form signed by both Departments, and forwarded to the Office of Graduate Studies for review by the Associate

Dean. It is not guaranteed that prior completed GWU courses will transfer to your new program. If you have a graduate award, it is not guaranteed that any awards or assistantships are transferable to a new program of study. All transfer requests must be a part of your petition to transfer.

Transfers to a program at another school within the University require a formal graduate application to that particular GWU school. Current Master's students who wish to apply for a PhD must do so through the [online graduate application system](#).

Dual Enrollment

Students are not permitted to be registered in two programs simultaneously, whether the program is within or outside of GWU, unless the program is an approved Combined, Dual or Joint degree program, or if you have your DGS and the Associate Dean's prior approval. If you are interested in registering in a second program, you must request the Associate Dean's approval by completing a Dual Degree Enrollment form. All students should complete this form before completing any double counted courses.

International Students

English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

International students who have a TOEFL score below 100 or an IELTS score below a 7.0 (with no individual band score below a 6.0) are required to satisfactorily complete an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course in the first semester. Your admission letter will indicate which EAP course you are required to take.

EAP 6110: Academic Writing and Research I (3 credits)

EAP 6111: Academic Writing and Research II (3 credits)

You will take a short exam in the first class of the semester to ensure you are in the correct EAP course. You may need to change EAP courses if the results of your exam indicate another course is better suited for you.

The EAP course credits do not count towards your degree credit requirements or your degree GPA. If you do not successfully complete the EAP course, you may be required to take the course again, or you may be put on academic probation or terminated from your degree program.

For additional information on the content of each course, please visit the [EAP website](#).

International Student Health Insurance

It is mandatory for all GWU international students on an F-1 or J-1 visa to have adequate health insurance while registered as a GWU student. Consequently, all international students are automatically enrolled in the University Student Health plan. You may choose to opt-out of the plan if you already have an adequate health insurance policy that meets the University's minimum requirements. To opt-out of the GWU plan, you must submit an online waiver before the following dates:

Fall – September 30

Spring – January 31

Please visit the [student health website](#) for more information on the GW health insurance plan, minimum coverage requirements and how to opt-out.

Graduation and Degree Completion

Degrees are conferred in January, May, and August, and the Commencement ceremony is held in mid-May.

In order to have your degree conferred, you must apply to graduate through the Student Records menu in GWeb.

Certificate students must complete the Application for Certificate Completion, which must be downloaded from the [Registrar's website](#) and submitted to your Program Coordinator.

Application deadlines can be found on the [Registrar's website](#). If you do not apply by the published deadlines, you will need to use a paper application form, and you will be charged a \$35 late fee.

You must be registered in the semester in which you are intending to graduate. If you are graduating in a Summer semester, you may be eligible for the zero credit Continuous Enrollment (please see the Continuing Research/Continuous Enrollment section of this handbook).

To be cleared to graduate, you must have a cumulative degree GPA of at least 3.0 (greater for some programs). In addition, the University requires that each student's [DegreeMAP](#) record show 100% completion of credits and 100% completion of degree requirements.

If you cannot be cleared to graduate in your intended semester, you must register and re-apply for graduation for the following semester or summer session.

Participating in CCAS Celebration and University Commencement

The CCAS celebration and University Commencement ceremonies are held in mid-May. To be eligible to participate, you must have applied to graduate in the Spring semester, or the preceding Summer or Fall semesters. Participation in Commencement ceremonies does not confirm program completion. Master's students who have 9 or fewer credits required for the degree, and will be completing these credits in the summer following the May ceremonies, may participate in Celebration and Commencement. Certificate students are not eligible to participate in Celebration or Commencement; individual Certificate programs often hold their own Celebrations.

For example:

Graduation in May 2018

You may participate in the celebration and commencement ceremonies only if you complete your program in Summer 2017, Fall 2017, Spring 2018 or are a

Master's student with no more than 9 credits left which you will complete in Summer 2018.

You may not participate if you are completing in Fall 2018. The CCAS Celebration is normally held on the Friday morning of Commencement Weekend but is subject to change. The University Commencement is held on the National Mall on the Sunday of Commencement Weekend.

Master's Degree Special Requirements

Master's Comprehensive Examination

Many programs require a Master's Comprehensive Examination. Examinations are held on dates fixed by the departments. If you fail to pass the Master's Comprehensive Examination you may, with the approval of the department, repeat the examination at the next scheduled examination date. If your department does not approve a second attempt, your degree candidacy will be terminated. If you fail a second time, no further opportunity to take the examination is permitted, and your degree candidacy is terminated.

Thesis

The main purposes of a master's thesis are to demonstrate your ability to make independent use of information and training and to furnish objective evidence of constructive powers in a chosen field. Students register for 3- 6 credit hours of thesis research. Registration for thesis research entitles you to the advice of the member of the faculty under whose direction the thesis is to be written. The faculty members who will direct the thesis must approve the thesis subject. All theses must be submitted electronically and meet the formatting and other requirements set forth on the [Electronic Theses and Dissertations \(ETD\) website](#). You will be assigned grades of IPG for Thesis Research until your thesis is approved and submitted. Once complete, your thesis is assigned a grade of CR (credit); no letter grade is given for your thesis. All theses must have a Director and a Reader. If your Director is outside GW and has been approved by your department, you must have a GWU faculty member serve as Co-Director.

Final Examination

The Final Examination or thesis defense is designed, scheduled, and administered by your department. It is an oral examination conducted by the thesis committee, which consists of your director and one reader at a minimum. Your current or prospective immediate supervisor of employment is not permitted to be a reader. Please consult with your department for any additional guidelines for your thesis defense.

Once you have successfully completed the Final Examination and the Committee has verified that any required revisions to the thesis have been made, you must complete the following steps:

- Upload your thesis through the [Electronic Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\) website](#);
- Submit the advisor signed [ETD Approval Form](#);

These materials must be submitted by the deadline dates posted on the ETD website for the semester in which you are graduating. If you do not submit the required materials by the deadline, CCAS will not be able to clear you for graduation. You will then need to register for the next semester and reapply for graduation.

[Formatting guidelines](#) are noted on the ETD site. The guidelines are designed to produce documents that are uniform in style, but they also allow for the particular requirements of various disciplines.

Your thesis will first be sent to the Gelman Library for approval. Once approved by Gelman, it will be forwarded to CCAS for a final check. You may receive instructions from Gelman or CCAS to make changes and upload a revised edition of your work. The student will be notified by email once the thesis has been approved and forwarded to ProQuest/UMI. Requested changes must be submitted by the set deadline in order for CCAS to clear you for graduation.

You must pay ProQuest/UMI fee directly on line. The amount charged will depend on the publishing option chosen by you. GW recommends students choose the Open Access option in the interest of making their scholarship as accessible as possible.

Accepted theses and any accompanying illustrations become the property of the University. The University is to be given credit for material used in the publication of any portion of your thesis, whether as a direct quotation or as an adaptation.

Human Research Requirements

If you are planning to conduct research at GW using human subjects, which will yield generalizable knowledge in the form of a journal article, poster presentation, or Master's thesis, you must obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before collecting data. Once you have defended your proposal to your committee, you can initiate the process by:

- Downloading and completing the Non-Medical Submission checklist and Non-Medical Submission form. These items can be obtained from the [Office of Human Research website](#).
- Preparing a submission packet. You can refer to the submission checklist in order to decipher what you will need to turn in.

If you have any questions about this process, you may contact the Office of Human Research at any time by calling (202) 994-2715.

Failure to obtain IRB approval will result in the following:

- You will not be allowed to collect data until you obtain IRB approval.
- You will not be allowed to use the data collected for the intended research purposes. You may be asked to re-register for your thesis research credits and start the data collection phase over again.
- You will not be allowed to use the data collected for future research, i.e., you will not be able to use the information to publish or as the basis for a future study.
- If the study is funded, you will not have access to the funds.

Rights and Responsibilities and Academic Integrity

Student Rights and Responsibilities

The University's Statement of [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) is available from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. This statement includes the Code of Student Conduct which defines student behavior that is considered to be disruptive to the academic enterprise and life within the campus community. The Code also details the procedures by which the University takes disciplinary action against students who violate the provisions of the Code.

Student Grade Appeals are handled through the [Columbian College of Arts and Sciences Arbitrary or Capricious Academic Evaluation](#) procedures.

Academic Integrity

The University community, in order to fulfill its purposes, must establish and maintain guidelines of academic behavior. All members of the community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Incoming students have a special responsibility to acquaint themselves with, and make use of, all proper procedures of doing research, writing papers, and taking examinations.

Members of the community will be presumed to be familiar with the proper academic procedures and held responsible for applying them. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with such procedures will be considered academic dishonesty. Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels.

Copies of the [University Code of Academic Integrity](#) can be obtained from the following offices: all department chairs, all academic deans, the Registrar, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs or online.