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Data Science

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

Student Handbook

Master of Science in Data Science

(MS-DS) on Campus

Academic Year 2025 - 2026

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Data Science
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

Authority & Discrepancies

Graduate School Rules

This document is a program-specific supplement to the University of Colorado Boulder Graduate School Rules, which take precedence to program policies. Current Graduate School guidelines override any that are referred to in this document, unless otherwise noted in the handbook.

Handbook/Website Errors

If there is a disagreement between any statement in this Handbook and the information on the program website, the website is the authority, as it is updated more frequently. Should you have specific questions regarding this handbook or the policies, please reach out to your Residential Graduate Program Specialist.

Preface

This handbook is a resource for you as a graduate student in the residential Master of Science in Data Science (MS-DS on Campus) program, an interdisciplinary degree at the University of Colorado Boulder.

The policies and requirements in effect at the time of your matriculation will apply to you during your course of study here. If there are revisions to the requirements while you are enrolled, they will not apply to you retroactively unless you specifically make that request.

All students are bound by both program requirements and Graduate School requirements, which are separate. Make sure you understand both sets. Authoritative information on Graduate School requirements is given in the Graduate School website and the Graduate School section of the University Catalog. Use the Catalog and the Handbook for the year you entered until you graduate, since together they govern your graduation requirements.

You can find additional general information by searching the University's website. Current courses offerings are available online. See the Registrar's website for details. Course descriptions are provided in the online catalog, in the registration system and by individual instructors. Consult your advisor before registering for courses each semester.

This handbook should answer your questions about the rules and requirements of the program for your degree. This information is also available in the Current Students section of the Data Science website. If you have questions or are unclear about the rules, it is best to talk to your Graduate Program Specialist.

1. Policy Questions

This handbook should answer your questions about the rules and requirements for your degree program. This information is also available on our website. If you have questions or are unclear about the rules, it is best to talk to your Graduate Advisor. They are your first point of contact any time you have questions regarding degree policies and procedures.

2. Program Goals

The Master of Science in Data Science (MS-DS) is a unique interdisciplinary degree between multiple CU Boulder departments, including Data Science, Computer Science, Applied Mathematics, Information Science, and more. The field of data science is growing and has fantastic career opportunities after graduation.

The MS-DS program is intended to give students:

- A strong foundation in acquiring, cleaning, and managing data.
- Opportunity to analyze large datasets using data mining and machine learning techniques.
- Experience designing, conducting and running statistical experiments and models, and in drawing rational conclusions from data using probability theory and statistics, and more.
- Preparation to apply data science skills to a specific domain area.
- Real-world skills required to be a successful data scientist, including the ability to clearly communicate the results of data science analysis to a non-technical audience, structure effective meetings and projects using collaboration skills, and act ethically in the role of professional data scientist.

Coursework alone is not sufficient to succeed as a Data Scientist. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own education. We encourage you to seek advice from faculty members and make requests concerning special interests or plans (e.g., individual study with faculty members or specific coursework in a non-Data Science area/department). We also encourage you to interact with each other and with faculty members. Your own work—through a combination of reading, attending scholarly talks, participating in scholarly meetings, interacting with other data scientists, participating in project-based learning, and an optional internship, capstone project and/or independent study—is important for building up the intellectual curiosity and knowledge expected of a holder of an advanced degree.

3. Advising

Your Graduate Advisor helps make sure that you are taking the proper courses, both in terms of the program and University requirements as well as connecting your coursework to your career goals. You should also talk to your advisor about any issues you have that may be affecting your coursework. If the problem is not one that your advisor can help you to handle, they will help you to find the resources you need. They will be your primary contact during your time in the program. You are encouraged to meet with your Graduate Advisor prior to both Fall & Spring registration(s).

Find your Graduate Advisor under Data Science Team Section.

3.1 Degree Progress Worksheet

Your Degree Progress Worksheet includes a checklist of requirements to help you keep track of your progress and record decisions about your individual plan of study. You can work with your advisor to start filling out the Degree Progress Worksheet at your first advising meeting, and then, consult and update it

at subsequent advising sessions if desired. Find the worksheet here and bring with you to your advising appointment if you so choose.

4. The Professional Master's Program

The MS-DS is a non-thesis degree that requires 30 credit hours of graduate-level coursework. You must complete 21 credits of core coursework in statistics, computer science, and general core concepts as well as 9 credits of elective coursework. See curriculum details below.

The MS-DS is designed to be a two-year program. You may choose to take more than two years to complete the degree, but no more than four, per the Graduate School policy. Please consult with your Graduate Advisor if you are thinking about this option. Should you wish to complete the degree in less than two years, please be sure to let your Graduate Advisor know.

4.1 Required Courses

Core Courses (21 credits)

- DTSC 5301 Data Science as a Field – 1 Credit
- DTSC 5302 Ethical Issues in Data Science – 1 Credit
- DTSC 5303 Cybersecurity for Data Science – 1 Credit
- STAT 5000 Statistical Methods and Applications 1 – 3 Credits
- STAT 5010 Statistical Methods and Applications 2 – 3 Credits
- CSCI 5502 Data Mining – 3 Credits
- CSCI 5612 Machine Learning for Data Science – 3 Credits
- *Two of the following:*
    - STAT 5600 Methods in Statistical Learning – 3 credits
    - DTSC 5501 Data Structures and Algorithms – 3 credits
    - *CSCI 5253 Datacenter Scale Computing – 3 credits
    - *ATLS 5214 Big Data Architecture – 3 credits
    - INFO 5602 Information Visualization – 3 credits
    - CSCI 5454 Design and Analysis Algorithms – 3 credits

** **Note**: Only one course between ATLS 5214 and CSCI 5253 will count towards core requirements.*

Elective Courses (9 credits)

Students can choose from available courses in computer science, information science, geography, business, as well as other graduate level courses of interest with approval. We strongly encourage you to take no more than (3) credits in any one application area. There is significant value in obtaining experience in different content areas. You may consider taking your electives in a variety of different subjects and departments to build your Data Science experiences. Please consult with your Graduate Advisor for more information, See the Curriculum webpage for more details.

Repeatable Elective Courses

The following elective courses are **repeatable** (e.g., take more than one time in your program) with approval from your Graduate Advisor:

> **DTSC 5930 Internship:** After completing a significant part of your degree (at least 1 semester for domestic, and one year for international), you have the option of completing an internship for

elective credit(s). Internships are intended to give you the chance to apply what you have learned in class to a business environment and, therefore, must have a significant data science component. Variable credit hours (1–3).

Students may take up to (6) credits of internship.

Eligibility Requirements

- **Completion of Coursework:**
  - *Domestic students*: Must complete at least 1 semester in the MS-DS program before enrolling in DTSC 5930.
  - *International students:* Must complete at least 1 full academic year in the MS-DS program before enrolling in DTSC 5930.
    - 1 academic year is defined as a Fall and Spring semester. If you started the program in Fall 2024, the first time you will be eligible for internship is Summer 2025.
- **Internship Relevance:**
  - The internship must include a significant data science component, allowing students to apply their academic knowledge to real-world business environments.

Internship Duration and Credit Allocation

The number of credits students can earn for DTSC 5930 will depend on the length of their internship and the total number of hours worked. Students must meet both the weekly duration and total hour requirements to qualify for the corresponding credit registration. Students who meet the qualifications for a 3-credit hour internship may choose to pursue 1-3 credit hours of DTSC 5930.

- **Weekly Duration Requirements (Fall/Spring):**
  - 1 credit: Internships of 6 weeks
  - 2 credits: Internships of 7-9 weeks
  - 3 credits: Internships of 10 weeks or more
- **Total Hour Requirements (Fall/Spring):**
  - 1 credit: Minimum of 40 hours worked during the semester.
  - 2 credits: Minimum of 80 hours worked during the semester.
  - 3 credits: Minimum of 120 hours worked during the semester.
- **Weekly Duration Requirements (Summer):**
  - 1 credit: Internships of 4-6 weeks
  - 2 credits: Internships of 7-9 weeks
  - 3 credits: Internships of 10 weeks or more
- **Total Hour Requirements (Summer):**
  - 1 credit: Minimum of 40 hours worked during the semester.
  - 2 credits: Minimum of 80 hours worked during the semester.
  - 3 credits: Minimum of 120 hours worked during the semester.

Enrollment Deadlines

- **Standard Enrollment:**
  - Students must have an offer letter and enroll for DTSC 5930 by the last day to add a course deadline posted on the CU Academic Calendar.
- **Late Enrollment Requests:**
  - Requests due to late internship offers will be considered on a case-by-case basis during the Fall and Spring semesters, pending faculty and advisor approval.

- No late enrollment requests will be considered for the Summer semester and students must enroll in DTSC 5930 by the last day to add a course deadline posted on the CU Academic Calendar.
- Students requesting late enrollment for DTSC 5930 in the Fall or Spring semester must submit a special enrollment form through their advisor to the Registrar's office.

After receiving an offer from a company that fulfills the requirements for a data science internship, you must submit the Internship Agreement Form and have your contact supervisor sign the form. If you are an international student, you must also apply for CPT or Pre-Completion OPT as part of the process. Please review the CPT/OPT guidelines from ISSS.

DTSC 5840 Independent Study: Independent study should be work in an area where the program does not offer a formal course or go more in-depth into a field. You may not use individual study to duplicate existing courses (e.g. in a semester in which they are not offered). Two or more students may participate together in the same independent study. Variable credit hours (1–6). No more than 25% of the coursework toward a master's degree, or 8 credits, can be taken as independent study.

After you find a faculty member who has agreed to work with you on an individual study, you must submit an Independent Study Agreement Form for approval per the instructions on that form.

Research: You are eligible to do research with any CU Boulder faculty members who have funding. To earn credit, you must take an independent study course in conjunction with the research project. See *Independent Study* below for details. Visa restrictions may apply. International students, please check with International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) to verify your eligibility given your Visa status.

You can also consider a non-repeatable capstone option to fulfill a portion of your elective credit requirements:

DTSC 5810 Capstone/Practicum: You have the option to complete a capstone project or practicum for elective credit. Students conduct agreed-upon research, critical review, business proposal, or project and present their work to the capstone committee for evaluation. 3 credit hours.

Other departments across campus also offer courses covering data science-like topics and applications. If you are interested in taking a course for elective MS-DS degree credit that is not currently included on the list of approved electives, contact your Graduate Advisor with the course number and description, syllabus, etc., and rationale demonstrating your interest in this area in combination with your Data Science Curriculum. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and approval is not guaranteed.

If you are interested in **taking a course for elective MS-DS degree credit and it is not currently included in the list above**, email Mariah Alvarado at mariah.alvarado@colorado.edu with the following information, showing the course has a significant data science component:

- Course name
- Course number
- Course description
- Course syllabus (if available)
- Number of credits

- Provide a brief rationale of why you would like to take the course and how it applies to your DS career aspirations

All courses taken towards the degree must be at the 5000 level (graduate) or higher.

Bridge Coursework
Bridge coursework is coursework available to obtain the necessary skills and experience in particular areas of Data Science (i.e. Programming in Python, Programming in R, Mathematical Concepts for Data Science) to be successful in the remainder of the core curriculum of the MS-DS Program. Your Graduate Advisor may require you to take any one of-, or a culmination of these courses during your first semester in the program.

Potential Additional Curriculum
The graduate committee may require students in this pathway to complete one or more of the following courses (up to 7 credits). Courses should be taken in the first year and are subject to Graduate School grade and cumulative GPA standards. Up to 3 hours of bridge courses which meet applicable standards can count toward the degree in the electives category.

- INFO 5651 Fundamental Concepts in Data Science (3)
- INFO 5652 Statistical Programming in R (3)
- DTSC 5003 Programming for Data Science - Python for Data Science (1)

Non-Credit Coursera Option
These courses are also available to take as non-credit via Coursera before you begin for free. Formal completion certificate must be submitted to Graduate Advisor to waive taking the coursework during your first fall semester, if applicable.

***Please note that not all admitted students are required to complete the Bridge Coursework. This will be determined by the admission committee and your graduate advisor upon admission to the program.*

4.2 Course Load for MS-DS Students

The Graduate School Rules note that full-time registration status requires a minimum of 5 credits of graduate-level coursework. (See the rules for full details, e.g., if you are taking an undergraduate course). Most full-time students will complete 6–9 credit hours per semester in order to complete the MS-DS degree within two years. Students should enroll in all their courses as a Boulder campus student.

4.3 Distance Courses

There is no limit on the number of distance classes a graduate student may take. International students should confirm with ISSS their eligibility per immigration regulations before enrolling in distance sections.

Note that the MS-DS on Coursera program and the MS-DS on Campus are not interchangeable. MS-DS on Campus courses cannot be applied toward the MS-DS on Coursera degree.

4.4 Graduate Pass/Fail Courses

Courses taken pass/fail may not be applied toward the degree. This includes transfer courses, as explained below. You can take courses for no credit, but they will not count towards your degree/graduation requirements.

4.5 Transfer Credits

The MS-DS allows transfer credit from some sources on a case-by-case basis. Per The Graduate School Policy, MS-DS students may request up to (9) credit hours be transferred. In any category below, courses to be considered for transfer must meet the posted transfer of credit standards. In brief, courses must be from an accredited institution, be graduate level, have a grade of B or better, and not have been used toward another degree. Read below and see the Graduate School Rules, Graduate School FAQs and the Transfer of Credit Request for full details. If you wish to transfer credit, please consult on this process with your Graduate Advisor.

From Another University

To request a transfer of credit from another accredited university, you must first complete at least 6 hours in your CU Boulder degree program with a GPA of 3.0 or better. Then, you can submit a Transfer of Credit Request form and attach an original transcript. The Data Science program and Graduate School will review.

From Another CU Campus

Courses taken at other CU campuses are considered to be transfer credit. However, these courses are already included on your CU transcript. Speak with your graduate advisor if you would like one of these courses to count toward the MS-DS.

From Courses Taken in Non-Degree Student Status

CU credits earned as a non-degree student are considered to be transfer credit. However, these courses are already included on your CU transcript and no additional paperwork is necessary to use up to 9 credit hours toward your degree (or more if you completed a graduate certificate here at CU Boulder). Simply list those courses in the transfer section when you fill out the Application for Admission to Candidacy.

From the MS-DS on Coursera

Credits earned as part of the fully online MS-DS on Coursera can be applied toward the residential MS-DS degree. No more than (9) credit hours can be applied. Please see Section 4.5 on transferring credit and consult with your Graduate Advisor.

From Intercampus Registration Program

Courses taken through the intercampus registration program at another CU campus are not considered to be transfer credit and will not count against the transfer limit.

4.6 Part-time Study

Students admitted to the graduate program are expected to work steadily toward completion of their degree requirements. Part-time students are not discouraged, especially for students with jobs. Per the Graduate School time limit, students should plan to complete the degree within four years but may request an extension of time limit where appropriate.

5. Resources for Research

5.1 Library Resources

The University's Norlin Library has an excellent general collection. Books may be checked out or portions photocopied at copy machines available in Norlin. Items that Norlin does not have may be obtained through Inter-library Loan.

The University Libraries website has a search engine as well as a wide variety of databases and electronic journals. To access electronic databases and journals that are licensed for use solely by CU faculty, staff, and students from off-campus locations, you will need to use CU Boulder's Virtual Private Network (VPN) service.

5.2 Colloquia

Many departments on campus hold regular colloquia. Many of the talks have significant data science content and we encourage you to attend as many of the talks in these colloquia as your schedule permits. Look for talks in computer science, applied math and information science. The talks cover a wide range of research topics and may provide some familiarity with people and projects. When we are aware of a talk that is of particular interest to our data science students, we will email you.

6. Student Affairs & Resources

6.1 Information Sources

The University of Colorado's Students website provides a wide array of resources pertaining to student life, from transportation to technology services. Consult this page for a complete listing of information sources.

6.2 Professional Programs

The University of Colorado Boulder's Graduate School website and Organization Directory website provide many STEM-affiliated professional programs and affinity groups you can elect to join. Opportunities include:

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

- American Association of Engineers of Indian Origin
- American Indian Science and Engineering Society
- American Medical Women's Association (AMWA)
- CU Student Chapter of the Society of American Military Engineers
- CU Women in Computing
- National Society of Black Engineers
- oSTEM at CU Boulder
- Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers
- Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
- Society of Women Engineers
- STEM Routes
- T9Hacks
- Women in Construction

- Women in Cybersecurity
- Women of Aeronautics and Astronautics
- Women of Color in STEM

Graduate and Professional Studies

- Black Graduate and Professional Student Association at CU Boulder (BGPSA)
- CU Boulder Asian Studies Graduate Association (CUBASGA)

6.3 Data Science Mailing List

We add all matriculated students to the Data Science mailing list, where we share events and opportunities relating to a wide range of data science topics. We encourage you to attend meetings, talks, conferences, hackathons, etc., on campus and beyond to expand your professional network and knowledge of the field.

6.4 Data Science Student Association

Consider joining the **Data Science Student Association (DaSSA)**, a vibrant, student-led community dedicated to enhancing your academic and professional journey. DaSSA organizes a wide variety of engaging events, from networking socials and hackathons to workshops on resume-building, interviewing, and more. You'll have access to peer mentorship, support navigating the first-year transition, and channels to connect with faculty and fellow students both virtually and in person. Joining DaSSA is a great way to gain hands-on experience, build a professional network, and feel supported from day one in your MS-DS program.

6.5 General Student Government

The interests of all university graduate students are represented by the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG).

The Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG) represents graduate and professional students at the University of Colorado Boulder. They support topics including health insurance, childcare, employment, and campus security, as well as social programming. In the past, they've influenced paid parental leave, dental insurance, stipend increases and more – see the GPSG FAQ for more information.

Stay informed! Find out who your representatives are each year.

Want to represent the Data Science program? GPSG meetings are open to everyone. Check out their calendar for upcoming meetings. Representatives must regularly attend meetings for graduate students in the program to receive activity funds from GPSG.

6.6 Grievances

Course or Program Grievances

Whether related to individual courses or program actions, grievances should be brought first to the attention of your Graduate Advisor or the MS-DS Program Manager. If a grievance is not resolved informally to your satisfaction in this way, you may address a formal appeal.

The Data Science Program follows the Graduate School Policies & Procedures for grievances. Whenever possible, graduate students and faculty in graduate programs should seek informal resolution of the

issues covered in the policies and procedures document. A list of campus resources and Graduate School policies that may be helpful in identifying and achieving resolutions can be found on the Graduate School website. In cases where an informal resolution has not been achieved, graduate students may submit a grievance but must first do so with their graduate program. The formal grievance process requires a student to file a grievance in the following order:

- ***Program Level*:** You can initiate a program-level grievance by submitting the Graduate Student Grievance form to the Faculty Director.
- ***Graduate School Level*:** 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. If the issue is not resolved through the program-level process, you can then file an appeal to the Graduate School.

The University of Colorado Boulder has a Guide for Student Appeals, Complaints & Grievances. The Ombud's Office offers confidential counsel to students at any stage of a concern and can assist with information resolution.

Grade Appeals

For grade appeals, if discussions between the instructor and the student have not led to any resolution of the problem, you can make a formal written appeal to the Faculty Director. The formal appeals process is outlined below:

1. Student submits a formal appeal to the Faculty Director. The students must submit a formal written appeal to the Faculty Director within 45 days of the end of the academic term in which the course was taken. The appeal must specify the student's desired remedy.

2. Faculty Director (or a designee) reviews case; meets with instructor and student. Meet (together or separately) with the student and with the faculty member who taught the course.

3. Grade Appeals Committee reviews case and makes recommendation to Faculty Director; Faculty Director makes recommendation to instructor. If the Faculty Director/designee is unable to broker a solution mutually acceptable to both student and instructor, the Faculty Director will appoint an ad hoc Grade Appeals Committee to review the dispute. This committee will consist of at least three impartial faculty members competent in the subject matter of the course in question. The Faculty Director will provide the committee with the student's appeal and a written response from the faculty member. Within 45 days, the committee will submit a report and recommendation to the Faculty Director, and the Faculty Director will recommend to the instructor that either (a) the originally assigned grade stand, or (b) a new grade be assigned. In cases where a change of grade is recommended and the instructor does not wish to accept the recommendation of his/her colleagues, the Faculty Director shall forward the written materials associated with the appeal to the Dean of the College.

7. Finances

7.1 Billing

The Bursar sends email notifications to students' colorado.edu email addresses when bills are issued. See the Bursar's Billing page for details on what appears on your CU Boulder bill, how to access your bills, how to authorize financial aid to pay the bill, payment due dates, and more. If you have specific questions about your finances or bill, please contact the Bursars Office.

7.2 University Financial Aid

To receive University financial aid, domestic students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), available from the Office of Financial Aid and on the FAFSA website.

Additional information about financial aid may be found at Financial Aid and Aid for Professional Students. The Graduate School has funding information including National Fellowship Opportunities at Graduate Student Funding.

7.3 Employment

Students in the Professional MS programs are **not eligible** for Teaching Assistantships (TAs), Research Assistantships (RAs), or Graduate Part-Time Instructor (GPTI) appointments that compensate in the form of tuition reimbursement. MS-DS students may only work hourly paid positions on-campus and off-campus.

Course Assistant Positions

Part-time hourly jobs as course assistant/graders or for individual professors may be possible once you've arrived on campus and completed one semester of coursework. Please refer to the Students Jobs page on the Data Science website for up-to-date information on positions.

MS-DS on Coursera Positions

You can also consider applying to be a Course Facilitator for the fully online MS-DS on Coursera program. Most positions require you to have completed the related coursework to be eligible. See the Student Jobs page of the Data Science website for openings.

Positions in Other Departments

There are occasional opportunities for part-time hourly jobs in other programs.

Student Employment Office

Review Student Employment Office resources for on-campus and off-campus opportunities.

International students can work a set number of hours per month and must consult with International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) for details.

7.4 Residency Status

U.S. citizens and permanent residents (Green Card holders) may establish Colorado residency. In fact, they are expected to do so, if possible, since financial aid sources cannot reliably cover non-resident tuition. It takes 12 months (minimum) to establish residency. See Residency Guidelines for information on how to establish in-state residency. Often, you will need supporting documentation (e.g., Colorado voter registration certificate, Colorado vehicle registration, Colorado driver's license or state ID, income tax returns, and rent receipts.)

Do not delay! You must take some steps when you first move to the state, before the first day of classes for your first semester at CU. Your application for residency may not be accepted if you start this procedure later than the first day of classes. You should submit the actual application in the spring of your first year, as it takes a while to get approved.

To establish residency status for tuition purposes, you must submit a Tuition Classification form to the Tuition Classification Office by the relevant deadline. See details at State Residency or visit the Tuition Classification Office in the Office of the Registrar, Regent Administration Center, Room 101.

International students cannot become Colorado state residents unless they are already qualified permanent residents of the United States.

7.5 Financial Aid Eligibility & Academics

Financial Aid requires students to maintain good standing (3.0 GPA) in the program. If you are not making acceptable progress or meeting the registration requirement, you can petition to be allowed to retain financial aid that has already been awarded to you, but this will only work for a semester or two at the most. Financial aid is very unlikely to be given to students who have several incomplete course grades or who are otherwise not making satisfactory progress towards the degree.

8. Grades and Course Credit

8.1 Grades

Note that the MS-DS program is designed for working professionals in the industry. It is not intended to train Ph.D. students or research students. Other institutions and universities may accept transfer credit from the MS-DS program at their discretion.

Graduate School grades are somewhat inflated as compared to most undergraduate grades. Although professors vary in their grading policies, the following is a rough guide as to how grades in masters-level courses are likely to be interpreted by people evaluating your transcript.

A Exceptional master's-level work
A- Very good master's-level work
B+ Good master's-level work
B Acceptable master's-level work
B- Minimal passing work; we encourage you to review the material from the course in more depth before proceeding to the next course

8.2 Minimum Required Grades and GPA

The Graduate School does not accept courses with grades below (C) toward the M.S. degree. The Graduate School also has strict requirements for the cumulative grade point average (GPA). Students in the Graduate School must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.00 (B) for all courses taken, whether graduate or undergraduate. Students whose cumulative average falls below 3.00 may be placed on academic probation by the Graduate School and may be subject to dismissal from their program. See *Grades and Quality of Work* in the Graduate School rules for additional detail.

Students may take a Leave of Absence from graduate study if personal circumstances are making it difficult to maintain a GPA of 3.00. Discuss this option with your Graduate Advisor if you are having problems.

A degree-seeking graduate student who has earned a grade of C+ or below in a course may retake the course under the university-wide Grade Replacement Policy, subject to the policies and limitations of the program.

Graduate School Grading & Quality of Work Policies

A student is required to maintain at least a B (3.0) average in all work attempted while enrolled in the Graduate School, and a student must have at least a 3.0 overall average to receive a graduate degree.

Grades Below B

1. A degree-seeking graduate student who earned a grade of C+ or below may retake the course under the university-wide grade replacement policy, subject to the policies and limitations of the program.
2. Courses in which grades below B- (2.7) are received are not accepted for doctoral programs.
3. Courses in which grades below C (2.0) are received are not accepted for master's degree programs or for the removal of academic deficiencies.
4. Courses taken toward the fulfillment of requirements for graduate degrees may not be taken pass/fail or satisfactory/unsatisfactory.
5. Grades received in courses transferred from another institution and/or grades earned while a student was classified as a non-degree student are not included in the calculation of grade point average.
6. Graduate students may not register for more than 15 credits during any one semester.
7. Students whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0 at any time during their graduate career will be placed on academic warning and may be dismissed from their program.

8.3 Credit Policies

See Credits & Grading and Academic Standards & Advising sections of the University Graduate Catalog for additional information about academic probation and dismissal, provisions for removal of grades below B by retaking a course (Grade Replacement), I (Incomplete) grades, and the Leave of Absence Program.

9. Graduation

9.1 Candidacy Application for an Advanced Degree

In order to graduate, you must first complete an Application for Admission to Candidacy the semester you intend to graduate. When completing the Candidacy Application, check the Degree Plan II (non-thesis, no exam, degree plan). After your Graduate Advisor signs the completed form, they will obtain the Director's signature before sending it to the Graduate School for approval.

See Master's Graduation – Non-Thesis Plan for graduation deadlines. It is your responsibility to keep track of these deadlines.

9.2 Applying for Graduation

Students also must officially apply online to graduate through Buff Portal. Start with the *Apply for Graduation* card and follow the instructions to apply for the semester you plan to graduate.

If you do not graduate in the semester you plan to, you must return to Buff Portal and apply for the next semester you plan to graduate.

The filing deadlines are listed at Master's Graduation – Non-Thesis Plan. You must do this at the beginning of the semester in which you plan to graduate.

9.3 Confirmation of Final Semester (International Students Only)

For international students in their final semester, please review the information on the ISSS Your Final Semester page and address any applicable items.

International students must submit the Confirmation of Final Semester e-form (available in the MyISSS portal) to ISSS.

- All students must submit the Confirmation of Final Semester e-form in their final term.
- For students enrolling in a less than full-time course load, the Confirmation of Final Semester must be submitted and approved by ISSS before dropping below full time.

9.4 Sufficient Progress

The MS-DS defines sufficient progress as:

- Maintaining a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA for all courses, and
- Completing enough credits per term to graduate within the four-year time limit.

The MS-DS program has the authority to drop any student who fails to make sufficient progress toward the degree. We will not act under this authority without first informing you of what you must do to resume adequate progress and giving you a fair amount of time to satisfy those requirements. The best way to avoid problems is to maintain regular contact with your Graduate Advisor.

If you decide not to take any courses in a particular semester, you must apply for a Leave of Absence to ensure you will be able to register for the next semester. Contact the Registrar's Office with questions. Failure to register or sign up for a Leave of Absence will result in being discontinued from the program (i.e., you would have to reapply and be accepted again to resume your studies).

10. Other Resources

Please see the MS-DS Current Students page for helpful links and forms.

The following pages may also be helpful as you navigate the program and the University:

- Academic Calendar
- Bursar
- Career Services
- Center for Student Involvement
- Events: Computer Science | Applied Mathematics | Information Science
- Graduate School
- Health & Wellness Checklist for New Students
- Housing & Dining | Ralphie's List (Off-campus Housing)
- International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS)
- New Student & Family Programs
- Registrar
- Student Affairs