

Boulder3 (B3) Graduate Program Policies

Overview	2
Admissions	2
Financial Policies	2
Academic Policies	3
Transfer of Credit	3
Master's Degree	3
Graduate Certificates	3
Academic Standing	4
Time Limit	4
Academic Records and Policies	4
Course Repetition and Replacement	4
Course Drops, Tuition Refunds, Withdrawals, and Grades	5
Student Discontinuance	5
Program Withdrawal	6
Program faculty and Degree Governance	6
Services and Processes	6
Career Services and Alumni Association	6
Diplomas	6
Academic Dishonesty and Honor Code	6
Accommodations for disabilities	7
Academic Petition, Appeal, and Grievance Issues	7
Petitions	7
Connectivity Issues	8
Grade Appeals	8
Grievances	9
Discrimination and Harassment	9
State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA), Complaints, and University Accreditation	9
Accreditation and Designations	10
Additional policies for programs hosted on the Coursera platform	11
Courses and Curriculum	11
For-Credit Courses and CU Boulder Credentials	12

Prerequisites and Assumed Background Knowledge	12
Time Limit	12
Calendar and Course Sessions	12

Additional program-specific policies:	13
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Overview

Graduate programs at CU Boulder are governed by the University’s and Graduate School’s [rules and policies](#). Because programs set up on the Boulder3 (B3) campus of CU Boulder are unique among graduate programs at the University of Colorado Boulder in terms of modality, admissions policies, and course design, they also have a number of distinct policies and procedures. Policies that are unique to programs housed on 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 as appropriate. Proposed changes must be reviewed and approved through the appropriate workflows.

In addition to utilizing this policy guide, students should refer to the appropriate program handbook to understand program-specific policies.

Programs hosted on the Coursera platform may have specific policies called out throughout this document and are also listed together at the end of this document.

Admissions

Programs on B3 typically have low-touch and/or performance-based admissions criteria and processes. Programs that are not approved for performance-based admissions require applicants to have an awarded and verified baccalaureate degree. Refer to the program-specific policies for admissions requirements and processes.

Financial Policies

Tuition

Tuition is assessed at a linear rate based on credit hours. Refer to the [Bursar Office’s website](#) for officially approved tuition rates. Students are granted access to for-credit components of a course after their tuition has been paid and verified.

Former or current CU Boulder students wishing to enroll in a B3 program who have unpaid debts will have these debts automatically deducted from payments made to B3 programs and before B3 tuition charges are paid.

If a student enrolled in a B3 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.

In consultation with University Counsel and the Chief Financial Officer's office, B3 programs on the Coursera platform are offered as auxiliary programs. This designation allows CU Boulder to charge the same tuition to resident and non-resident students. It also prevents B3 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 (fund 2x's) are those funds that account for units and activities that generate their own revenue to support the expenses of the individual program. See Additional Policies for programs hosted on the Coursera platform for additional information.

Courses taken in B3 programs are not eligible for coverage by RA/TA waivers.

If a tuition payment does not process successfully, a financial hold is placed on the student's account and the student will be prevented from registering for future courses at CU Boulder until the outstanding amount is paid in full.

Student Fees

Student fees will be set in accordance with [campus policy](#).

For additional information regarding tuition and fees, refer to program-specific policies.

Financial Aid

At this time, no federal financial aid will be administered in these programs.

Academic Policies

Transfer of Credit

At this time, credits earned at other institutions or in other programs at the University of Colorado Boulder are not transferable to graduate B3 programs.

Credits earned in B3 programs 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.

Master's Degree

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.

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. Certificate courses in which grades below C (2.0) are received may not be applied toward the certificate requirements but will count toward the overall cumulative GPA. The graduate certificate credential is conferred by the CU Boulder campus.

Degree-seeking students may pursue and stack one or more CU Boulder graduate certificates toward a 30-credit master's degree if the program policies and curriculum allow for or require this.

Students may not double count courses between multiple certificates.

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 in *academic recovery*.

The student will remain in academic recovery 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.

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

Time Limit

Courses used toward the degree must have been completed within six years of the degree conferral date. Courses completed, but which fall outside of 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 a six-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.

For programs offered on the Coursera platform, courses used toward the degree must have been completed within eight years of the degree conferral date.

Academic Records and Policies

Course Repetition and Replacement

Course Repetition: The cumulative GPA and credit totals are based on all courses attempted.

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. Refer to the program-specific policies.

Grade Replacement: The [Grade Replacement Policy](#) allows students admitted to a master's degree program to replace up to six credits in the cumulative GPA calculation. In this process, all courses attempted will still appear on the transcript, but only the last attempt will be calculated in the cumulative GPA and credit totals.

Course Drops, Tuition Refunds, Withdrawals, and Grades

For B3 programs that have flexible course start dates, all drops, tuition refunds, withdrawals and grades are handled at the individual course level. It is the student's responsibility to monitor these deadlines. CU Boulder and, if applicable, Coursera are not responsible for notifying students of these deadlines.

Course Drop and Refund: Class or session lengths determine the date by which students must request a drop to receive a 100% tuition refund, in accordance with University and CU System policy. These deadlines are typically prorated based on a regular semester calendar. Refer to the program-specific policies for details. 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) or received a final grade. When a course is dropped by the 100% refund deadline, it will not appear on the student's record.

Withdrawal: Students who request to drop the course after the initial drop with refund deadline and who have not accessed the final assessment (or equivalent) may withdraw from the course until the session end date. When a student withdraws from a course under these conditions, they are not eligible for a refund and will receive a grade of W on their academic record. W grades have no bearing on the student's GPA and credit total.

Certain programs may offer classes of different term lengths (three week capstone, etc.) with variable drop and withdrawal deadlines. Refer to the program-specific policies for more information.

Grades: Students who access a final assessment (or equivalent) are ineligible for a drop, withdrawal, or refund, and are assigned a final grade.

Upon completion of all required coursework, students are assigned final grades in their enrolled classes. At the session end date, a final letter grade is recorded on the student's CU Boulder transcript.

Some programs may have restrictions on Incomplete (I) grade assignments and/or the Pass/Fail student grading option. See program-specific policies.

Requests for grade changes must be made within one year of grade assignment. If approved, the department must submit these by the end of the same year. Grade changes are not accepted for students who have already earned a degree in the B3 program.

For programs housed on the Coursera platform, students who complete some but not all coursework and who do not attempt the final assessment (or equivalent) will be assigned administrative Ws after the session end date passes.

Student Discontinuance

Students are not required to take a minimum number of credit hours over any given period of time and are not required to apply for a leave of absence when not enrolled in courses. However, students who have not enrolled for two years will be discontinued until they enroll in a new for-credit course. At that point, the student will automatically be reinstated.

Program Withdrawal

Students may formally withdraw from the program by completing and submitting the university withdrawal form.

Program faculty and Degree Governance

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

Programs on B3 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 with the Graduate School and other campus stakeholders. Requests for modifications to program policies that relate to Graduate School, CU Boulder, or University of Colorado system policies will be subject to standard academic and campus review processes. See program-specific policies for specific program governance information.

Related Services, Information, and Processes

Career Services and Alumni Association

Students who are admitted into a degree program will receive access to Handshake and other selected services and resources via CU Boulder Career Services and the ForeverBuffs alumni network.

Diplomas

Degrees are conferred at least three times annually. Diplomas and certificates are issued to graduating students and certificate completers in both paper and digital formats.

Accommodations for disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#).

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 not-for-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 [Honor Code](#) Office's policies and procedures. Information on the Honor Code can be found at [the Honor Code Office website](#).

Students who violate the Honor Code are subject to discipline. 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.

Any suspected violations of the Honor Code, including reports of violation from a proctoring service, will be submitted to the CU Boulder Honor Code Office (honor@colorado.edu; 303-492-5550).

The instructor of record has jurisdiction over all academic sanctions for academic dishonesty. Non-academic sanctions may also be imposed by the Honor Code Office's Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution Committee for students found responsible. Instructors of record have up to 40 days from discovery of a suspected violation to report the incident to the Honor Code Office.

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

Academic Petition, Appeal, and Grievance Issues

Petitions

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.

Petitions, appeals, connectivity issues, and grievances should be handled at the lowest level possible, within the individual course if appropriate. This policy applies to platforms as well as discussion forums, course content, assessment, and degree issues.

The University of Colorado Boulder encourages students initially to address complaints and grievances relating to academics, consumer protection, or other University policies with the specific individuals or units most directly connected with the issue at hand unless there are good reasons for not doing so such as a desire to maintain anonymity. Current University policies and procedures on [Student Appeals, Complaints, and Grievances](#) may be found in this guide. As with all issues of complaint, the student should initiate any grievance matters 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. See the program-specific policies or contact your program for specific details.

In all cases, Graduate School and program policy is to resolve student concerns at the lowest level possible, without escalation.

Connectivity Issues

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

For degrees hosted on Coursera, concerns regarding platform issues should be directed to Coursera's technical support team.

Learning management system issues should be directed to the Office of Information Technology.

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. In the case of an interdisciplinary course not rostered within a home department or college, materials shall be submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School. There is no further appeal.

Grievances

Programs follow the [Graduate School policy](#) for grievances. The first step in the Grievance Process and Procedure requires a student to first file a grievance through the program, and then file an appeal to the Graduate School if the issue is not resolved through the program-level process. The program-level grievance shall be initiated by submitting the [Graduate Student Grievance form](#) to the faculty director. The grievance must be reviewed by an ad-hoc faculty committee or steering committee before an appeal can be filed directly to the Graduate School. Additionally, the University of Colorado Boulder has a guide for [information](#) related to appeals, complaints, and grievances, including those for distance and online students.

Students located outside of Colorado must first seek resolution with the [University of Colorado Boulder by filing a complaint with the appropriate person or office](#). If the student bringing the complaint is not satisfied with the outcome of the university's internal processes, the student may file a complaint with the university's SARA Portal Entity at the [Colorado Department of Higher Education](#).

The University of Colorado Boulder also provides access to a list of [all state contacts](#) for filing complaints should the person wish to pursue these venues.

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 regional 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 will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (including dating or domestic violence), stalking, protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information and other resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA) and University Accreditation

State Authorization

The University of Colorado is part of, and 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.

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.

Accreditation and Designations

The University of Colorado Boulder is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The University's accreditation may include programs delivered via correspondence or distance education upon notification to HLC.

Correspondence education is currently defined by HLC as:

Education provided through one or more courses by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor.

Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. Correspondence courses are typically self-paced. Correspondence education is not distance education.

(<https://www.hlcommission.org/General/glossary.html?highlight=WyJjb3JyZXNwb25kZW5jZSJD>; accessed February 17, 2019)

Further, the Department of Education defines *correspondence courses* as (1) a course provided by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructors. Interactions between instructors and students in a correspondence course is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student; (2) if a course is part correspondence and part residential training, the Secretary considers the course to be a correspondence course; (3) a correspondence course is not distance education. (34 CFR 600.2)

Distance education is defined by the Department of Education as:

Education that uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor(s) and supports regular and substantive interactions between student and instructor(s) either synchronously or asynchronously. (34 CFR 600.2) Instructors are responsible for the monitoring of student's academic engagement and success in distance education courses and programs.

Please note: programs offered by the University of Colorado Boulder that are designated as correspondence education are not eligible for Financial Aid.

Additional policies for programs hosted on the Coursera platform

In consultation with University Counsel and the Chief Financial Officer's office, B3 programs on the Coursera platform are offered as auxiliary programs. This designation allows CU Boulder to charge the same tuition to resident and non-resident students. It also prevents B3 enrollments from impacting CU Boulder's mandated resident and non-resident student ratios. The CU Employee Tuition Assistance Benefit cannot be applied toward Auxiliary programs per Administrative Policy Statement (APS) 5024.

Courses and Curriculum

Non-Credit Courses and Specializations on Coursera

Programs offered on the Coursera platform may offer non-credit courses, which 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. Non-credit students may use specializations to earn course and specialization completion certificates from Coursera, but non-credit courses and specializations do not carry CU Boulder credit and are not recorded on CU Boulder transcripts.

For-Credit Courses and CU Boulder Credentials

Typically, non-credit courses taught by CU Boulder are the foundation for for-credit CU Boulder courses on Coursera. A course is not considered credit-bearing until a student enrolls in the for-credit session of the course by paying CU Boulder tuition. Enrolling in the for-credit session enables access to additional credit-bearing content and assessments or project-based assignments.

A student enrolled in a non-credit session of a course may elect to change to the for-credit version of the course at any time during the enrollment period, including after completion of the non-credit course. Work performed in the non-credit portion of the course (e.g. assignments and quizzes) transfers with the student to the for-credit option, and the student may then continue to complete the remaining homework, exams, and lessons.

Individuals may take for-credit CU Boulder courses on Coursera as either *non-degree students* (in which case they do not seek admission to a degree program) or as *degree-seeking students* (in which case they have followed the steps to enroll in a degree program).

Prerequisites and Assumed Background Knowledge

There are no course prerequisites or corequisites for courses. Nevertheless, it is important that students are prepared for individual courses. Course descriptions will 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.

Time Limit

For programs offered on the Coursera platform, courses used toward the degree must have been completed within eight years of the degree conferral date.

Calendar and Course Sessions

Non-credit course sessions are typically self-paced with assignment due dates programmed and updated by the Coursera platform.

For-credit sessions run in defined increments throughout the calendar year, so students will have the ability to upgrade and take a course for credit, complete coursework and any additional

for-credit requirements, and earn credit and a grade in a fashion approximating an on-demand service.

Students enrolled in a for-credit session will be expected to complete and submit work by the defined session end date (e.g., eight weeks). At the end of a for-credit session, the session closes; all enrolled students are assigned a letter grade.

Additional program-specific policies

Program-specific policies above and beyond those included in this document must be maintained on a program site or handbook. These include:

- General information about approval/accreditation (correspondence/auxiliary issues etc.)
- Financial aid eligibility or ability to use faculty/staff tuition assistance program
- Specific admissions requirements (examples: requirements of performance based admissions, coursework requirements for pathways, application etc.)
- Tuition/Fee information
- Add/Drop/Withdraw/Refund information, including deadlines specific to the terms utilized in the program (or a link to a university site where they can find the dates/deadlines information).
- Academic policies that are more restrictive than the above B3 policies. Examples:
 - Curricular requirements (core courses, elective options, etc)
 - Number of times courses can be taken
- Degree Governance (oversight or steering committee role and responsibilities)
- Academic petition, appeal, and grievances (see below example)
 - Notes:
 - Grade appeals typically follow college/school process
 - Formal grievances typically follow Graduate School processes
 - All programs are subject to honor code policy

Academic Petition, Appeal, and Grievance Issues - sample sections

Petitions, appeals, connectivity issues, and grievances should be handled at the lowest level possible, within the individual course if appropriate. This policy applies to platforms as well as discussion forum, course content, assessment, and degree issues.

Concerns regarding discussion forum, content, assessment, and course issues should be brought directly to the individual course's course facilitator or instructor. If the course facilitator cannot resolve the issue, he or she will escalate the issue through the following resolution hierarchy:

1. Course Facilitator (include in degree programs where appropriate)
2. Instructor of Record
3. Faculty Director
4. Steering Committee

5. Either Departmental Chair followed by College Dean, or Graduate School Dean (to be determined by Faculty Director)

Concerns regarding the degree itself, and not having to do with a particular course, follow a different pathway. These should begin with the Graduate Advisor, and then move accordingly:

1. Graduate Advisor
2. Faculty Director
3. Steering Committee
4. Graduate School Dean

In all cases, the program policy is to resolve student concerns at the lowest level possible, without escalation.

Grade Appeals (update if necessary to match college policies)

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. Failing 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:

5. The student's name
6. The course, section, and date
7. 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.
8. 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, he or she 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) that a revised grade 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 do 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. In the case of an interdisciplinary course not rostered within a home department or college, materials shall be submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School. There is no further appeal.

Grievances (Section should remain in all program-specific policies)

Programs follow the [Graduate School policy](#) for Grievances. The first step in the Grievance Process and Procedure requires a student to first file a grievance through the program, and then file an appeal to the Graduate School if the issue is not resolved through the program-level process. The program-level grievance shall be initiated by submitting the [Graduate Student Grievance form](#) to the faculty director and reviewed by an ad-hoc faculty committee OR steering committee before an appeal can be filed directly to the Graduate School. Additionally, the University of Colorado Boulder has a guide for [information](#) related to appeals, complaints, and grievances, including those for distance and online students.

Endorsed by:

Katherine Eggert, Senior Vice Provost and Associate Vice Chancellor 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)

Clarifications approved (August 9, 2021)