Student Resources

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1. Orientation

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 of the student support departments that will help to guide you through your journey. To access the Success Guide, click here.

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

2. Policies and Etiquette

CSU Student Handbook
The CSU 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.

Academic Integrity Policy
Ethical conduct is foundational to a successful academic career at Columbia Southern University. 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 CSU Student Handbook under Academic Policies.

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:
  o One day late – 10 points deduction
  o Two days late – 20 points deduction
  o 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.
  o Students earn zero points if Discussion Board assignments are submitted late.

**Internet Etiquette**
Following proper internet etiquette is important for successful online learning. Please always self-identify in all correspondence with your full name and student number. Also, the use of proper grammar and courteous language is appreciated when emailing professors, posting to discussion boards, or corresponding with CSU personnel or students. As a suggestion, the email address used to communicate with professors and/or CSU personnel should be one that is considered professional within the educational environment.

Students are prohibited from engaging in conduct that includes, but is not limited to:

Inappropriate content posted to discussion boards and other university/social media platforms including but not limited to, harassment, prejudice, stalking, offensive language, threats, abuse, insults, or humiliation. No demeaning comments will be tolerated, including, but not limited to, comments on religion, race, age, sexual orientation, and unwanted sexual advances or intimidations.

For more information, refer to the Communication Guidelines section and the Student Code of Conduct section within the CSU Student Handbook.

**3. Tools & Technology**

**Minimum Technical Skills**
Proficient use of e-mail, the Internet, and standard desktop software is recommended to successfully complete online, distance learning courses. CSU utilizes an online curriculum delivery method through the Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS.) To view a detailed list of CSU Technical Requirements, please click on the following link:
www.columbiasouthern.edu/Future-Students/Requirements
Required & 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.

SafeAssign Originality Check
Columbia Southern University has teamed with SafeAssign 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 SafeAssign database and receive a report similar to what their professor would receive after the official submission. The SafeAssign 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.

Accessibility Statements and Privacy Policies
Please click the link below to access accessibility statements and privacy policies for standard course technologies that can be found throughout all CSU courses. For accessibility and privacy information that is unique to your specific courses, please refer to your course syllabus or course announcements.

https://mycsu.columbiasouthern.edu/media/accessibility_privacy.pdf/

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.

4. Academic & Student Support Services

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 requirements of their assignment, identify grammar and punctuation problems, and provide guidance in proper APA formatting.

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.

To submit a Math Center Request, click here.

The Office of Disability Services
The mission of the Office of Disability Services is to ensure an accessible learning experience in which students with disabilities have equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services, and activities. To request accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services at disabilityservices@columbiasouthern.edu or 888-785-3005. For more information, visit the Office of Disability Services webpage.

CSU Online Library
The CSU Online Library is available to support your courses and programs. The online library includes databases, journals, e-books, and research guides. These resources are always accessible and can be reached through the library webpage. To access the library, log into the myCSU Student Portal, and click on “CSU Online Library.” You can also access the CSU Online Library from the “My Library” button on the course menu for each course in Blackboard.

The CSU Online Library offers several reference services. E-mail library@columbiasouthern.edu and telephone (1.877.268.8046) assistance is available Monday -Thursday from 8 am to 5 pm CDT and Friday from 8 am to 3 pm CDT. The library's chat reference service, Ask a Librarian, is available 24/7; look for the chat box on the online library page.
Librarians can help you develop your research plan or assist you in finding relevant, appropriate, and timely information. Reference requests can include customized keyword search strategies, links to articles, database help, and other services. The Library Orientation Guide is a helpful tutorial which gives you tips on how search within the database, and explains what a peer reviewed article is.

The A-Z List of Library Resources lists all the databases and gives descriptions of what type of information is in each of the databases.

Ebook Central is the CSU Library’s e-books database, which provides authoritative e-books in a range of subjects from the world’s top publishers.

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

Research Guides located at the bottom of the library homepage 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.)

**Academic Advising and Student Support 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 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. Online resources for the Academic Advising and Student Support Center can be found on the [myCSU Portal](#) by clicking on Support Services.

**Technical Support**

Technical Support is available in the event difficulties occur or general assistance is needed in determining how to submit a course assignment. The following resources are available to students in the myCSU Student Portal.

You may contact a Technical Support representative at [techsupport@columbiasouthern.edu](mailto:techsupport@columbiasouthern.edu) or by phoning 877-399-1063. Technical Support is also available via Live Chat

Technical Support Hours:
Monday – Friday 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM CST Saturday 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM CST
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.

5. Assessments and Exams

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 CSU Student Handbook.

6. Communication and Feedback

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 Academic Advising and Student Support Center 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.

General Education Competencies
CSU recognizes the importance of general education and is committed to providing students with the general education skills needed to be successful in the world of work as well as in advanced courses of study. In many courses, we measure student attainment of one or more of the five General Education Competencies: Communication, Critical Thinking, Information Literacy & Technology, Math & Science, and Social & Cultural Awareness.

If one or more of these five General Education Competencies is measured in your course, your instructor used a rubric item embedded within the assignment rubric to determine your level of attainment. The rubric item used for General Education Competencies did not count in your grade; it was only used to provide a measure of your level of attainment.

When you receive a Level 1, 2, or 3 on any General Education Competency, CSU provides you with additional assistance to help you improve your level of attainment. This is optional, but we encourage you to access this additional assistance to better prepare you for success in your other courses. In the chart below, locate the General Education Competency and the level of your attainment reported on your assignment rubric (at the very bottom). When you click on the appropriate link, a separate window will open, providing you with information about additional assistance.
7. **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 the items on the scale are recorded on CSU transcripts (unless noted with an asterisk):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading</th>
<th>Points per credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Institutional Drop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not recorded on CSU transcripts*

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. The rubric can be accessed either by clicking [here](#) or by clicking the given link within each unit assessment in Blackboard. Faculty apply this rubric in scoring assessment items and provide feedback in the assessment.

**Grading Time Frames**
CSU requires all assignments to be graded in a timely manner. Unit Discussion Boards or Journals, 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.

**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.