CU Boulder on Coursera: Graduate Program Policies and Procedures

Overview

Graduate programs at CU Boulder are governed by the University's and Graduate School's [rules and policies](). CU Boulder on Coursera programs are unique among graduate programs at the University. Their modality, admissions policies, course design, and other characteristics warrant some distinct policies and procedures. Policies that are unique to CU Boulder on Coursera (administratively referred to as B3) are detailed below and will be reviewed as necessary, and at a minimum on an annual basis, by the Graduate School, Office of the Registrar, and other campus partners. Proposed changes must be reviewed and approved through the appropriate governance channels.

This policy manual should be used in tandem with the [University Catalog]() and the [Graduate School Rules](). In addition, students should refer to the appropriate program handbook to understand program-specific admissions requirements (pathways, minimum grade requirements, etc.), curriculum requirements, procedures, policies and information.

Admissions

CU Boulder on Coursera programs are designed to be low-touch and typically have performance-based admissions criteria and processes.

To be admitted, students must meet all the following requirements. Individual programs may have stricter requirements. Refer to program handbooks for program-specific admissions policies, requirements and processes.

- Satisfactorily complete the pathway specialization (subset of specific courses) specified by each program
- Achieve a separately computed GPA of at least 3.0 in the pathway courses
- Have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 for all for-credit courses taken to date
- Declare their intent to seek the degree for the program according to established business processes

Six times per year, at the end of each session, students who meet all performance-based requirements for their declared program of study are automatically admitted.

Financial Policies

Tuition

Tuition is assessed at a linear rate based on credit hours, and may vary by program. Students are granted access to for-credit components of a course after their tuition has been paid and verified, all onboarding steps have been completed, and all holds removed.

If a tuition payment does not process successfully and/or students have a past due balance, a financial hold is placed on the student's account and the student will be prevented from registering for courses at CU Boulder until the past due amount is paid in full. Former or current CU Boulder students wishing to enroll in a CU Boulder on Coursera program who have unpaid debts to the university may have these debts deducted from payments made to the Coursera-based programs and before those tuition charges are paid. If applicable, the students may be dropped from enrolled classes for non-payments or invalid payments. The Bursar's Office will collect on the unpaid balance according to its collection policies.

If a student enrolled in a Coursera-based program wishes to take additional courses on Main Campus or through Continuing Education, they must enroll through the appropriate channels and will be charged separately for those courses. Students will also be required to pay the required mandatory fees associated with their new enrollment.

In consultation with University Counsel and Budget and Fiscal Planning, CU Boulder on Coursera programs are offered as auxiliary programs. This designation allows CU Boulder to charge the same tuition to resident and non-resident students. It also prevents these enrollments from impacting CU Boulder's mandated resident and non-resident student ratios.

The CU Employee Tuition Assistance Benefit cannot be applied toward auxiliary-funded programs, per Administrative Policy Statement (APS) 5024. Auxiliaries are those funds that account for units and activities that generate their own revenue to support the expenses of the individual program.

In addition, courses taken in these programs are not eligible for coverage by Research Assistant/Teaching Assistant (RA/TA) waivers.

Courses taken in CU Boulder on Coursera programs are eligible for third-party sponsorship. The students are required to make a payment at the time of enrollment request. The students will receive a refund once the University receives the sponsorship authorization and the sponsorship applies to the student accounts.

Tuition/Fee information is available on the Bursar's Office website.

The tuition appeal/dispute process is available for the students in CU Boulder on Coursera programs, refer to the Bursar's Office website tuition dispute process. Non-attendance cannot be used as a reason for tuition dispute for these programs.

Student Fees

Students enrolled in CU Boulder on Coursera programs and courses only pay mandatory fees if specifically designated by campus via the Budget and Fiscal Planning office. Most often, these programs will pay fewer fees, or no fees at all. Students in these programs are therefore not eligible for on-campus student services and are not eligible for CU Boulder student health insurance or required to meet the Main Campus mandatory insurance requirements. For additional information regarding officially approved tuition and fee rates, refer to the Bursar's Office website.

Financial Aid

No federal financial aid is administered for CU Boulder on Coursera programs.

Academic Records and Policies

Credentials

Master's Degrees

A master's degree requires a minimum of 30 credit hours of approved, degree-eligible graduate-level coursework and a minimum cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of 3.00. Courses in which grades below C (2.0) are received may not be applied toward degree requirements. Individual programs may have additional GPA requirements.

Students wishing to complete degrees in more than one program must complete all the requirements for both degrees, with no shared or overlapping course work.

Graduate Certificates

Where applicable, students may enroll in graduate certificates as either non-degree or degree-seeking students. A graduate certificate is a sequence of courses totaling 9–12 credit hours that has been approved by the Graduate School at CU Boulder. To be eligible for a certificate, students must have a separately computed minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 across courses applicable toward the certificate. Courses in which grades below C (2.0) are received may not be applied toward certificate requirements but will count toward the overall cumulative GPA. Individual programs may have additional GPA requirements. Degree-seeking students may pursue and stack one or more CU Boulder graduate certificates toward a 30-credit (minimum) master's degree if the program policies and curriculum allow for or require this.

Students wishing to complete more than one certificate must complete all the requirements for each certificate, with no shared or overlapping course work.

Prior to Fall 2025 students enrolled in a degree program will be automatically awarded certificates that are part of that program upon completion of the requirements. Students pursuing certificates outside of their primary degree program must enroll in a course in the intended certificate program using the appropriate program-specific enrollment form.

Beginning Fall 2025, all CU Boulder on Coursera students must officially declare any certificates they intend to pursue in order for a certificate to be conferred.

Diploma and Certificate Conferral

Degrees and certificates are conferred up to six times annually. Diplomas and certificates are issued to graduating students and certificate completers in both paper and digital formats approximately one month after they are posted to academic records and transcripts.

Calendar and Sessions

Classes taken for CU Boulder credit are offered in defined 8-week sessions (two sessions within each standard term of fall, spring, and summer) throughout the calendar year.

See [CU Boulder on Coursera calendar](#) for specific dates.

Courses and Curriculum

Non-credit courses offered on the Coursera platform include content, discussion forums, and homework assignments of level and scope similar to assignments made in an equivalent on-campus course in the same subject. Typically, non-credit courses taught by CU Boulder are the foundation for for-credit CU Boulder on Coursera courses. Non-credit courses and specializations completed through Coursera do not carry CU Boulder credit and are not recorded on CU Boulder transcripts.

A course is only considered credit-bearing when a student enrolls in the for-credit session of the course by paying CU Boulder tuition. Enrolling in a course for credit enables access to additional course content and assessments or project-based assignments.

There are no course prerequisites or corequisites for courses. Nevertheless, it is important that students are prepared for individual courses. Course descriptions advise students of assumed incoming knowledge, and students are strongly encouraged to take course sequences in the order they are presented on the Coursera platform.

Students may track their progress toward degrees and certificates in the degree audit system, accessible through [Buff Portal](#).

Time Limit

Courses used toward the degree must have been completed within eight years of the degree conferral date. Courses completed, but which fall outside this window, will appear on the transcript and be calculated in the cumulative GPA but may not be used toward the degree. Students may continue to pursue the degree, but must accrue 30 credits within an eight-year window to earn the degree.

The restriction is applied to courses on a rolling basis and is determined by the date that credit was awarded in the course.

Transfer, Test and Prior Learning Credit

At this time, credits earned at other institutions or in other Main Campus programs at the University of Colorado Boulder, including those administered by Continuing Education, are not transferable to graduate programs hosted on Coursera.

Credits earned from Coursera-based courses may be used toward other Coursera-hosted credentials and may be transferred to other CU Boulder graduate degree programs at the discretion of the program and of the Graduate School in accordance with program-specific requirements and Graduate School rules and limits.

Credit for prior learning may only be awarded in accordance with CU Boulder's Credit for Prior Learning [policy](#).

Enrollment

When a student enrolled in a non-credit version of a course (paying only a Coursera subscription fee) elects to upgrade to the for-credit version of the course, most work performed in the non-credit portion of the course (e.g. assignments and quizzes) transfers with the student to the for-credit option. Due to their interactive nature, discussion board posts and peer-graded assignments may not transfer from session to session.

Students may upgrade and pay tuition at any time during the enrollment period, including after completion of the non-credit course. The student may then continue to complete the remaining assignments, exams, and assessments.

Once a student has established a CU Boulder student profile, they may continue to register for credit-bearing courses on Coursera in subsequent sessions directly through CU Boulder as long as they remain eligible and in good standing.

All students pursuing CU Boulder credit begin in a non-degree student status until the term they complete the performance based admissions requirements and declare their intent to pursue a specific degree. Curriculum requirements for each certificate and degree are based on the first term of enrollment, as opposed to the term in which students are officially admitted

to the specific program. Beginning Fall 2025, once a student officially declares a degree program, and is admitted, the curriculum requirements for each degree are based on the term the student declares the respective degree. Certificate requirements are based on the term that a student officially declares the certificate.

Students are allowed to enroll in a maximum of 15 units per term (session 1 & session 2 combined).

Course Repetition and Grade Replacement

The Grade Replacement Policy allows students in eligible courses with qualifying grades, to repeat courses and replace credits in the cumulative GPA calculation. In this process, all courses attempted will still appear on the transcript. Students may repeat as many different courses as they like, but some programs may have restrictions on the number of times the same course can be repeated and applied to the degree. Refer to the program-specific policies.

Course Drops, Tuition Refunds, Withdrawals

Classes on Coursera have flexible start dates, and all drops, tuition refunds, withdrawals and grades are handled at the individual class level. It is the student's responsibility to monitor these deadlines. Neither CU Boulder nor Coursera are responsible for notifying students of these deadlines.

Add/Drop information is found on the CU on Coursera calendar.

Course Drop and Refund: Students may drop a class if they are within the initial drop-with-refund period of 14 days from the class start date or enrollment date (whichever is later)**.** Students are eligible to drop a class only if they have not accessed the final assessment (this may be in the form of an exam) nor received a final grade. When a course is dropped by the 100% refund deadline, it will not appear on the student's academic transcript.

Withdrawal: Students who request to drop classes after the initial drop with refund deadline and who have not unlocked the restricted content (typically a final assessment or equivalent) may withdraw from classes until the session end date. When a student withdraws from a class under these conditions, they are not eligible for a refund and will receive a grade of W on their academic transcript. Students who have not unlocked the restricted content by the end of their enrolled session will be administratively withdrawn from the class, earning a W grade on their academic transcript and becoming ineligible for a refund.

W grades have no bearing on the student's GPA and credit totals.

Swapping: Students are unable to swap classes from one session to another. Students must drop a class from one session and then pay for and enroll in the class in a future session.

Student Discontinuance

Students will be discontinued in the following scenarios:

- The student completes the Personally Identifiable Information (PII) form during their first term but does not end up enrolling in that term.
- The student begins a program but does not enroll in a course for two consecutive years.
- The student enrolls but subsequently drops all of their classes during the initial drop-with-refund period of their first term.

Discontinued students, who enroll in course credits in a later term, will be automatically reinstated. Prior to fall 2025, students who return to their program after being discontinued will follow the curricular requirements in effect during their initial term of enrollment. Beginning Fall 2025 onward, students who return to their program after being discontinued will follow the curricular requirements in effect during their reinstated term of enrollment

Students in CU Boulder on Coursera programs are not eligible to apply for a leave of absence when not enrolled in courses.

Program Withdrawal

Students may formally withdraw from the program by completing and submitting the [CU Boulder on Coursera Program Discontinuation form](#).

Grading and Academic Standing

Grading

At the session end date, a final letter grade is recorded on the student's CU Boulder academic transcript. Students who access a final assessment (or equivalent) are ineligible for a drop, withdrawal or refund, and are assigned a final grade. See [Course Drops, Tuition Refunds, Withdrawals](#) for details.

Requests for grade changes must be made within one year of grade assignment. If approved, the department submits these to the Office of the Registrar. Grade changes are not accepted for courses applied to a program in which students have already been awarded a degree or certificate.

Academic Standing

Students admitted to degree programs are expected to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher to be in good academic standing in the program and to earn the degree. If a student's cumulative GPA falls below 3.00, the student is considered on academic warning.

The student will remain on academic warning until the cumulative GPA is raised to 3.00, at which point the student is returned to good academic standing. If a student's cumulative GPA falls below 2.50, they will be academically dismissed from the degree program. If the program allows, such students may continue to take for-credit courses in a non-degree seeking status, but are not eligible to earn a degree. To be reinstated to the degree program after dismissal, the student must raise their cumulative GPA to 3.00 and complete the other requirements for admission. Student academic standing is reviewed at the end of each term.

The degree will not be awarded until the minimum 3.00 cumulative GPA has been achieved.

Program Faculty and Degree Governance

All CU Boulder graduate courses must be designed and taught by instructors with Graduate School faculty status.

Programs hosted on Coursera are typically overseen by a faculty director and an oversight or steering committee. The committee is typically charged with overseeing and assessing the degree program, adjudicating grade appeals and program-level grievances, and reviewing program-specific processes and policies annually. The committee will work within their college (where applicable) and Graduate School protocols and other campus departments, as appropriate. Requests for modifications to policies that relate to the Graduate School, CU Boulder, or University of Colorado system will be subject to standard academic and campus review processes.

Related Services, Information, and Processes

Career Services and Alumni Association

Students who are admitted to a degree program will receive access to career platforms, services and resources via CU Boulder Career Services and the ForeverBuffs alumni network.

Accommodations for Disabilities

Students who qualify for accommodations because of a disability must submit their accommodation letter to their program in a timely manner to ensure their needs are addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities

in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](). Disability Services may also be reached at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu. Students with a temporary medical condition should be referred to [Temporary Medical Conditions]().

Academic Dishonesty and Honor Code

The University of Colorado Boulder takes issues of academic dishonesty extremely seriously.

Students in all of CU Boulder's courses, whether non-credit or for-credit, are expected to perform to the highest standards of academic honesty.

Students enrolled in for-credit courses are members of the CU Boulder's community and are subject to the university's [Honor Code](). Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threats, unauthorized access to academic materials, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty.

Students are specifically expected to turn in original work and cite portions created by other authors. If a student has doubts regarding what collaboration is permissible in the course, the student should consult the instructor or instructional team directly.

Students who violate the Honor Code are subject to discipline. The instructor of record has up to 40 days from discovery of a suspected violation to [report the incident,]() and has jurisdiction over all academic sanctions for academic dishonesty. Non-academic sanctions may also be imposed by the Honor Code Committee for students found responsible. Any suspected violations of the Honor Code, including reports of violation from a proctoring service, will be submitted to the CU Boulder Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (honor@colorado.edu; 303-492-5550).

Grade replacement will not apply in cases of Honor Code violation as determined by the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

Academic Petitions, Appeals, and Grievance Issues

The *Higher Education Opportunity Act* requires institutions of higher education to disclose and make available to current and prospective students safety-related, financial, graduation rate, athletics, and cost information, as well as instructions on how to obtain more information.

Students may review these required disclosures for CU Boulder at the [Student Right To Know]() website. Current University policies and procedures on [Student Appeals, Complaints, and Grievances]() may be found in this guide.

Grade Appeals

The instructor of record has primary authority and responsibility in all aspects of evaluating student course performance and assigning grades.

If a student believes that a course grade is incorrect, the student should first contact the course facilitator or instructor of record. If there is no resolution at this level, the student may make a formal, written grade appeal to the program faculty director.

The written grade appeal must document the basis for the appeal and should state the specific remedy desired by the student. The appeal should include the following information:

1. The student's name
2. The course, section, and date
3. The details of the case, including the steps taken to resolve and, if a specific test or homework is concerned, the nature of the problem
4. The student's desired outcome

The appeal must be submitted in accordance with the college or school grade appeal policy, or within 30 days of the conclusion of the course. The instructor of record will be given an opportunity to respond in writing to the faculty director regarding the student's appeal.

If the faculty director finds that the grade has been improperly or unprofessionally assigned, they can forward the appeal to the program oversight committee or an ad hoc committee.

Under these circumstances, the faculty director will present the case, but will not vote. In accordance with college or school policy, the committee will recommend that either (1) the original grade stands, or (2) a revised grade should be assigned. The committee will submit a short written statement summarizing the reasons for its recommendation and submit an official change of grade request. Only faculty may vote on grade appeals.

In cases where the instructor or student does not agree with the committee recommendation, the faculty director shall submit all materials to the dean of the college where the course is rostered (or a designee), who will make a final decision on the student's grade appeal. There is no further appeal.

Complaints and Grievances

In general, petitions, appeals and grievances should be handled at the lowest level possible, within the individual course if appropriate. Students who have a complaint or grievance are encouraged to first seek resolution and/or file a complaint with the appropriate person or office at the university.

For non-grade related course complaints, students should initiate their grievance regarding discussion forum, content, assessment, and course issues with the course facilitators or instructor. The course facilitator or instructor can escalate the concern through program leadership as applicable.

Students and programs must follow the [Graduate School Process and Procedures (P&P)](#) for formal academic grievances which fall within the Graduate School's jurisdiction. The P&P document includes information regarding other types of concerns, which follow different processes for consideration and resolution.

For students who are located outside of Colorado in another State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA) member-state, territory, or the District of Columbia, and are not satisfied with the outcome of the university's internal processes, complaints including those relating to allegations of dishonest or fraudulent activity, the veracity of marketing materials, complete and accurate admission requirements for courses and programs, transfer, job placement rates, tuition and fees, etc.(see section [4.2 in the SARA Policy Manual](#) for the complete list of consumer protection issues), may be brought to the [Colorado State Portal Entity at the Colorado Department of Higher Education](#):

> Director - Office of Private Postsecondary Education
> Colorado Department of Higher Education
> 1600 Broadway, Suite 2200 Denver, CO 80202
> heather.delange@dhe.state.co.us

Resolution of the complaint by the Colorado Department of Higher Education is final.

For students located in a non-SARA member state while enrolled in education offered by the University of Colorado Boulder, including **California,** may file a complaint with the Colorado Department of Higher Education, as noted above, or with the state or territory where the student is located:

> California Department of Consumer Affairs
> Consumer Information Center
> 1625 North Market Blvd., Suite N-112
> Sacramento, CA 95834
> p: (833) 942-1120
> dca@dca.ca.gov

For additional questions about how SARA consumer protection provisions assist students, please review NC-SARA's [Student Complaint Process](#).

Regardless of location, if students are unsatisfied with the resolution and all other avenues provided have been exhausted, unresolved complaints may be filed with the [Higher Learning Commission](#), the University's accreditor.

> Higher Learning Commission
> 230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500
> Chicago, IL 60604
> Telephone: 800-621-7440
> info@hlcommission.org
> [www.hlcommission.org](#)

Discrimination and Harassment

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, protected-class discrimination and harassment, and related retaliation by or against members of our community. These behaviors harm individuals and our community. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these policies, and individuals who believe they have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, reporting options, and support resources can be found on the OIEC website.

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when they are made aware of any issues related to these policies regardless of when or where they occurred to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about their rights, support resources, and resolution options. One of the free, confidential resources to help someone explore their options and receive trauma-informed counseling is CU's Office of Victim Assistance (OVA), 303-492-8855.

To learn more about reporting and support options for a variety of concerns, visit Don't Ignore It.

Connectivity Issues

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have a stable exam environment when completing course assessments, including proctored exams. CU Boulder and any external platform are not responsible for internet connectivity issues.

Concerns regarding platform issues should be directed to Coursera's technical support team.

University Accreditation

The University of Colorado Boulder is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The University's accreditation includes programs delivered via correspondence and distance education. Approval/accreditation (correspondence/auxiliary issues etc.). Additional approval may be required for new or expanded programs.

State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements

The University of Colorado participates in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) - an agreement among states, territories, and the District of Columbia that establishes a level of quality in distance education and offers consumer protection to students. As a

participant in SARA, the University of Colorado Boulder agrees to comply with applicable state and federal regulations in order to offer educational opportunities outside of Colorado.

Students are encouraged to review and understand how the university participating in SARA benefits them: SARA for Students.

International Students: International Students are advised to understand and be apprised of the norms, rules, regulations, and requirements related to online distance education programs in their country of residence, particularly if the country will charge any additional taxes, withholdings, or fees associated with online distance education programs.

International students are encouraged to contact the International Student and Scholar Services in the Office of International Education if they have any questions.

Program-specific Information

Program-specific policies and information beyond what is included in this document may be found on program sites or in program handbooks. This may include information such as specific admissions requirements (e.g., pathway coursework requirements for performance based admissions etc.), certificate and degree curriculum requirements, and academic policies that are more restrictive than the above B3 policies.

Endorsed by:

Katherine Eggert, Vice Chancellor and Senior Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Assessment

Robert McDonald, Dean of the University Libraries and Senior Vice Provost of Online Education

Approved by:

E. Scott Adler, Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs along with the Graduate School Executive Advisory Council (February 3, 2021)

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