



Data Science

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

# **Student Handbook**

Master of Science in Data Science  
(MS-DS) on Coursera

1 Jan 2021 – 31 Dec 2021

# Contents

<b>Contents</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Welcome</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Vision</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Program Policies</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Admissions</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Financial Information</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Tuition .....	4
Student Fees.....	4
Financial Aid.....	5
<b>Courses &amp; Curriculum</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Non-Credit Courses & Specializations on Coursera.....	5
For-Credit Courses & CU Boulder Credentials .....	5
Prerequisites & Assumed Background Knowledge .....	6
Courses & Credit Hours.....	6
Calendar & Course Sessions .....	6
Calendar for Proctored Exams and Projects .....	7
Master’s Degree.....	7
Transfer of Credit .....	7
Degree Curriculum.....	8
Core Courses .....	8
Elective Courses .....	8
<b>Academic Records &amp; Policies for For-Credit Courses</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Course Repetition & Replacement.....	9
Course Repetition .....	9
Grade Replacement .....	9
Course Drops, Tuition Refunds, Withdrawals & Grades.....	9
Course Drop & Refund.....	9
Course Withdrawal.....	10
Grades .....	10
Academic Standing, Time Limit, Discontinuance & Withdrawal .....	11

Academic Standing.....	11
Time Limit.....	11
Discontinuance .....	12
Program Withdrawal .....	12
Privacy Policy.....	12
Program Faculty, Course Facilitators, Degree Governance & Student Support.....	12
Degree Governance.....	13
Student Services Provided to Enrollees in the Program.....	13
Academic Support .....	13
Graduate Advising for the Program .....	13
Career Services & Alumni Association.....	13
Diplomas .....	13
Commencement .....	13
Academic Dishonesty & Honor Code .....	13
Petition, Appeal & Grievance Issues.....	14
Connectivity Issues.....	15
Grade Appeals .....	15
Grievances .....	16
Accommodations for Disabilities .....	17
Discrimination & Harassment.....	17
State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA) & the Higher Education Opportunity Act.....	17
State Authorization.....	17
Higher Education Opportunity Act.....	18
Accreditation & Designations.....	18
Additional Policies for CU Boulder B3 Special Programs.....	18

# Welcome

Welcome to the Master of Science in Data Science (MS-DS), a cutting-edge program designed for the twenty-first century. Hosted on the internationally acclaimed Coursera learning platform, the MS-DS program offers graduate-level courses and a fully accredited Master's Degree in Data Science. We hope you will join us in a new educational modality, one different from traditional online and residential programs alike.

The University of Colorado stands fully behind the degree: there are no qualifying designations on official CU Boulder transcripts, degrees or certificates associated with the MS-DS. The Program specifics are reviewed on the Data Science department webpage. This document provides students with the policies governing the MS-DS. Overall, the program is governed by the University's and [Graduate School's rules, policies and procedures](#). Because the MS-DS is unique among graduate programs at the University of Colorado Boulder in its modality, its admissions policies and its course design, the program also has several special policies. These policies are listed below and will be updated annually.

We welcome student contact. Prospective and enrolled students should feel free to reach out to course facilitators within their courses or to the Data Science graduate advisor ([msds-support@colorado.edu](mailto:msds-support@colorado.edu)) with questions.

We are proud for you to join our community and forge a new kind of education for the twenty-first century. Again, welcome to the MS-DS.

# Vision

The MS-DS is founded on the principles of the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) "revolution." In 2012 several major research universities developed online teaching platforms that allowed tens of thousands of students to enroll in one course. Because MOOC technology allowed such greater access to education, it was widely heralded as a revolution in higher education that would disrupt the ways degrees are offered to the world.

Technology alone cannot change the world. Although MOOC technology opened new possibilities in 2012 and has advanced since then, there has not been a disruptive revolution in higher education. This is because, with few exceptions, most MOOC degrees simply replicated the vision and practices of existing online programs.

Recognizing this, the Data Science program at the University of Colorado Boulder developed the MS-DS degree with a new vision for graduate education.

The degree presents three major innovations:

- **Access.** The MS-DS is designed to provide global access to graduate-level education. It seeks to educate the world. To this end it uses *performance-based admissions* rather than traditional admissions standards. Anyone who can do the work of a graduate-level data science course is welcome to enroll in our degree.
- **Curriculum.** The MS-DS curriculum is both modular and self-directed. The data science professors have purposely broken down their semester-long courses into one-credit classes and, although classes can naturally fit together in sequence, we encourage our students to construct degree plans as they need.

An overview of the MS-DS curriculum and courses may be found here:

- The degree has two types of courses: Core Courses and Elective Courses.
  - The degree curriculum is made up of a broad variety of courses in areas across data science, including 21 credits of core courses and 9 credits of elective courses.
- **Learning.** The MS-DS is guided by the belief that learning belongs to the learner. To be successful in the MS-DS each student must commit to his or her learning by creating a clear plan of courses, a schedule for study, and a strategy for taking courses.

As an essential part of learning strategy, we recommend that students explore the courses in non-credit format before taking them for credit. By beginning a course in a non-credit format *before* switching to credit, students can see if the course content and instructor's style fit their learning plan.

# Program Policies

## Admissions

The MS-DS degree uses performance-based admissions for enrollment. There is no traditional application for admission to the degree. Students do not need to take the GRE or submit letters of recommendation or proof of language proficiency. Neither a prior degree nor university transcripts are required for admission. Because this is a purely online program, students do not need to complete a background check to enroll.

A student desiring admission to the MS-DS degree program must complete four required protocols:

1. The student must take one Pathway Specialization for credit with at least a grade of C in each Pathway course;
2. The student must achieve a computed pathway specialization grade-point average (GPA) of at least 3.00;
3. The student must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00 for all for-credit courses taken to date; and
4. The student must declare their intention to seek the degree, which they can do before, during or after any work in a pathway specialization.

Upon completion of these four steps the student is admitted to the MS-DS degree program.

Students may successfully complete a designated pathway specialization and declare their intent to seek the degree at any point in their academic journey.

Completion of a pathway specialization is not required for students to begin earning academic credit, only to earn the degree. Non-degree-seeking students may enroll in for-credit courses.

All courses attempted and/or completed for credit will appear on an official CU Boulder transcript (unless dropped by the drop deadline) and will count toward the cumulative GPA. See [Course Drops](#), [Tuition Refunds](#), [Withdrawals & Grades](#) for details.

## Financial Information

### Tuition

Tuition is assessed at a linear rate based on credit hours. The tuition rate is \$667 per credit hour. Please refer to the [Bursar Office's website](#) for officially published tuition rates. Students are granted access to for-credit components of a course after their tuition has been paid and verified.

If a credit card is used, a 2.75% service charge will apply to all transactions—this includes both payment for tuition and refunds of tuition in cases where a student drops a course within the 14-day window. E-check and Flywire services do **not** have transaction charges.

#### **Tuition payments cannot be rolled over to future sessions.**

Former or current CU Boulder students wishing to enroll in the MS-DS on Coursera but carrying unpaid debts will have these items automatically deducted before the for-credit tuition charges are paid.

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.

If a student enrolled in the MS-DS on Coursera program wishes to take courses on Main Campus or through Continuing Education, they must enroll (and apply if necessary) through the appropriate program and tuition will be charged separately for those courses.

The CU Employee Tuition Assistance Benefit cannot be applied towards the MS-DS on Coursera program.

### Student Fees

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

No standard campus fees shall be charged for this program. Students may be charged on an at-cost basis for such items as proctoring, credit card fees and Career & Alumni Services.

## Financial Aid

At this time, no financial aid will be administered in this program.

## Courses & Curriculum

### Non-Credit Courses & Specializations on Coursera

All MS-DS courses are hosted on the Coursera platform. A typical non-credit course includes content, discussion forums, and homework assignments of level and scope similar to assignments made in an equivalent on-campus course in the same subject. Many of the courses are organized into sequences called specializations. This term originates with Coursera. 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 & CU Boulder Credentials

Non-credit courses taught by CU Boulder Data Science faculty are the foundation of for-credit courses taught by those same faculty. 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 proctored assessments.

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

For-credit CU Boulder courses on Coursera may include proctored assessments or use project-based assignments.

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



## Prerequisites & Assumed Background Knowledge

There are no course prerequisites or corequisites for MS-DS 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. *Students are also encouraged to take a non-credit version in some form before moving to the for-credit version to test whether they can succeed, especially if they are unsure whether they have the background knowledge required for a course.*

## Courses & Credit Hours

Each MS-DS course is worth one credit hour. Individual courses in the program have an anticipated completion timeline of between four and six weeks. The program's credit hour system reflects its commitment to maintaining the rigor of the on-campus experience in an online setting by narrowing and focusing the content on a specific topic.

## Calendar & 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 8-week increments throughout the calendar year, so students 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 8-week session end date. At the end of a for-credit session, the session closes; all enrolled students are assigned a letter grade.

We look forward to each student succeeding in this program. To that end, we recommend students take a lighter course load for their first 8-week session—enrolling in only 1 or 2 courses. By doing so, students can best determine time commitment and workload. This allows students to get a better idea of how to plan for future sessions.

Students who want to complete the degree in 2 years need to take 2–3 courses per 8-week session.

## Calendar for Proctored Exams and Projects

ProctorU is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Students in MS-DS courses can complete final exams and projects that use the ProctorU remote proctoring service in each session starting at **9:00 am Mountain Time** on the day classes begin and ending at **4:50 pm Mountain Time** on the day classes end.

You must schedule your proctored experience at least 72 hours in advance of your desired day and time. For example, if the ProctorU availability window closes at 4:50 pm on a Friday, the last time you could schedule a proctored exam or project would be at 4:50 pm that Tuesday.

To secure your desired proctoring session time, log into ProctorU to schedule your session as soon as you know your desired session date and time.

View the [Calendar](#) for each session to see deadlines for scheduling and completing proctored exams and projects.

## Master's Degree

The MS-DS 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 the degree but will count toward the cumulative GPA.

## Transfer of Credit

Due to the pilot nature of this program, credit earned at other institutions or in other programs at the University of Colorado Boulder are not transferable to the MS-DS.

Credits taken as part of the MS-DS program 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.

Other institutions may accept transfer credit from the MS-DS program at their discretion, based upon their transfer of credit standards.

## Degree Curriculum

### Core Courses

The curriculum includes 21 credits of core courses, including the following:

- **Data Structures and Algorithms (3 credits)**
  - Algorithms for Searching, Sorting, and Indexing
  - Trees and Graphs: Basics
  - Dynamic Programming, Greedy Algorithms
- **Statistical Inference (3 credits)**
  - Probability Theory: Foundation for Data Science
  - Statistical Inference for Estimation in Data Science
  - Hypothesis Testing for Data Science
- **Vital Skills for Data Scientists (4 credits)**
  - Data Science as a Field
  - Cybersecurity for Data Science
  - Ethical Issues in Data Science
  - Fundamentals of Data Visualization
- **Machine Learning (3 credits)**
  - Introduction to Machine Learning: Supervised Learning
  - Unsupervised Algorithms in Machine Learning
  - Introduction to Deep Learning
- **Statistical Modeling (3 credits)**
  - Modern Regression Analysis in R
  - ANOVA and Experimental Design
  - Generalized Linear Models and Nonparametric Regression
- **Data Mining (3 credits)**
  - Data Mining Pipeline
  - Data Mining Methods
  - Data Mining Project
- **Big Data Architecture (2 credits)**
  - Fundamentals of Big Data Architecture
  - Big Data Architecture in Production

Students should be aware that minor changes to course titles may occur in the first year of the program.

### Elective Courses

The curriculum also includes 9 credit hours of elective courses. Students can see [Curriculum](#) for details of currently available courses.

# Academic Records & Policies for For-Credit Courses

## Course Repetition & 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 they can only repeat the same for-credit MS-DS course once regardless of the grade they earn. Course attempts that result in a “W” (withdrawal) are not counted toward the two attempts.

### Grade Replacement

The [Grade Replacement Policy](#) allows students admitted to the MS-DS degree program to replace up to six credits in their 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 & Grades

Because the MS-DS has 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. Coursera and CU Boulder are not responsible for notifying the students of these deadlines. To drop or withdraw from a course students must complete the appropriate form on the CU Boulder Registrar's [Special Programs](#) page.

### Course Drop & Refund

Each student may drop a class if they are within 14 days from the class start date or their enrollment date, whichever is later. When a course is dropped under these conditions, it will not appear on the student’s record.

- *Example – Enrolled Before Class Start:* A student enrolls in a class before it begins. Class starts on the 1st of the month. The deadline for the student to drop this class is 11:59 pm [MT](#) on the 15th of that same month.
- *Example – Enrolled After Class Start:* A student enrolls in a class after it begins. Class starts on the 1st of the month, but the student enrolls on the 10th of the month. The deadline for this student to drop the class is 11:59 pm [MT](#) on the 24th of that same month.

To receive a full refund, two requirements must be met:

1. The student must submit a drop request within 14 days from the class start date or their enrollment date, whichever is later; and
2. The student must not have accessed restricted content in the course or received a course grade.

Refunds are returned to the payment method on file within 10 business days.

***Tuition payments cannot be rolled over to future sessions.***

### Course Withdrawal

Students who request to drop the course after the 14-day period and who have not accessed the restricted content may withdraw from the course until the session end date, prior to 17:00 hours (5:00 pm Colorado [Mountain Time](#)). 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 GPA and credit total.

Neither Coursera, nor the University of Colorado, nor the Data Science program at CU Boulder is responsible for students who delay too long and experience technical or other difficulties; it is the student's responsibility to act responsibly and promptly when making these kinds of decisions.

As noted under [Tuition](#), 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.

See [Program Withdrawal](#) for more information about withdrawing from the MS-DS program.

### Grades

Students who access restricted content, such as a timed proctored assessment or locked final exam, are ineligible for a drop, withdrawal or refund, and are assigned a final grade.

Upon completion of all required coursework and within a couple of weeks following the session end date, a letter grade is recorded on the student's CU Boulder transcript.

Students who complete some but not all coursework and who specifically do not attempt the final exam (or equivalent) will be assigned administrative Ws after the session end date passes.

Grades of Incomplete (I) are not assigned as part of the program, and a Pass-Fail (P/F) grading basis is not offered.

## **Academic Standing, Time Limit, Discontinuance & Withdrawal**

### **Academic Standing**

Degree-seeking students admitted to the MS-DS are expected to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher for 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. Such students may continue to take for-credit courses as non-degree-seeking and may be able to earn a certificate but cannot 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, including the successful completion of a new pathway specialization.

The MS-DS degree cannot be awarded until the minimum 3.00 cumulative GPA has been achieved.

### **Time Limit**

Courses used toward the degree must have been completed within 8 years of the degree conferral date. Courses taken more than 8 years prior to graduation 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 even after eight years, but they must accrue 30 credits within an 8-year window in order to earn the degree.

The 8-year restriction is applied to courses on a rolling basis and is determined by the date that credit was awarded in the course.

## Discontinuance

Students admitted to the MS-DS degree program are not otherwise 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 admitted to the degree program 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 admitted to the MS-DS on Coursera program may formally withdraw from the program by contacting the academic program advisor who will, in turn, notify the Office of the Registrar to discontinue the student.

Non-degree seeking students (not admitted to the degree program) may simply stop enrolling in future courses. No withdrawal formalities of any sort are necessary.

See [Course Withdrawal](#) for more information about withdrawing from individual courses.

## Privacy Policy

This program adheres to the University of Colorado Boulder's commitment to the protection of individual privacy. See the [CU Boulder Privacy Statement](#) for details.

In order to preserve the integrity of this program, some exams and projects will have live proctoring managed by ProctorU. Read the [ProctorU Privacy Policy](#) for details.

## Program Faculty, Course Facilitators, Degree Governance & Student Support

All courses and specializations affiliated with the MS-DS are designed and taught by instructors with Graduate School faculty status.

Course facilitators—typically graduate students knowledgeable in the subject matter—will assist in administering courses. Course facilitators participate in the course discussion forums, respond to student feedback, address issues with the course and its features on the platform, and convey any relevant issues to the instructor of record and relevant program administrators.

## Degree Governance

The MS-DS is overseen by a dedicated MS-DS faculty director, who works with associated department chairs, staff, Graduate School, program coordinator and course coordinator. The faculty director is charged with the day-to-day operations of the degree program, including budgetary oversight, chairing the MS-DS steering committee, as well as working with the College of Arts and Sciences; College of Engineering and Applied Science; College of Media, Communication, and Information; and the Graduate School and the Provost's Office.

The MS-DS is governed by the MS-DS steering committee. The MS-DS steering committee is charged with overseeing the strategic direction of the degree, as well as reviewing its program-specific processes and policies annually.

## Student Services Provided to Enrollees in the Program

### Academic Support

A student's primary academic support will be via peer mentorship and course facilitators.

### Graduate Advising for the Program

Students may contact the MS-DS graduate advisor at [msds-support@colorado.edu](mailto:msds-support@colorado.edu).

### Career Services & Alumni Association

Students who are admitted into the degree will receive lifelong access to [Handshake](#) and other selected services and resources via CU Boulder [Career Services](#) and the [Forever Buffs](#) alumni network.

### Diplomas

Degrees are conferred three times annually. Check the [graduation calendar](#) for semester-specific dates. Diplomas are issued to graduating students in both paper and digital formats. See [Order a Diploma or Certificate](#).

### Commencement

Students who graduate from the program and earn the MS-DS degree are welcome to attend on-campus graduation ceremonies but are not obligated to do so.

### Academic Dishonesty & 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 community and are subject to the [Honor Code Office's](#) policies and procedures.

Any suspected violations of the Honor Code, including reports of violation from the MS-DS's proctoring service, will be submitted to the CU Boulder Honor Code Office ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu)).

Students who violate the Honor Code are subject to discipline, including possible academic penalties and non-academic sanctions. The course instructor will assign relevant academic sanctions for students found to have violated University rules on Academic Dishonesty, if applicable.

Find more details on the Honor Code at the [Honor Code Office website](#) and in the [B3 Program Policies](#).

## **Petition, Appeal & Grievance Issues**

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

Concerns regarding platform issues should be directed to Coursera's technical support team at [msds-support@colorado.edu](mailto:msds-support@colorado.edu).

Learning management system issues (i.e., CU Boulder software as distinct from Coursera software) should be directed to the CU Boulder Office of Information Technology ([oithelp@colorado.edu](mailto:oithelp@colorado.edu)).

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

1. Course Facilitator
2. Course Coordinator
3. Instructor of Record

4. Faculty Director
5. Department chair and Dean of Appropriate School if applicable, or Graduate School dean as determined by the 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. Graduate School Dean

In all cases, the 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. Coursera and CU Boulder are not responsible for internet connectivity issues.

### **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. 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:

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 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 will recommend within 30 days that either (1) the original grade stands, or (2) that a revised grade be assigned. The faculty director will submit a short written statement summarizing the reasons for its recommendation and submit an official change of grade request.

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

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  
<http://www.hlcommission.org>

## Accommodations for Disabilities

To request accommodations because of a disability, please work directly with Disability Services ([dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu)) in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment and shares accommodation information with faculty. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#).

## Discrimination & 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](mailto:cureport@colorado.edu). Information and other resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that CU Boulder faculty, instructors and staff have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about reporting options and support resources. This applies regardless of where or when an incident occurs if it involves a member of the CU Boulder community.

## State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA) & the Higher Education Opportunity Act

### 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.

### **Higher Education Opportunity Act**

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.

## **Accreditation & 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.

See the [B3 Program Policies](#) for HLC and Department of Education definitions of *correspondence education*, *correspondence courses* and *distance education*.

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 CU Boulder B3 Special Programs**

See [B3 Program Policies](#) for details about additional policies that apply to this program.