Student Resources

Success Guide

The Success Guide is meant to help you navigate the world of online learning. It will walk you through the steps that are proven to make students successful in college. In addition, you will learn a little about Columbia Southern University’s history and what makes it special as well as a valuable description and contact information about all student support departments to guide you through your journey.

Student Handbook

The Student Handbook is an official document that contains the policies, procedures, and resources of CSU. The handbook serves as your personal guidebook, assisting you in answering questions related to policies and procedures that are both academic and administrative in nature, support services available for student success, academic guidance, and the responsibilities, expectations, and rights of students.

myCSU Student Portal

The myCSU Student Portal is the gateway to the University. Students have the option to:

- Log into Blackboard to access and submit coursework
- View course grades
- Submit course enrollments
- View degree-specific information such as a Comprehensive Degree Report
- Verify course start and end dates
- Access Learning Resources provided through the Success Center, the Office of Disability Services, Career Services, and the CSU Online Library
- Access Technical Support resources such as tutorials and Frequently Asked Questions

Academic Integrity Policy

Ethical conduct is a foundation upon which a successful academic career at Columbia Southern University rests. The students, faculty, and staff must commit themselves to the highest standards of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. This policy can be found in the Student Handbook under Academic Policies.

Success Center

The Success Center encompasses the Writing Center, Math Center, and Office of Disability Services, which provide services that will aid in success throughout the students' academic career at Columbia Southern University. In addition to the course professor, who is the first point of contact, the Success Center has resources readily available for students, regardless of the degree being sought.
Writing Center

The CSU Writing Center provides students with support and guidance in tandem with faculty in order to promote students’ growth as writers so that they can work independently and confidently on these skills. The Writing Center offers services to help students with writing assigned papers such as essays and research papers. Writing specialists will help students understand the demands of their assignment and identify grammar and punctuation problems, provide guidance in proper APA formatting, and assist with developing assignments.

The Writing Center provides guidelines to facilitate an understanding of how assistance is given. These guidelines communicate the mission and philosophy of the Writing Center as well as submission guidelines.

To submit a Writing Center Request, click here.

Citation Guide

This CSU Citation Guide provides students with an overview of APA formatting. It includes examples of in-text and reference citations as well as instructions for how to format formal papers. In addition, this guide will provide a sample of an essay and research paper and information on library resources. To access this guide, please click here.

Math Center

The Math Center offers services to help with math-based courses. Math specialists will help students identify and understand the steps of math processes, assist with the correct usage of formulas, help students properly read and create graphs, and assist with utilizing Microsoft Office functions. The Math Center offers an abundance of resources including recorded webinars, worksheets, and self-assessments. To access these resources, please click here.

The Office of Disability Services

The mission of the Office of Disability Services (ODS) is to enhance the learning experience for students with disabilities by providing accessible education programs and reasonable accommodations to those who qualify. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), our goal is to ensure individuals with disabilities have the same access to programs, opportunities, and activities as all other students. To receive more information on The Office of Disability Services or to request accommodations, the Disability Services Coordinator can be reached by email at disabilityservices@columbiasouthern.edu or by phone at 888-785-3005.

Turnitin Originality Check

Columbia Southern University has teamed with Turnitin to provide students with a way to check their work for plagiarism before they turn it in. In Blackboard, CSU students will now be able to run their written work through the Turnitin database and receive a report similar to what their professor would receive after the official submission. The Turnitin database compares submissions to other works submitted at multiple universities, websites, and educational publications. This report will allow students
to see what portion of their work is considered to be “unoriginal” content so that they may cite it appropriately.

Online Library

The CSU Online Library is available to all students for research information and assigned reading materials. You may reach the library webpage through the My Library button on the course menu and from the myCSU Student Portal. No user names or passwords are required for using the site. Journal articles are available in the databases listed under the heading Research Databases. Suggested databases for specific courses or programs of study are listed below.

- Business Administration – Business Source Complete
- Fire Science – ABI/INFORM Complete
- Occupational Safety – Business Source Complete
- Criminal Justice – ProQuest Criminal Justice
- Psychology – Academic Search Complete
- All Other Courses – Academic Search Complete

CSU’s collection of electronic online books is accessed from the link for ebrary, which can be found below the heading Online Books. This collection of titles covers a broad scope of the academic subjects taught at Columbia Southern.

Students should pay particular attention to the section Using Wikipedia and familiarize themselves with this statement of CSU policy regarding information obtained from that source. Additional library features include:

- Subject Research Guides that provide information on the resources available for research in CSU’s programs of study (The Guides also include listings of authoritative websites for research, links to brief video tutorials on the CSU Online Library, and essential research skills.)
- A link to helpful websites on the APA rules of style

Academic Advising Center

Academic Advisors are here to help you with your academic needs whether it is your first time enrolling at Columbia Southern University or you are a returning student. Part of CSU’s mission is to meet the unique educational needs of adult learners as well as those of more traditional students in a way that is unmatched in higher education. In addition, academic advising is an important part of CSU’s mission to change lives through education. Advising involves an interactive process designed to facilitate student development through the timely and professional communication of accurate information regarding degree programs, courses, resources, and college policies/procedures, all with the objective of helping students attain their educational goals. Our goal is to enable you to discover your skills and abilities through education and apply those attributes to your everyday life.
Course Assessments

Students are permitted to use the course textbook and other reference materials as needed when completing course assessments. Blackboard allows only one submission for each assessment unless otherwise specified within the Course Syllabus. Each assessment may be opened multiple times but may only be submitted once. Students have the option to print assessments and prepare answers offline. Alternatively, students may complete and save their answers to continue at a later time.

Final Examination

Columbia Southern University (CSU) degree programs contain a variety of assignment types and methodologies. Comprehensive sets of questions or exercises are used to evaluate knowledge, skills, and mastery of subject matter prior to and during the final examination. Numerous courses within a program of study may require a final examination; for which, an approved proctor is required. For more information regarding final examinations, please refer to the student handbook.

Contacting Faculty

Professor contact information is available for viewing under the Professor Profile tab within each course. All course content related questions and subject matter inquiries should be directed to the course professor. The best method of contacting the professor is by email. All non-course content related questions should be directed to the Student Services Department at students@columbiasouthern.edu.

Viewing Feedback

Click here for a PDF file that outlines how to access professor feedback for assignments, assessments, and essay questions.

Talking with a Professor about a Grade

The first step in resolving a grading issue involves an informal discussion with the professor. Below are some guidelines to facilitate this discussion.

1. Ask for specific feedback.
2. Ask for examples of what would have made your work stronger.
3. Try to understand what your professor thinks is missing or incorrect about your work.
4. Focus on objective criteria.
5. Continue to ask clarifying questions that focus upon the learning objective.

Course Evaluations

Course evaluations are sent to students via email once each final course grade posts. Students have the opportunity to evaluate the course professor, course materials, and other services of the university. These evaluations are used to improve course instruction, materials, and services.
Grading Policies

Columbia Southern University (CSU) students can view course grades at any time through Blackboard or by visiting the myCSU Student Portal. The myCSU Student Portal provides students the option to print course grade reports and review all assignment grades for courses completed at CSU.

Course specific grading information is available within each Course Syllabus, to include assignment weights.

Grading System
The following scale is used to determine final course grades and are recorded on the CSU transcript unless noted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading</th>
<th>Points per credit hour</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W/F</td>
<td>Withdraw/Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Retake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DN*</td>
<td>Dropped for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Dropped from Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC*</td>
<td>Institutional Drop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not recorded on the CSU transcript.

Final course grades of W, I, IP, R, DN, DP, and DC do not generate quality points and are not normally included in the cumulative grade point average (GPA). However, grades of I and R will be calculated to determine Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), which may impact federal student aid eligibility. An IP grade is assigned when a student is in the process of completing a course and does not indicate that the student has been granted additional time to complete course assignments.

Grade Point Average
The grade point average (GPA) is computed by dividing the total number of quality points by the total number of hours completed.

Grading Rubric
Columbia Southern University has established functional scoring rubrics for all assignments types (e.g., research paper, case study, article critique). The rubrics are located in Blackboard with the assignment and are available for student review. Faculty apply the rubrics to evaluate the assignments and enter the scores and feedback directly into the rubric located with the assignment. There is also a non-functional scoring rubric for written response assessment items for student review located within the
myCSU Student Portal. Faculty apply this rubric in scoring assessment items and provide feedback in the assessment.

**Grading Timeframes**

CSU requires all assignments to be graded in a timely manner. Unit Assessments and Final Examinations are required to be graded within three days of submission. Papers, Projects, Article Critiques, and Case Studies are required to be graded within five days of submission. Selected assignments in the DBA program allow seven day grading time periods. Please Note: There may be times in which a grading delay could occur due to extenuating circumstances. These delays will be communicated appropriately.

**Late Assignment Submissions**

The following list defines information regarding late assignment submissions for students enrolled in the Term option:

- Weekly course assignments must be turned in during the week they are assigned. Students have the option to submit assignments one week in advance, unless otherwise indicated by the university.
- Students are required to respond to the Discussion Board assignment by Saturday, Midnight (Central Time) and comment on another student's response by Tuesday, Midnight (Central Time).
- Assignments not turned in by the deadline will be penalized as follows:
  - One day late – 10 points deduction
  - Two days late – 20 points deduction
  - Three days late – 30 points deduction
  - Assignments will not be accepted after the third day. The student will earn a zero on assignments not turned in by the third day after the deadline unless otherwise approved by the course professor, per the Assignment Make-Up Policy.
  - Students earn zero points if Discussion Board assignments are submitted late.

**Final Course Grade Appeals**

Students have the option to appeal a final course grade should the student have reason to believe an error has been made in determining their grade. A final course grade may be appealed once the course end date has lapsed and the final course grade has posted. Individual assignment grade challenges should be addressed to the course professor prior to the course end date and are considered informal.

A student may file a formal final course grade appeal if the following conditions are met:

- The student has attempted to resolve the issue informally with the course professor.
- The grading issues at stake impact the final course grade.
- The student believes that his or her final course grade was assigned contrary to procedures as specified in the course syllabus or was based on bias or caprice.
- All course assignments were submitted.
- The final course grade appeal is filed no later than 10 calendar days from the date the final course grade posted.

Students meeting the above criteria, wishing to appeal a final course grade, are required to complete the **Final Course Grade Appeal Form**. Along with this form, students should provide all email correspondence with the faculty member showing an attempt to informally resolve the issue and
justification supporting the reason for the appeal. The Final Course Grade Appeal Form, email correspondence, and justification should be submitted via email to studentappeals@columbiasouthern.edu, to begin the Level I Appeal pursuant to the Policy for Student Appeals, click here to fill out the Final Course Grade Appeal Form.

CareerQuest

CareerQuest is a comprehensive tool that will allow students and alumni to set up a profile, choose their privacy settings, gain access to Career Services Resources, and set up an appointment to speak with a Career Development Counselor. It will also allow students to keep all career-related documents organized and housed in one area, research companies, set preferences and save searches for a strategized job search, post resumes for employer viewing, access the global job bank, and apply for jobs.

Recommended Software

All CSU courses require Adobe Reader in order to view course material. Some courses may also require Adobe Flash Player, QuickTime video player, and Java. Please click the appropriate link below to download and install the necessary programs.

Blackboard Support Site

The Blackboard Support area of the myCSU Student Portal contains help for any issues you may have with Blackboard. Support areas include:

- Getting Started
- Browser Help
- FAQ
- Download
- Known Blackboard Issues

Click here for student Blackboard support.

Technical Support

You may contact a Technical Support representative at techsupport@columbiasouthern.edu or by phoning 877-399-1063. Technical Support is also available via Live Chat Monday – Friday 8:00 AM – 11:00 PM CST Saturday & Sunday 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM CST