

**DGS AND
PROGRAM DIRECTOR
HANDBOOK**

**Academic Year
2020-2021**

Quick References

GSAS Administration

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Office of Student Affairs, 107 Low Library
gsas-studentaffairs@columbia.edu | 212-854-8903

Office of Financial Aid, 107 Low Library
gsas-finaid@columbia.edu | 212-854-3808

Office of Admissions, 106 Low Library
gsas-help@columbia.edu | 212-854-6729

GSAS Compass, 106 Low Library
gsas-compass@columbia.edu | 212-854-2854

Office of Academic Diversity and Inclusion, 108 Low Library
gsas-diversity@columbia.edu | 212-851-8903

Office of Communications, 109A Low Library
gsas-communications@columbia.edu | 212-851-0716

GSAS DGS and MA Program Director Meetings in 2020-2021:

On the following dates, DGS Meetings will take place from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m., and MA Program Director Meetings will take place from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. During the fall term, these meetings will be conducted via Zoom; information regarding the format of spring meetings will be shared once it is available.

- Thursday, October 8, 2020
- Tuesday, November 10, 2020
- Tuesday, February 9, 2021
- Tuesday, April 6, 2021

Academic Calendar

To view important dates and deadlines for the 2020-2021 academic year, visit the [Academic Calendar](#) on the GSAS website.

Table of Contents

The director of graduate studies (DGS) is the primary liaison between the academic department and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS). In this handbook, the term “DGS” will be used to refer to both DGSs and individuals who serve as MA program directors or advisors, but are not necessarily formally designated as their department’s “DGS.”

This handbook details GSAS policies as of August 2020. Policies are reviewed and updated regularly on the GSAS website (gsas.columbia.edu) as the need arises; departments and programs are encouraged to consult the website for the most up-to-date information. Please contact the Office of the Dean with any questions at gsas-dean@columbia.edu or 212-854-2865.

Note: To jump directly to a section, click on the section title or page number below. To search for a specific word or phrase, type Control + F (PC) or Command + F (Mac).

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Introduction

Message from the Dean

Dear Directors of Graduate Studies and Master's Program Directors,

This handbook is offered to you as a resource for answering questions about GSAS policies and services. Please use this handbook in conjunction with the [GSAS website](#) and the [Essential Policies for the Columbia Community website](#) to guide doctoral and master's students as they progress through their course of study. Any suggestions for improving this document, which is updated annually, will be welcome.

The fulfillment of the needs of our students requires an ongoing partnership between the academic programs and GSAS. Hence, you should feel free to contact us with any questions that you may have that are not touched upon here. I am grateful as always for the many ways in which you support our graduate students throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Carlos J. Alonso
Dean and Vice President for Graduate Education
Morris A. and Alma Schapiro Professor in the Humanities

DGS/MAPD Responsibilities

The DGS or MAPD is responsible for making students aware of the program's academic expectations (including specific standards for good academic standing) and for maintaining clear and effective communication between the program and its doctoral and/or master's students. DGSs and MAPDs should contact students immediately if at any point their performance does not meet those expectations and standards.

As the primary party responsible for graduate education in the department or program, the DGS and MAPD (with assistance from the DAAF and PhD Program Coordinator where appropriate):

- Maintains complete and confidential academic records on all graduate students
- **Advises new students:** The DGS/MAPD is the initial advisor of all graduate students. Departmental practice after initial advising varies: In some departments, the DGS/MAPD remains the advisor until a sponsor is chosen; in others, faculty advisors are assigned to students shortly after arrival.
- **Advocates for graduate students and for the graduate program:** The DGS/MAPD is the advocate for the needs of graduate students and degree program(s), both within and outside the department.
- Evaluates each student's academic progress and standing each semester and ensures that students remain informed of degree requirements and expected milestones
- Serves as chair of departmental graduate recruiting, admissions, and fellowship committees—or delegates such responsibilities where appropriate
- Nominates entering and continuing students for fellowships
- **Requests Teaching Fellow (TF) appointments:** Before each term, the DGS of a PhD program conveys to Vice Dean Andrea Solomon the teaching needs of the department and a list of TFs proposed for assignment to each class. There is a spreadsheet used for this specific purpose, and it is included in a department's dedicated Google folder, along with explicit guidelines for assignments, historical enrollments, a sample teaching appointment letter, and the current rank list of funded students from GSAS Financial Aid.
- Reports to and confirms with GSAS all PhD student funding, including teaching and research appointments, dissertation writing fellowships, and outside awards
- Forwards or underscores to graduate students relevant announcements that are sent by GSAS or the University
- Alerts students of departmental, professional, and other academic fellowships and research opportunities, and encourages them to apply
- **Promotes GSAS rules and regulations:** Please contact GSAS if you are uncertain about how to interpret a specific GSAS policy.
- Ensures that departmental practices and guidelines conform to GSAS and University policy
- Ensures that [departmental academic requirements](#) are explicitly communicated to students, especially in the student handbook and on the department's website, and that the relevant portion of the website is kept up to date
- Works with the GSAS Office of Student Affairs on cases involving student complaints and grievances, student academic or behavioral misconduct, students with health issues, and other important student matters
- Transmits to GSAS requests for transfer of graduate credit, advanced standing, statement of academic standing for leaves of absence, reinstatements, extensions of time to degree, probationary conditions for students in academic difficulty, and recommendations for dismissal
- Certifies students for receipt of the MA, MPhil, and PhD/DMA degrees

Admissions

GSAS collaborates closely with each department and program to ensure that only students with the highest potential to succeed are admitted. The GSAS Office of Admissions prepares applications for review, and conveys to applicants the outcomes of program recommendations for admission.

Please note that, to ensure the efficient routing of messages, the GSAS Office of Admissions uses two distinct email addresses:

- gsas-help@columbia.edu – This **internal email address** is used only to field inquiries from departmental personnel about internal admissions matters. Please send questions about reviewing files in SLATE, moving applications from one bin to another, accessing how-to articles, etc., to this email address. This email address should not be shared with applicants, and programs should not copy this address when responding to messages from applicants.
- gsas-admissions@columbia.edu – This **public email address** is used to field inquiries from applicants about the admissions process. While the department is best equipped to answer questions about academic and programmatic issues, emails that you receive from applicants about admissions policies and procedures should be forwarded to [gsas-admissions](mailto:gsas-admissions@columbia.edu)—not to [gsas-help](mailto:gsas-help@columbia.edu).

General Admissions Policies

- Current graduate students in Arts and Sciences programs may not participate in the evaluation of applications.

Students must be formally admitted into a department or program in order to earn a degree in it. The role of the department is to make admissions recommendations to the Graduate School; the role of GSAS is to review the admit list and generate the formal letter of admission. Department faculty should not extend an offer of admission verbally or in writing before GSAS has produced the formal offer.

- With the sole exception of [approved dual-degree programs](#), students may not pursue a degree in more than one Columbia program concurrently, and may not be registered in more than one degree program at any institution in the same semester.
 - Applicants to dual-degree programs must submit separate applications to and be admitted by both schools in order to be eligible for the dual-degree program.
- Departments must contact GSAS about the dossier of any doctoral or master's applicant whom the department wishes to admit but who has:
 - been enrolled in a doctoral program elsewhere
 - submitted low TOEFL, IELTS, or Duolingo scores ([minimum scores](#) are available on the GSAS website)
 - an applicant profile that deviates significantly from customary admissions expectations
 - submitted plagiarized or false materials
- Admitted applicants must officially record via their SLATE Applicant Status page their response to the admission offer. Emails to departments are not considered official

responses. Programs that receive responses directly from admitted applicants should instruct the applicants to record their response in SLATE.

- Each department may determine whether to require submission of GRE scores from its applicants, or whether to make the scores an optional or recommended submission.
- GRE scores are valid for five years from the date of the test, per the policy of the Educational Testing Service (ETS), which administers the exam. However, applicants who took the GRE more than five years ago, and who have subsequently been enrolled in a graduate program, may petition the department or program to which they are applying to accept their scores. If the scores are deemed acceptable, a departmental representative must notify the GSAS Office of Admissions via email, and the applicant must provide an official score report from ETS to the GSAS Office of Admissions.
- TOEFL, IELTS, or Duolingo scores are valid for two years from the date of the test. The English Proficiency Requirement is set by the University and may not be waived.

Credentials Verification

- As mandated by the Office of the Provost, all incoming students must complete a credentials verification process. To assist in this task, GSAS has contracted with Re Vera Services to confirm the authorship of the letters of recommendation that were submitted in support of admitted applicants. Re Vera has been thoroughly vetted by both the Office of the Provost and the Office of General Counsel to do this work.
- GSAS instructs admitted students to inform their recommenders that they will be contacted by Re Vera. However, some faculty may be anxious about whether the verification emails are legitimate, and may contact your program directly about this process. Please confirm to both your faculty and to faculty from other institutions that if they receive an email from Re Vera, it is legitimate and not fraudulent.

PhD/DMA Admissions

PhD/DMA Admissions Policies – Minimum Standards

- Departments may review applications as soon as they are submitted by candidates.
- The reviewers may include a mix of faculty and administrative staff.
- A reviewer who has a personal relationship to the applicant must recuse themselves from evaluating the application.
- All components of an application must be reviewed. Special attention should be given to letters of recommendation with respect to:
 - 1) Length and specificity of the letter
 - 2) Title of the recommender and relationship between the recommender and the applicant
 - 3) If specific courses and grades are mentioned, verify that the transcript and the letter contain consistent information.
- One person may be authorized to reject an application, but an Admit or Waitlist decision should be determined by at least three reviewers.
- Departments must submit to the Dean for approval any requests for offers of admission in excess of the number set by the Office of the Dean at the beginning of the season.

Waitlist for PhD/DMA Applicants

March 15 is the recommended date by which departmental decisions should be recorded for all doctoral applications. If a final decision cannot be made by that date, departments are encouraged to use the formal waitlist option in SLATE.

The waitlist process provides a pool of applicants to whom an offer admission may be made if the program will not yield its full class from the offers that already have been made. Offers to waitlisted applicants may not be made until it is mathematically impossible to over-yield from the still-outstanding offers of admission.

Creating a waitlist is advantageous because it informs applicants that their application has been reviewed. Since online forums and social media allow applicants to learn when programs have made their admit and reject decisions, applicants for whom no decision has been released often become concerned and contact GSAS and the department for information concerning the status of their applications. Therefore, it is preferable for departments to record formally a waitlist decision. Waitlisted applicants receive a waitlist decision letter, and must respond to accept or decline waitlist status.

GSAS typically provides two weeks for applicants to respond to the waitlist offer, unless a program specifically requests a different timeframe. The files of applicants who accept waitlist status will appear in the program's "Waitlist-HOLD" bin. Offers of admission may only be made to those applicants whose files reside in this bin. Offers to waitlisted students may be made until 5:00 p.m. on April 15.

PhD/DMA Admissions Calendar

August	DGSs should work with departmental staff to ensure that the department website is updated to correspond to GSAS admissions policies and procedures (e.g., deadlines, tuition deposits, admissions requirements, etc.).
September	Application system opens for the following fall admissions period.
December–January	Deadlines for PhD/DMA applications (specific dates are set by departments, subject to GSAS approval) Note: Typically, the GSAS Office of Admissions keeps the online application system open to receive late applications for two weeks after the program's published application deadline.
Late January–March	A department's internal admissions schedule determines the specific times when the following processes occur: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Departments make recommendations to admit, reject, or place applicants on a waitlist. Departments are encouraged to provide the GSAS Office of Admissions with rejected applications as early as possible.2. The GSAS Office of Admissions releases standard decision letters within two business days of approval by the Dean's Office. Discussion between GSAS and a department regarding an individual application may delay a decision. Letters to applicants who hold external fellowship awards may also take longer to be released, because the GSAS Office of Financial Aid may be required to contact the funding organization to confirm the terms and conditions of the award before the letter can be released.

Late March– April 15	Departments should contact admitted applicants who have not yet responded to the offer of admission. Admitted applicants who reply to the department should be advised that they must officially accept or decline the offer using the online response form.
April 15	The absolute deadline for admitted students to accept or decline an offer of admission to a doctoral program is April 15. If the department’s target number has not been reached before that date, offers may be made to students on the waitlist only with the permission of the Office of the Dean and only before the April 15 deadline. Such offers will have a “reply by” date of two days from the date of issuance.

Minimum Standards for MA Admissions

MA Admissions Policies

- Departments may review applications as soon as they are submitted by candidates.
- The reviewers may include a mix of faculty and administrative staff.
- A reviewer who has a personal relationship to the applicant must recuse themselves from evaluating the application.
- All components of an application must be reviewed. Special attention should be given to letters of recommendation with respect to:
 - 1) Length and specificity of the letter
 - 2) Title of the recommender and relationship between the recommender and the applicant
 - 3) If specific courses and grades are mentioned, verify that the transcript and the letter contain consistent information.
- One person may be authorized to reject an application, but an Admit or Waitlist decision should be determined by more than one person.
- The GSAS Office of Admissions reviews departmental decisions within two business days of receipt of application files. Discussion between GSAS and a department regarding an individual application may delay release of a decision letter.
- Admitted MA students who are being offered fellowship funding must be provided with a response date of no earlier than April 15, in order to comply with the April 15 Resolution of the Council of Graduate Schools for all funded offers of admission.
- Release of letters to applicants who are members of the military or who hold Fulbright or other external scholarship awards may be delayed, because the GSAS Office of Admissions may be required to contact the scholarship organization to confirm the terms and conditions of the award before the letter can be prepared.
- An MA applicant’s request to extend the original response deadline may be granted with the approval of the program and GSAS.

Spring Admission Cycle

- Applications are available for departmental review starting in October.
- All admission decisions must be made by December 7 .
- No applicant may be waitlisted for spring admission.
- Applicants must reply to the offer of admission within two weeks of notification, and pay the tuition deposit when accepting the offer.

Fall Admission Cycle

- Programs may review applications as soon as they are submitted by candidates.
- Programs are strongly encouraged to make admissions decisions within a month of the application deadline.
- The GSAS Office of Admissions provides programs with a schedule of “reply by” dates that vary from one to four weeks, based on how far before the end of the annual admissions cycle a decision is recorded. Admitted applicants will be provided with response dates of up to four weeks, unless a different timeframe is requested by the program. The other exception to the “up-to-four-weeks” window for responses is for MA admits receiving funding from GSAS. To comply with the Council of Graduate Schools guidelines concerning funded offers, the response date for those students may not be set for earlier than April 15.
- Admitted students must accept the offer of admission by submitting the tuition deposit.
- Programs may not record “waitlist” as a decision after mid-May.
- All final decisions for waitlisted applicants who are not being kept on the summer waitlist (see below) should be made by mid-June.

Summer Waitlist

MA programs may choose to keep a small list of applicants on a waitlist over the summer. If spaces open in the program due to declines, deferrals, etc., offers of admission may be extended to applicants from the summer waitlist.

Summer waitlist decisions may be recorded between May 1 and June 15. When a decision is recorded, the file will be reviewed by the Office of Admissions, and a summer waitlist letter will be released to the applicant.

Students admitted from the summer waitlist may not defer. Applicants must accept or decline the offer to join the summer waitlist via an online response form. The last day on which applicants may accept summer waitlist status is Wednesday, June 23.

When recording admit decisions, the following guidelines should be noted:

- Students admitted from the summer waitlist may not defer.
- To avoid visa issues, any applicant placed on a summer waitlist should be domestic.
- Summer waitlist candidates should be reviewed for any unusual circumstances (such as low or missing English proficiency test scores). Please write to gsas-help@columbia.edu if you have any questions about a potential summer waitlist candidate's eligibility.

To extend offers of admission to summer waitlist applicants, please email the Office of Admissions via gsas-help@columbia.edu by 5:00 p.m. on August 17. Official letters offering admission will then be released. To accept the offer of admission, applicants must submit a tuition deposit.

MA Admissions Calendar

- **September** – Application system opens for the following spring and fall admissions periods. Typically, the GSAS Office of Admissions keeps the online application system open to receive late applications for two weeks after the program’s published application deadline.

If a program needs either to 1) close the application earlier than the two-week grace period or 2) leave the application open beyond the two-week grace period, the program should notify the GSAS Office of Admissions by emailing gsas-help@columbia.edu.

- **October to May** – Deadlines for applications, as selected by departments and programs (subject to GSAS approval). Deadlines vary widely, from October for admission in the spring semester to May for admission in the following fall semester.

Programs are strongly encouraged to make admissions decisions within a month of the application deadline. The GSAS Office of Admissions releases decision letters and notifies applicants by email.

- **June 25** – Final date for faculty, staff, and applicants to access SLATE

BA/MA Option

The BA/MA option is available only to current Columbia undergraduates (i.e., at Columbia College, School of Engineering, School of General Studies, and Barnard College). Applicants apply and receive their admission decision during their junior year or the first semester of their senior year, but their official enrollment in GSAS does not occur until they graduate from their undergraduate school.

Students who are interested in pursuing the BA/MA option are required to consult the DGS or program director of their intended MA program before applying. Students applying in the first semester of their senior year should meet with an advisor early in the semester, and should be urged to submit an early application. The program should review the application and record a decision before the end of the semester. Seniors who approach the program about applying later than mid-November should be instructed to submit the standard MA application and be advised that they may transfer eligible excess credits to GSAS upon enrollment. These applicants should be offered an expedited GSAS decision.

Students offered admission under the BA/MA option should then work with the DGS or program director to determine an appropriate selection of graduate courses during their remaining undergraduate semesters. Eventually, upon enrollment in GSAS, BA/MA students may be granted up to one-half Residence Unit (0.5 RU) of advanced standing and/or up to three courses (nine to twelve credits) of transfer credit for graduate courses (4000-level and above) **taken in excess of the requirements for the Columbia or Barnard bachelor's degree.** In other words, these courses may count as 0.5 RU of the 2 RU requirement for a master's degree.

Applicants interested in the BA/MA option should apply no later than two months in advance of the semester in which they intend to begin taking courses that will count toward the MA. Since students are not enrolled in GSAS formally until after graduation from their undergraduate school, their admission to the BA/MA option is essentially a commitment to be granted transfer credit upon registration in GSAS.

For additional information, contact gsas-help@columbia.edu.

Non-Degree and Exchange Scholar Applications

Non-Degree Special Students

Students who are matriculated PhD students at institutions outside of the United States and who wish to take classes or conduct research at the Graduate School, but who do not wish to enroll in a degree program, may apply for Non-Degree Special Student status. This application is submitted through SLATE by students who are not participants in a formal Exchange Agreement (see below).

Non-degree applications are available to review upon submission by the candidate. Departments are encouraged to submit decisions no later than December 2 for spring and May 1 for fall.

Domestic and International Exchange Programs

GSAS has a number of longstanding exchange agreements in place with domestic and international institutions to host graduate students for a limited period of time, so that they may take courses or conduct research that is necessary for completion of their dissertations. The objectives of these exchange programs are to offer doctoral students additional educational opportunities not available in their home institutions, to introduce them to the academic culture and professional contacts of another institution or country, and to further enhance relationships between partner institutions.

Domestic Exchange Programs

The Graduate School holds exchange agreements with the [Ivy Plus Exchange Scholar Program](#), the Bard Consortium, and IUDC. Through these agreements, graduate students can study for one or two semesters at participating graduate schools. These programs are handled by the Office of Student Affairs.

International Exchange Programs

GSAS has approximately twenty exchange agreements with international institutions or consortia. Students who are matriculated graduate students at international institutions and who wish to take classes or conduct research at GSAS, and whose institutions participate in special exchange programs with GSAS, are thus referred to as [International Exchange Scholars](#).

International Exchange Scholars apply through a special SLATE application. Prospective non-degree graduate students applying as exchange scholars are encouraged to coordinate their plan of study at GSAS with both their home institutions and the respective GSAS departments or programs to ascertain whether non-degree admission is offered. Applications should be submitted only by students who have been officially preselected by their home institutions.

Admissions deadlines for most non-degree students are mid-November for the following spring semester, and mid-April for the following fall semester. Although GSAS strongly encourages all Exchange Scholars to apply during the normal application cycle, in some cases, due to international academic calendars and longstanding agreements, the review and admission process may take place earlier or later than the typical application time frame. GSAS understands that reviewing applications outside of the normal application cycle may be inconvenient; however, timely decisions for these applications are required to ensure an efficient admissions process for all students.

Deferrals

The Graduate School offers admission with the expectation that students will matriculate in the semester specified during the application process. If extraordinary circumstances will prevent the student from matriculating in the year of acceptance, the student may request deferring admission. Deferrals may be granted for academic reasons, such as the need to study a language abroad or travel due to the conditions of an award; they may also be granted for reasons of personal health or the health of a family member. Deferrals may be requested for up to one calendar year only, and are not granted automatically: they must be reviewed and formally acknowledged by GSAS. The Office of Admissions will report the decision to the applicant by email.

Doctoral Students

Admitted PhD applicants should request a deferral through the online response form available in SLATE. They will have the ability to do this only if they have not already used the application form to accept the offer of admission. Otherwise, they may request a deferral by writing to gsas-admissions@columbia.edu. Upon receipt of the deferral request, the GSAS Office of Admissions will confer with the DGS or departmental admissions representative. Student correspondence with the department does not grant a deferral automatically; departments should forward any such correspondence to gsas-help@columbia.edu with a recommendation to GSAS on whether to approve or deny the deferral request.

Master's Students

Admitted MA applicants may request a deferral via the online response form only after accepting the offer of admission and paying the tuition deposit. The MA deferral request will then be approved by the GSAS Office of Admissions, unless GSAS determines there are compelling reasons to deny the request. If your department wishes to review each individual MA deferral request, please notify the GSAS Office of Admissions at gsas-help@columbia.edu.

MA applicants whose deferral requests are approved will be required to submit a second tuition deposit the following year, when an updated letter of admission reflecting the new enrollment date will be released. Upon enrollment, both tuition deposit payments will appear as credits on the student's account.

Transfer Credit

At GSAS, "transfer credit" denotes relevant coursework completed before a student's enrollment in a GSAS degree program, and that the student may submit in partial fulfillment of specific academic requirements for the degree. This determination is made by the student's department, approved by GSAS, and entered on the student's transcript as formal acknowledgement of completed work that a student may use in partial fulfillment of academic requirements for the degree.

During the first semester in which they register, students who wish to request transfer credit should submit the [Application for Transfer Credit form](#) as well as any relevant materials to their department's director of graduate studies or program coordinator. Departments and programs determine the number of completed points to award as transfer credit, and forward their recommendation to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Please note that all coursework

submitted for transfer credit must be at the graduate level (at Columbia, this means courses at the 4000 level and above), be worth three or more points each, **and must not have been used to fulfill requirements for any other degree previously awarded at Columbia or elsewhere.**

Students should be aware of the following policies:

- Transfer credit is granted solely by the faculty and the Dean of the Graduate School.
- Requests for transfer credit must be made by both the student and the director of graduate studies/program director.
- Under no circumstances will undergraduate courses (for Columbia courses, those at the 3000 level and below) be accepted as transfer credit toward a master's or doctoral degree.
- Once granted, transfer credit cannot be revoked.
- Students who transfer from one doctoral program to another within Columbia University do not receive additional guaranteed funding beyond the initial offer of five years of funding.

Policies for awarding transfer credit differ depending on the type of degree program (doctoral or master's). Please refer to the [Transfer Credit page](#) of the GSAS website for complete policies.

Trailing Student Policy

In order to assist with the recruitment of new faculty, GSAS will accommodate to the extent possible departmental requests to allow new faculty to relocate to Columbia along with some of their current graduate students. The total number of transferring students must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School and may affect the department's fellowship allocation for the following year. At a minimum, all transferring students must complete at least two Residence Units at GSAS and receive the MPhil degree in addition to defending the dissertation. In addition, all transferring students must have completed at least one year of graduate work at their current institution. Consequently, trailing students will receive at most an offer of four years of guaranteed funding.

Students seeking to transfer must complete the GSAS online application in the same manner as any other GSAS applicant; GSAS will waive the application fee. The departmental faculty and the Dean will review the application files. The chair of the departmental admissions committee should certify to the Dean both the admissibility of the student to the graduate program and the academic cohort into which the student would be placed. Students whose application is recommended for admission by the department and approved by the Dean will receive a formal letter of admission. The official letter of-admission is accessible to the department in the student's application account in SLATE.

The academic level (year of study) of the entering student determines the maximum number of Residence Units awarded as advanced standing and the years of guaranteed fellowship support that will be awarded. The following table describes the standard years of funding and advanced standing awarded:

Entering Year	Maximum Advanced Standing Awarded	Natural Sciences (Excluding Math and Statistics)		All Other Departments
		Years of GSAS Funding	Years of Faculty Grant Support	
2	2 RUs	1	3	4
3	4 RUs	0	3	3
4	4 RUs	0	2	2

Students who arrive in the spring semester will have their advanced standing and funding years adjusted accordingly. Students who are in their fourth year or later at the time of requesting admission, or who have completed most of their doctoral work at their current institution, are generally ineligible to earn their doctorate at Columbia. Such students may enroll as exchange scholars at Columbia to complete their dissertation research but will receive the doctorate from their current institution.

Financial Aid

The GSAS Office of Financial Aid coordinates funding for graduate students from internal and external sources. For questions about financial aid, contact Tom Tarduogno, Director of Financial Aid, at tt22@columbia.edu or 212-854-3809.

DGSs should review the [Fellowship Information for Doctoral Students](#) section of the GSAS website.

Five-Year Funding Guarantee and Seven-Year Funding Eligibility

Guaranteed-Funding Years (Years 1-5)*

Doctoral students normally receive the annual prevailing stipend and appropriate tuition and health fees for five years, provided that they remain in good academic standing and, in the case of student officers, have discharged responsibly their pedagogical or research duties. For doctoral candidates in Humanities and Social Science departments, as well as Mathematics and Statistics, this includes five summers of support.

**For doctoral candidates in English and Comparative Literature and Theatre only, guaranteed funding extends from year one through six.*

Funding-Eligible Years (Years 6 and 7)

After the fifth year of funding (the fourth for students with advanced standing), students in years six or seven may be eligible for, but are not entitled to, additional support. Such advanced students may be eligible for GSAS funding if they have previously banked it from outside awards received any time in years one to five; if they have special teaching assignments such as Core Preceptors, Kluge Scholars, or GSAS Teaching Scholars; or upon special request by departments that have exceptional and demonstrable pedagogical need in a given year, subject to GSAS approval.

Students are not eligible to receive GSAS fellowships after their seventh year of registration. However, for students beyond their seventh year of registration who currently hold a major, competitively awarded external fellowship that requires that GSAS contribute to the cost of tuition and health fees, an exception is made.

For more information, see the [Five-Year Funding Guarantee and Seven-Year Funding Eligibility page](#) of the GSAS website.

Internal Fellowships

GSAS administers a number of fellowships through an internal application process. For more information on a fellowship, follow the appropriate link below.

The [Summer](#) and [Academic Year Foreign Language and Area Studies \(FLAS\)](#) fellowships are open to students whose programs combine modern foreign language training with international or area studies. Students must be US citizens or permanent residents to receive these fellowships; FLAS funding is contingent on approval from the United States Department of Education.

The [Lindt](#) and [Zuckerman](#) Fellowships enable recipients to complete the writing of their dissertations during the award year; the [GSAS International Travel Fellowship](#) provides funding for international travel that is necessary for the completion of the dissertation.

The [GSAS Summer Language Fellowships for International Students](#) support international doctoral students in the Humanities and Social Science departments who need to study a foreign language abroad during the summer. GSAS will endow summer fellowships with a maximum award of \$3,000.

External Fellowships

GSAS requires that doctoral students apply for at least one academic-year external award before the end of their fourth year. Students are required to submit evidence of at least one good-faith effort to obtain funding from an external funding source to their director of graduate studies. Students should consult with the DGS to determine what constitutes a satisfactory effort based upon their field and progress in the program; the DGS is expected to convey to the Dean of the Graduate School information about student efforts in this regard.

As an incentive to seek outside awards, doctoral students who receive a major external fellowship awarded competitively during a year they would have otherwise received a GSAS-funded fellowship may choose to **either** (1) receive a supplement to the external fellowship (top-off) or (2) extend a year of GSAS fellowship (see below).

(1) Top-Off of an External Fellowship

Humanities and Social Sciences

Students in Humanities and Social Science departments who choose the top-off option to supplement their outside award with their GSAS funding may receive GSAS funds up to a maximum of \$6,000 above the standard academic year stipend. In 2020-2021, this maximum combined award will be \$37,140. Students whose academic-year awards exceed this amount may prefer to use option 2, extending a year of GSAS funding, and “bank” their GSAS fellowship for future use.

Students who receive either an outside award during the academic year for which the stipend is at least two-thirds of the GSAS standard academic year stipend or who receive an academic year Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) award will not be required to teach during the period of the outside award unless the student will not have another opportunity to complete the GSAS one-year instructional requirement.

Beginning in Fall 2020, GSAS will allow students who hold new external awards that are renewable for four or more years but are between \$6,000 and two-thirds of the GSAS standard academic year stipend to top off their external award up to a maximum equal to the GSAS standard academic year stipend for each year of the award. Students who choose this option will not be required to teach for one of the years that they would otherwise be required to teach. Students who hold continuing four- or five-year awards that meet the criteria described above in Fall 2020 may opt to receive a top-off up to the GSAS standard academic year stipend in that semester and all future semesters for which they are eligible. Students who exercise this option will not be required to teach for one semester. *Please be advised that in selecting this option, students will need to commit to this payment arrangement for the duration of their award.*

Students in the Humanities and Social Sciences who receive an external fellowship that is awarded explicitly for the months of June, July, and August will also receive their GSAS summer stipend.

Natural Sciences

GSAS allows students in Natural Sciences departments to top off their external awards with their multiyear package up to a maximum funding cap. Students in departments that support students in the summer on faculty research grants* who hold external awards whose stipend value is greater than \$15,000 may combine their GSAS and external awards up to a maximum of \$43,000. Awards that are below the \$15,000 threshold will be topped off up to the annual stipend rate. Students in the remaining Natural Sciences departments whose awards include stipends greater than \$15,000 and a tuition grant (“cost-of-education allowance”) of at least \$10,000 will be topped off to a maximum of \$43,000. If those levels of stipend and tuition are not met, students may combine their GSAS and external awards up to a maximum of \$6,000 above the academic year (September through May) stipend. Students in Natural Sciences departments are not eligible to extend a year of GSAS funding. Accordingly, students in the Natural Sciences do not need to submit the Statement of Understanding form.

**Those departments include Astronomy, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Physics, and Psychology.*

Applying for the Top-Off Option

Students in the Humanities and Social Sciences who choose the top-off option to supplement their outside award with their GSAS funding will receive GSAS funds up to a maximum of \$6,000 above the standard academic year stipend. Students whose academic year awards exceed this amount may prefer to use option 2, extending a year of GSAS funding, and “banking” their GSAS fellowship for future use.

Students in the Humanities and Social Sciences who wish to top off an external fellowship should complete the Statement of Understanding form, sign it, have it signed by their departmental administrator, and send it to the GSAS Office of Financial Aid, 107 Low Library, MC 4304, by August 1 (for the fall semester or for the academic year), or by December 16 (for spring-semester-only awards).

Students who receive either an outside award during the academic year for which the stipend is at least two-thirds of the GSAS standard academic year stipend or who receive an academic year Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) award will not be required to

teach during the period of the outside award unless the student will not have another opportunity to complete the GSAS one-year instructional requirement.

Beginning in Fall 2020, GSAS will allow students who hold new external awards that are renewable for four or more years but are between \$6,000 and two-thirds of the GSAS standard academic year stipend to top off their external award up to a maximum equal to the GSAS standard academic year stipend for each year of the award. Students who choose this option will not be required to teach for one of the years that they would otherwise be required to teach. Students who hold continuing four- or five-year awards that meet the criteria described above in Fall 2020 may opt to receive a top-off up to the GSAS standard academic year stipend in that semester and all future semesters for which they are eligible. Students who exercise this option will not be required to teach for one semester. *Please be advised that in selecting this option, students will need to commit to this payment arrangement for the duration of their award.*

Students in the Humanities and Social Sciences who receive an external fellowship that is awarded explicitly for the months of June, July, and August will also receive their GSAS summer stipend.

(2) Extension of GSAS Funding

Instead of topping off, students may choose to defer a year (or a semester, for semester-long awards) of their GSAS multiyear fellowship, subject to complying with the GSAS instructional requirement for doctoral students. **Students who select this option will not be topped off.**

Students in the Humanities and Social Sciences will receive neither option until GSAS receives the Statement of Understanding form. Students whose forms are not received by August 1 (for the fall semester or for the academic year) or by December 16 (for spring-semester-only awards) will automatically receive the “Top-Off of External Fellowship” option and will not defer their GSAS funding. For more information, see the [External Fellowship Policy page](#) of the GSAS website.

Students who do not use their deferred GSAS fellowship by the end of their seventh year will not receive retroactive top-off funding.

External Fellowships Calendar (Sample List)

September–December

- Fulbright IIE Travel Fellowship
- DAAD (**Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst**) Travel Fellowship (study in Germany)
- Mellon/ACLS (American Council of Learned Societies) Dissertation Fellowship
- Hertz Foundation Graduate Fellowship
- NSF (National Science Foundation) Graduate Research Fellowship Program
- Ford Foundation Pre-Dissertation Fellowship
- AAUW (American Association of University Women) Dissertation Fellowship
- Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans
- Charlotte W. Newcombe Dissertation Fellowship
- Trudeau Foundation Doctoral Scholarship
- Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fellowship
- National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate Fellowship

January–February

- Department of Energy Computational Science Graduate Fellowship
- Boren Fellowships
- Josephine De Kármán Dissertation Fellowship
- Eisenhower-Roberts Dissertation Fellowship
- Summer & Academic Year FLAS (Foreign Language and Area Studies)

Student Affairs

The GSAS Office of Student Affairs oversees a student's academic career at Columbia from admission to graduation. Contact the GSAS Office of Student Affairs at gsas-studentaffairs@columbia.edu or 212-854-8903 with questions and issues pertaining to grading and registration, housing, leaves of absence and withdrawals, student life, orientation, and graduation. Areas of responsibility and contact information for individual staff members is available on the [Staff Directory page](#) of the GSAS website.

Progress toward the Degree

The DGS tracks the progress of master's and doctoral students toward their degrees by conducting annual reviews for PhD and DMA programs and semesterly reviews for MA programs. This evaluation is conducted either by a departmental faculty committee or by the faculty as a whole, and should examine progress through academic requirements and milestones, note problematic and incomplete grades, and review any pedagogical issues for students with TA responsibilities.

This regular review is an opportunity to encourage faltering students and to identify resources to support them; it is also a time to administer academic warnings and put students on probation, removal from which should depend upon explicit improvements (including meeting specified deadlines for such improvements).

MA Degree Requirements

The degree of Master of Arts (MA) is conferred upon students who complete all academic requirements specified by their program, including a minimum of 30 credits of graduate-level coursework. Additionally, the Graduate School requires students to complete at least two Residence Units (RUs).

Registration in a full RU (usually for four or more courses) is considered full time. [Some freestanding MA programs](#) allow students to register on a part-time basis. Part-time MA students may register for a half or quarter RU depending on the number of courses they are taking. Part-time study is not allowed for the doctoral degree (see below).

Note: After enrolling at Columbia, MA students may not take courses outside Columbia nor at affiliate institutions (Jewish Theological Seminary, Teachers College, Union Theological Seminary) to fulfill degree requirements.

With the sole exception of [approved dual-degree programs](#), students may not pursue a degree in more than one Columbia program concurrently, and may not be registered in more than one degree program at any institution in the same semester. Enrollment in another degree program at Columbia or elsewhere while enrolled in a GSAS master's or doctoral program is strictly prohibited by the Graduate School. Violation of this policy will lead to the rescission of an offer of admission, or termination for a current student.

Students are required to complete all work and receive grades for all courses with the mark of [Incomplete \(IN\)](#) or [Credit Pending \(CP\)](#) before receiving the MA, whether or not the course is a requirement for the degree.

Once all requirements have been completed, *the student* must [apply for graduation](#). Degrees are awarded three times a year—in October, February, and May—and each degree conferral date has a corresponding application [deadline](#). Students should be reminded of their responsibility to apply for the degree before the deadline.

MA Thesis

Full-time students in freestanding master's programs complete their degree in a relatively short span of time. It is therefore important to help them maintain momentum during the thesis-writing process.

Students who are concerned about finding a topic for original research should be reminded that they can take a comparative, critical approach to extant research and scholarship; analyze data already collected by others; or test established theories in new situations. The program director, DGS, or equivalent advisor should assist students in finding a topic of manageable dimensions.

For a smooth start to the process of research and writing, programs may require students to submit a thesis proposal in the semester before they begin work in earnest: we suggest 1,000 words (not counting a bibliography) concerning the topic, previous scholarship, and the approach and methodology they intend to take. This provides their advisor with a basis for constructive criticism early in the thesis-research-and-writing semester. If several MA students in the program are writing theses simultaneously, DGSs may encourage them to set up an informal writing circle if the program does not have a thesis colloquium. Advisors should set a date for submission of a complete first draft of the thesis with plenty of time left for the advisor to comment and for the student to revise before the final draft is due.

MA students who conduct research involving human subjects for a thesis or research paper should be advised about the requirement to apply to the [Institutional Review Board](#) for exemption or approval.

If the thesis requires registration for a course, students should register in the term when they will be devoting the most time to the research and writing of the thesis, not before. Incompletes (IN) for theses have the same grace period as any other course before they turn to an F. The advisor or department may set an *earlier* deadline for completion of the thesis; in such cases, that deadline will supersede the GSAS deadline.

Library Affiliation

Library affiliation cards are available to unregistered GSAS students in freestanding MA programs who require access to the library to complete outstanding work for the thesis. To be eligible, students must not be registered for courses or Extended Residence, and must be approved by their department/program and the Dean. The card grants temporary library access (up to two semesters) with borrowing privileges.

To receive a library affiliation card, students must complete the [Library Affiliation Request form](#), have it signed by their thesis advisor, and submit it to the GSAS Office of Student Affairs in 107 Low Library.

MPhil Degree Requirements

The degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) is conferred upon a student who has fulfilled all PhD requirements except the dissertation. Study for the MPhil is full time only.

For conferral of the MPhil, the Graduate School requires the completion of all requirements for the MA degree (two Residence Units of advanced standing), plus four additional Residence Units earned at Columbia, for a total of six Residence Units. Through coursework and qualifying examinations, a student must demonstrate a superior level of competence in the discipline. Students must complete the instructional requirements for doctoral students, and are responsible for fulfilling any language or other special requirements as set by the program; the DGS should advise students of any such additional requirements.

Students are required to complete all work and receive grades for all courses with the mark of [Incomplete \(IN\)](#) or [Credit Pending \(CP\)](#) before receiving the MPhil, whether or not the course is a requirement for the degree.

To maintain satisfactory academic progress, all work for the MPhil degree and the prospectus defense must be completed within four years from initial registration, unless the student receives two Residence Units of advanced standing, in which case all MPhil degree requirements and the prospectus defense must be completed within three years from initial registration. This time limit for the MPhil applies to students entering PhD programs who already hold appropriate master's degrees from Columbia or from other institutions.

Students must defend the prospectus successfully by May 31 of their fourth year. Students who do not meet this deadline will lose good academic standing, will not have their stipend disbursed for the ensuing fall semester, and may be terminated from their PhD program.

In exceptional circumstances, and with a written rationale from the DGS and sponsor and the approval of the Dean of GSAS, students may receive a final opportunity to defend their prospectus before September 30 of the fifth year. Students who do so successfully by September 30 of the fifth year will receive the full Dissertation Fellowship retroactively. Students who do not pass their prospectus by September 30 of their fifth year will be terminated from their PhD program.

Once all requirements have been completed, the student should submit [an application for the MPhil degree](#) to the DGS. The DGS must then sign the form and submit it to the [GSAS Dissertation Office](#) by the [deadline](#) that corresponds to the intended degree conferral date.

PhD and DMA Degree Requirements

The degrees of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) are the University's highest degrees. Study for the PhD and DMA is full time only. For more information, see [Requirements for the PhD and DMA Degrees](#).

Students who wish to earn the PhD degree must have earned the MPhil degree at Columbia and must prepare, distribute, defend, and deposit a dissertation in accordance with the [regulations of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences](#). Students must also fulfill the requirements of their department or PhD program.

Students must satisfy rules pertaining to time limits as stated below under “Satisfactory Academic Progress” and as described in the [Nine-Year Policy for Time to the PhD/DMA Degree](#). Additionally, both DGSs and students should be aware of the [Seven-Year Rule for GSAS Fellowship Eligibility](#).

Instructional Requirement for Doctoral Students

As part of the academic requirements for conferral of the degree, all students in [Arts and Sciences doctoral programs](#) must fulfill a minimal one-year GSAS teaching requirement that must be completed in their first four years of residence (three years for students admitted with advanced standing) or before receipt of the MPhil degree, whichever should come first. Students are usually appointed as [GSAS Teaching Fellows](#) while they fulfill the requirement. It is expected that students will fulfill the instructional requirement in consecutive semesters of an academic year; exceptions based on compelling academic or professional reasons must be approved by the Office of the Dean.

Students who receive [GSAS multiyear fellowships](#) typically teach on appointment as Teaching Fellows for two more years for their home department as a condition of their fellowship support, as indicated in their official letter of admission from the Dean of the Graduate School.

Dissertation

Complete information about the dissertation, defense, electronic deposit, and certification of completion is available in the [Dissertation Office section](#) of the GSAS website.

[The GSAS Writing Studio](#), located on the third floor of Lehman Library, is dedicated to supporting Arts and Sciences doctoral students who are in the process of writing the dissertation. The quiet writing stations are reserved for Arts and Sciences dissertation writers on a first-come, first-served basis on weekdays from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm. Additional meeting rooms, including our downstairs Seminar Room, are available by reservation for dissertation-related group work.

Dissertation Workshops

All Humanities and Social Science departments should offer a required in-house dissertation workshop to provide a structure and a venue to discuss writing for all post-MPhil students after their fourth year. While the format, size, and frequency of meetings vary among departments, two conditions should be observed: all post-MPhil students are required to participate, and each student must have at least one opportunity annually to circulate work and receive feedback. Post-MPhil students not in New York are expected to participate by distributing their work digitally and using digital media to participate, whenever possible.

Defense and Deposit

Defense and deposit procedures are outlined in detail on the [Defense and Evaluation and Deposit Gateway](#) pages.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences has specific rules and benchmarks to define satisfactory academic progress for master’s and doctoral students. The Graduate School holds each student within a particular program to the same academic standards.

Students who take a leave of absence or who do not register for the semester are not considered to be active Columbia students, and will not be able to fulfill requirements for the degree while they are not registered and/or on leave.

Progress toward the MA Degree

The Graduate School considers progress toward the MA degree to be minimally satisfactory when progress is made at a rate that will allow a student to complete the degree within four consecutive terms of full-time study. Rates of progress for part-time MA study vary by program, and not all MA programs allow part-time study; for more information, see the [Satisfactory Academic Progress page](#) of the GSAS website.

Students must also maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. The cumulative GPA is derived from all courses in which a student has registered and received a grade. Students may not hold more than one mark of [Incomplete](#) at a time. If they receive two or more such marks, they *must* be placed on formal probation.

Progress toward the PhD or DMA Degree

Full-time continuous registration is required of all doctoral degree candidates in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Exceptions are made only for students on official leaves of absence which “stop the clock” on time-to-degree requirements and multiyear fellowship packages. For more information, see the [Leaves of Absence page](#) of the GSAS website.

The Graduate School considers progress to be minimally satisfactory when a student completes the MA degree within two years from initial registration, the MPhil degree and the prospectus defense within four years from initial registration, and the PhD or DMA within nine years from initial registration. Students who receive credit for an MA completed elsewhere, and/or with two Residence Units of advanced standing, must complete the MPhil and the prospectus defense within three years from initial registration, and the PhD or DMA within eight years from initial registration.

Students must also maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. The cumulative GPA is derived from all courses in which a student has registered and received a grade. Students may not hold more than one mark of [Incomplete](#) at a time.

These time-to-degree requirements are the maximum registration limits for the MA, MPhil, and PhD/DMA in the Graduate School; some programs have a shorter time-to-degree requirement. Where the program’s time-to-degree rule is shorter, the student must follow the program’s rule. Failure to comply with these requirements will indicate lack of satisfactory academic progress toward the degree.

Dissertation Progress Meetings

Beginning in the semester following the defense of their prospectus, students should meet once each semester with their sponsor and at least one other faculty member, in order to receive timely feedback on their dissertation work and regular support throughout the dissertation-writing process.

Students should consult with their sponsor or DGS after the prospectus defense to identify the other faculty who will constitute, along with the sponsor, a committee that will meet regularly with them to provide feedback on their work. The reader(s) other than the sponsor may be from within the department or from another department, as recommended by the dissertation topic. Dissertation Progress Meetings should be scheduled each semester until the semester before the

distribution of the defense to the larger thesis defense committee. Students or faculty who are not physically on campus in a given semester may use their preferred video-conferencing platform to participate.

If you have any questions or concerns about Dissertation Progress Meetings, please write to the GSAS Office of Student Affairs at gsas-studentaffairs@columbia.edu.

Failure to Maintain Satisfactory Progress and Probation

A student who fails to maintain satisfactory progress will be advised of corrective steps to take, and apprised of the consequences of failing to take those steps. Students in a probationary state who fail to take corrective action in the time specified may have their candidacy terminated. Each program maintains its own standards of satisfactory academic progress and corrective procedures, with which students must be familiar. In cases of evident failure to achieve progress, a student may be dismissed from the degree program without a probationary period.

In communicating the terms of the probationary period, the DGS should provide students with appropriate advice, specific requirements to meet, and deadlines by which they must be met. The DGS should be the only person in the department to provide information and/or warnings to students regarding their academic standing.

The DGS should communicate requirements and deadlines to students in person and in writing, and should follow up to ensure students are meeting the deadlines as they come due. It is easier to work with students in difficult academic situations if an original, written warning can be produced during future conversations.

See the appendix of this handbook for a sample warning / probation letter that you may tailor for your use. Please feel free to send drafts of such letters to Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs, Richard Slusarczyk, for review.

The warning letter should be emailed to the student with instructions for its acknowledgment and return. The DGS should also inform the student in writing when he or she has returned to good standing after satisfying the academic requirements and meeting the deadlines expressed in the warning letter.

Dismissing a Graduate Student in the Arts and Sciences

Graduate students are expected to maintain good academic standing, including acquiring an advisor, meeting time-to-degree requirements, maintaining superior quality of work, and other criteria specified by the department and the Graduate School. When students are in poor standing, departments are expected to detail conditions and deadlines that must be fulfilled for them to regain good standing.

If a student has been warned and continues to be in poor academic standing for another semester while in registered status, the director of graduate studies, program director, or designee should confer with Richard Slusarczyk, GSAS Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs, regarding the termination of that student's candidacy for the degree.

After that consultation, the department will communicate to the student the reasons for recommending dismissal, and GSAS will proceed with the formal termination of candidacy, sending an official letter to the student and copying relevant faculty and administrators. A student's University privileges, including attending class or participating in a lab, are not suspended until the dismissal is final.

The effective date of dismissal will be included in the official notification from GSAS. Typically, the dismissal is effective immediately or at the end of the then-current semester. However, the department or program may request a different effective date of dismissal if it provides compelling reasons to do so.

A student may appeal a departmental recommendation to dismiss within ten calendar days of receiving notification from GSAS, by writing to the Dean of the Graduate School. The letter should explain the grounds for challenging the department's recommendation to dismiss. The student may appeal the decision only if he or she:

- has new relevant information that was unavailable at the time of dismissal.
- has concerns with the process of probation and dismissal that could potentially change or affect the outcome of the decision.

The Dean will consider the appeal to determine if a change in the original decision is warranted. Regardless of the outcome of the appeal, the Dean will notify the student of the final decision in writing within ten calendar days of the appeal request. There are no further possibilities of appeal beyond the Dean.

Good Standing

Good standing in the Graduate School involves two components: *good academic standing* in the student's department or program, and *good administrative standing* in the Graduate School.

Good Academic Standing in a Doctoral Program

Good academic standing for PhD students includes but is not limited to:

- Maintaining a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0*
- Holding no more than one mark of Incomplete at any given time
- Registering continuously
- Making consistent academic progress as designated by the department and GSAS
- Completing degree requirements while maintaining superior quality of work as determined by the department
- Acquiring an advisor
- Maintaining consistent contact with the departmental director of graduate studies, sponsor, and GSAS
- Fulfilling pedagogical requirements and responsibilities as designated by the department and GSAS
- Fulfilling the dissertation prospectus requirement (in the cases in which it applies)
- Holding Dissertation Progress Meetings regularly with the dissertation sponsor and at least one other member of the dissertation committee (beginning in the semester after the prospectus defense)
- Meeting other criteria specified by the department

Departments or programs should communicate the express criteria for good academic standing to their students, who should take time to familiarize themselves with the criteria.

**The cumulative grade point average used to determine good standing is calculated beginning with the first semester of enrollment in that degree program, including the summer term, if applicable. No coursework previous to that date—including previous work done for another*

degree at Columbia—will be factored into the student’s current GPA. The cumulative GPA is derived from all courses in which a student has registered and received a grade, except when the student takes a course again after receiving an F. In such cases, the F received for the original iteration does not count toward the GPA.

Good Academic Standing in an Master’s Program

Good academic standing for MA students includes but is not limited to:

- Maintaining a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0*
- Holding no more than one mark of Incomplete at any given time
- Registering continuously
- Making consistent academic progress as designated by the department and GSAS
- Completing degree requirements while maintaining superior quality of work as determined by the department
- Maintaining consistent contact with the MA Program Director and GSAS
- Meeting other criteria specified by the department

Departments or programs should communicate explicitly to their students their additional criteria for good academic standing to their students; candidates should be familiar with them. Any questions should be directed to the DGS or program director.

**The cumulative grade point average used to determine good standing is calculated beginning with the first semester of enrollment in that degree program, including the summer term, if applicable. No coursework previous to that date—including previous work done for another degree at Columbia—will be factored into the student’s current GPA. The cumulative GPA is derived from all courses in which a student has registered and received a grade, except when the student takes a course again after receiving an F. In such cases, the F received for the original iteration does not count toward the GPA.*

Good Administrative Standing in the Graduate School

Additionally, students are expected to remain in compliance with all applicable administrative policies, procedures, and community standards of the University such as those of the University Libraries, University Housing, ISSO, and other Columbia administrative units.

Consequences for failing to make academic progress or to adhere to applicable administrative policies and procedures may include academic or administrative warning, probation, suspension, or dismissal. For more information, see [this page](#).

Registration

Every semester they are registered, students in the Graduate School must register for an enrollment category (a quarter, half, or full Residence Unit; Extended Residence; or M&F). This process is the same as registering for a course through [Student Services Online \(SSOL\)](#), and is completed at the same time.

If the DGS wishes to ensure that a student receive advice before registering for courses or enrollment categories such as Extended Residence (ER) or Matriculation & Facilities (M&F), the DGS may ask GSAS to put a registration hold on a student’s record, thereby requiring the student to meet with the DGS before the hold is lifted. GSAS will lift the hold only upon request of the DGS.

Registration: Courses and Enrollment Categories

Students register for courses through [Student Services Online \(SSOL\)](#). For general information regarding registration periods, see the [Registration Dates page on the Registrar's website](#) or the [Academic Calendar](#).

In addition to registering for individual courses, students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences are required to register for an enrollment category. In all doctoral and almost all MA programs, this is typically done by registering for Residence Units, which provide the basis for tuition charges.

Degree Requirements

Two Residence Units are required for the MA earned as part of a PhD degree; four additional Residence Units, for a total of six overall, are required for the MPhil, PhD, and DMA degrees.

Two Residence Units are required for the freestanding Master of Arts degree.

Exception: Students who entered the following master's programs in **Spring 2016 or earlier** do not register for Residence Units: American Studies, Global French Studies, Human Rights Studies, Islamic Studies, Japanese Pedagogy, Jewish Studies, Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Modern European Studies, or South Asian Studies. Students entering these freestanding MA programs in **Fall 2016 or later** register for a full or fractional Residence Unit following registration rules.

Full- and Part-Time Registration

To be considered full time, a student must register for a full Residence Unit, Extended Residence, or Matriculation and Facilities (see below) each semester, whether or not the student is taking courses. Students in doctoral programs may not register as part time.

Part-time students in MA programs may register for quarter or half Residence Units.

- A student who is registered for a full Residence Unit may enroll in any number of courses; however, additional tuition is charged per point if the student registers for more than twenty points per semester.
- A student who is registered for a half Residence Unit may enroll in no more than three courses.
- A student who is registered for a quarter Residence Unit may enroll in one or two courses.

Full, half, and quarter Residence Units are calculated on the basis of courses taken for a letter grade, Pass/Fail, or R credit.

Extended Residence (ER)

After completing the appropriate number of Residence Units, students are required to register for Extended Residence for any term in which they:

- register for a course
- hold a University teaching or research appointment

Matriculation and Facilities (M&F)

To satisfy the continuous registration requirement and to make use of various University facilities, doctoral students in Arts and Sciences programs who have completed at least six Residence Units may register for Matriculation and Facilities (M&F) only when they are:

- completing a degree requirement such as a language examination or qualifying examination
- preparing the dissertation prospectus
- writing or distributing the dissertation

In all other cases, a doctoral student must register for either a full Residence Unit or Extended Residence. Doctoral students need not register in any semester following the one in which they distribute the dissertation.

Students in MA programs do not register for M&F. For access to library facilities, thesis-writing students who are not registered in any courses may apply for [library affiliation](#).

Late Registration

A \$100 late fee will be charged to students who register after the designated registration period before classes begin.

Registration Policies

All entering students must meet the University's [immunization requirements](#) before they can register for courses. Columbia Health places a registration hold on all students who have not submitted the required documentation by the stated deadline and lifts the hold when it receives appropriate documentation. Other offices, such as University Life, have additional pre-arrival requirements that must be satisfied before students can register for classes.

According to University regulations, each person whose registration has been completed will be considered a student of the University during the term for which he or she is registered, unless the student's connection with the University is officially severed by withdrawal or expulsion. No student registered in any school or college of the University shall be registered at the same time in any other school or college, either of Columbia University or of any other institution.

The privileges of the University are not available to any student until he or she has completed registration. A student who is not officially registered for a Columbia course may not attend the course. No student may register after the stated period unless he or she obtains the written consent of the appropriate dean or director.

The University reserves the right to withhold the privilege of registration or any other University privilege from any person with an unpaid debt to the University.

Continuous Registration

Students in all degree programs are required to register in each fall and spring semester until all degree requirements have been completed or until the time-to-degree limit (as noted in the "Satisfactory Academic Progress" section) has been reached. To ascertain and record the progress of students toward the PhD or DMA, the Graduate School requires that doctoral students register continuously on a full-time basis until they distribute to their committee the copy of the dissertation that will be evaluated at the defense; if the dissertation defense is scheduled for a subsequent term, students need not register again.

Students are exempt from the requirement to register continuously only when taking an official leave of absence processed by the GSAS Office of Student Affairs.

Adding and Dropping Courses

Students may add or drop courses through SSOL, without penalty, during the change of program period (i.e., the first two weeks of the fall or spring semester). The [GSAS Academic Calendar](#) lists the exact dates for the change of program period and other deadlines. (The change of program period varies during the School of Professional Studies summer session; consult the [SPS website](#) for exact dates.)

After the change of program period, students may continue to drop courses through SSOL until the final deadline to drop a course (consult the [Academic Calendar](#)). Courses may be added during this time only with the instructor's approval. Courses dropped during this time are charged at full tuition but do not appear on a student's transcript.

Not attending classes, or sending a notification to the instructor, does not constitute dropping a course. Students who stop attending a course without formally dropping it by the deadline should be assigned a letter grade based on the same criteria as students who complete the course.

Beginning in Fall 2020, more complicated registration processes, such as cross-registration between schools after the change of program period, will be conducted online, replacing the the paper [Registration Adjustment Form](#) (RAF). Additional information will be shared with departments and programs when it is available.

Grades

The Graduate School's grading system is as follows: A, excellent; B, good; C, fair; D, passing but poor; F, failure. Plus and minus letter grades are also used. Departmental letter grade expectations are often more rigorous and supersede this scale. Unless program regulations specifically state otherwise, all courses to be credited toward the degree must be taken for a letter grade (see also the paragraph on R credit below). The grade of F is a final grade and is not subject to reexamination.

The DGS/MAPD oversees grades in two ways:

- First, the DGS/MAPD should encourage faculty to give meaningful grades. When a student's work does not meet published minimum departmental standards, the grade awarded should reflect that.
- Second, in evaluating student progress, the DGS/MAPD should remain aware of student grades overall, keeping track of outstanding Incomplete marks and following up with students who frequently receive Incompletes or are in danger of accumulating more than one Incomplete at a time. GSAS generates reports for departments each term to help identify students who may be in academic difficulty.

Faculty Grade Change Requests

Instructors are responsible for initiating grade changes and must transact all grade changes directly in [SSOL](#) for GSAS students. For more information, visit the [Registrar's website](#).

IN (Incomplete)

The mark of IN is given to a student who has satisfactorily met all the requirements of a course except for the completion of the final academic exercise — an assigned paper, report, or the final examination — which a student has been compelled to postpone for reasons that are 1) beyond their control and 2) satisfactory to the instructor. For a course in the Arts and Sciences, if the student does not submit the outstanding work by the end of the grace period (about six months), the mark of IN will be changed to an F, which will not be subject to change at a later date. Official leaves of absence “stop the clock” on Incomplete deadlines.

The deadline for students to submit their outstanding work is December 30 for Incompletes earned in the previous spring semester or summer session, and June 30 for Incompletes earned in the previous fall semester; for example, a student who receives an Incomplete in the Fall 2020 semester will have until June 30, 2021, to submit the outstanding work. Extensions will not be granted. Instructors should review outstanding work and submit grades as soon as possible after students submit such work.

Departments and instructors may set an *earlier* deadline for completion of the outstanding work; in such cases, that deadline will supersede the GSAS deadline. When students fail to meet the earlier deadline, instructors should submit the grade of F as soon as possible after the deadline.

R (Registered for the course; no qualitative grade assigned)

The mark of R is awarded in place of a letter grade. A student who elects to take a course for R credit must meet all course requirements other than the final examination or paper, unless the instructor states otherwise in writing.

Before electing to take a course for R credit, students should first consult their DGS or program director to ascertain that the course will count toward their degree requirements, since some programs do not allow any R-credit courses and others allow only a limited number. They should also confer with the instructor of the course and their home department or program to obtain permission to take the course for R credit.

Requests for R credit are handled directly between students and instructors any time from the start of the semester until the eleventh week of classes. For students taking half-semester courses, the deadline to request R is the Friday of the fourth week of the course. Students should discuss the R credit option with the instructor, and obtain written confirmation of the agreement, typically via email. Instructors will be able to select the R at the end of the semester when submitting grades.

The deadline to request R credit is the same date as the deadline to request to take a course Pass/Fail (see the [Academic Calendar](#) for fall- and spring-term deadlines; see the [School of Professional Studies website](#) for summer-term deadlines). **Courses cannot be converted to R credit or from R credit to a letter grade after this deadline.**

A course that has been taken for R credit may not be repeated for a letter grade.

When a student chooses to take a course for R credit, but does not satisfactorily fulfill the conditions for receiving R credit, the instructor may award the mark of IN, UW, or F depending on what he or she deems appropriate. To make the actual change, the instructor will submit an online grade-change request.

If a student receives an Incomplete for a class taken for R credit and does not submit the work by the GSAS deadline, the mark of IN will be changed to an UW, which will not be subject to change at a later date.

Courses taken for R credit are applied toward the calculation of Residence Units for billing purposes in the same way as are courses taken for a letter grade. The number of points of R credit acceptable for a degree, however, is set by each program in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

P/F (Pass/Fail)

A few specific graduate-level courses are offered only on a Pass/Fail basis. In these cases, the instructor notifies the student of the P/F grading scale and submits grades accordingly.

Students who wish to be given a P/F grade for a course offered on a letter-grade scale must request the grade of P/F through the Office of the University Registrar, not by direct request to the instructor. The deadline for requesting to take a course P/F is given each year on the [University Academic Calendar](#). Requests to take a course P/F and requests to change from P/F to a letter grade will not be granted after this date. The grade of F is a final grade and is not subject to reexamination.

A course that has been taken for P/F may not be repeated for a letter grade.

The number of points of P/F credit which may be applied toward the degree is set by each program in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

YC (Year Course)

This mark is given at the end of the first term of a course in which the full year of work must be completed before a qualitative grade is assigned. The grade given at the end of the second term is the grade for the entire course.

CP (Credit Pending)

The mark of CP implies satisfactory progress. It differs from IN in that it is given only in graduate research courses in those rare situations in which the research project, by the nature of its subject, unavoidably and predictably continues beyond the end of the term. Upon completion, a final qualitative grade is assigned and credit granted. If the CP is not removed within six months, it will be changed to an F.

UW (Unofficial Withdrawal)

The mark of UW is assigned to students who registered for a course but who never attended or discontinued attendance prior to the due date of substantive work. Additional information is available on the [Registrar's website](#).

Retaking a Course with a Grade of F

Students may appeal to the DGS or program director of their department to retake a course in which they have received an F. The student must obtain approval from the DGS of the department offering the course, as well as the instructor of the course. The student must retake

the entire course. Students cannot retake a course for which they received a passing grade (i.e., R, P, D, or higher). To receive permission to retake a course, the student must submit via email the [Registration Adjustment Form](#), signed by the instructor and the DGS of the student's department, to the GSAS Office of Student Affairs, requesting that the course be added to the student's registration the next time it is offered. **Note:** This appeal must be filed no later than ten days after the grade has been posted on SSOL.

The grades for both of the courses will be posted on the student's transcript; the first course will not count toward the student's minimum GPA for [good standing](#), but the second iteration will. The student will be charged applicable tuition for both courses.

Grade Appeals

As a matter of course, GSAS recognizes that all faculty members have the right to determine grading policies for their classes and the expertise to evaluate their students' work. **A grade appeal requires objective evidence of a substantive breach in grading policy.** A student wishing to appeal a final grade should first contact the professor to attempt to resolve the dispute informally. If no resolution results, the student should next consult their advisor, director of graduate studies, or chair. If the dispute is not settled, the student should submit a detailed written statement describing the disagreement to the GSAS Office of Student Affairs no later than thirty working days after the end of the term in which the class was taken or, if the student receives notice of the grade after the end of the term, no later than thirty working days after receiving notice of the grade.

Note: Grade changes are not allowed after a student has graduated and the terminal degree has been conferred.

Change of Program

A student who is currently registered in a program at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences may request a change of program:

- from one doctoral program to another doctoral program
- from a doctoral program to a master's program
- from one master's program to another

Note: A change of program from an MA program to a doctoral program is not permitted; master's students who seek admission to a doctoral program must formally apply during the annual doctoral application cycle. Students wishing to change to a program at another school of the University must submit a formal application for admission.

To apply for a change of program, the student must contact the program director or director of graduate studies of the new program and ask to be considered for a transfer. If the new program agrees to consider the student, it should contact the GSAS Office of Admissions for the student's application to the original program. It may also require directly from the student a transcript of all courses completed since the original application, as well as a new statement of purpose and/or writing sample. After these materials are reviewed by a faculty committee in the proposed new program, and the recommendation reviewed with GSAS, the student will be formally notified of the decision. Final approval for such requests is made solely at the discretion

of the Dean of the Graduate School and the faculty of the program to which the student is seeking to transfer.

Change of program requests cannot be made within the first semester of enrollment.

Once the change of program request is approved, the student will be unregistered from the original program and enrolled in the new one.

PhD fellows who wish to transfer to another PhD program should consult with the faculty of the new program before formally applying. If the student transfers in the first two years of registration, the destination department must commit to using an admissions allocation to fund the student for the balance of the guaranteed funding years. The original department may replace the student in the next admissions cycle. If the student is beyond the first two years of registration, the fellowship accompanies the student to the destination department and has no impact on admissions for either department.

Professional Development

Departmental Placement Officer

Each department should designate a faculty member (or members) who will help students prepare for the job market. In many instances, this may be the DGS, but depending on the number of students and size of the faculty, departments may choose someone else for this role. Sponsors may continue to provide this valuable service to their charges, but the placement officer should be a resource available to all students in the department.

Among the services this faculty member provides are to:

1. distribute templates appropriate to the discipline of curriculum vitae, cover letter, research statement, statement on teaching, dissertation abstract, etc., to all students preparing to send applications
2. edit and proofread drafts of documents listed above before they are mailed by candidates
3. ensure that letters of recommendation are produced and submitted by colleagues in a timely fashion
4. review syllabi and other course materials to be submitted by candidates with application
5. prepare candidates for mock interviews
6. arrange for mock interviews of candidates with department faculty
7. prepare candidates for on-campus interviews
8. serve as a resource to interpret and negotiate offers received

GSAS Compass (Career Development)

GSAS Compass offers a variety of career development services tailored to master's and doctoral students, including career development workshops, employer events, networking opportunities, and [one-on-one advising](#).

For more information, visit [this page](#) and refer to the GSAS Compass section of this handbook.

Conferences

The [GSAS Conference Matching Travel Fund](#) helps graduate students in Arts and Sciences programs to present a paper or poster at academic or professional conferences. Master's and doctoral students are eligible to apply for funds to defray travel expenses. Conferences organized by graduate students are ordinarily not eligible.

In order for a student to receive an award from the Conference Matching Travel Fund, the department or program must first approve a student's application and agree to provide funds to defray expenses. GSAS will then match the funds provided by the department, up to a maximum of \$300.

There is a limit of one travel award per academic year, and a maximum of two awards during a student's career at Columbia. The award is not guaranteed, and requests are considered on a first-come, first-served basis. If applications exceed available funds, students who have not received an award in previous years will have priority.

For more information, see the [Funding to Attend Conferences page](#).

Teaching

Center for Teaching and Learning

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) promotes best practices in teaching and communication within a fast-changing academic landscape. GSAS students are encouraged to register for CTL workshops and activities that help them cultivate pedagogical skills.

The CTL also offers individual consultations to students. Students who approach DGSs with questions or concerns about their teaching should be encouraged also to visit the CTL during office hours, or to contact Mark Phillipson, director of graduate student programs and services, at mlp55@columbia.edu to schedule an appointment with relevant CTL staff. More information is available on the [Teaching section](#) of the GSAS website.

PhD Teaching and Research Appointments

As part of the academic requirements for conferral of the degree, all PhD students in [Arts and Sciences doctoral programs](#) must fulfill a minimal one-year GSAS teaching requirement to be completed in their first four years of residence (three years for students admitted with advanced standing) or before receipt of the MPhil degree, whichever should come first. Students are usually appointed as [Teaching Fellows](#) while they fulfill the requirement. It is expected that students will fulfill the instructional requirement in consecutive semesters of an academic year; exceptions based on compelling academic or professional reasons must be approved by the Office of the Dean.

Students who receive [GSAS multiyear fellowships](#) typically also teach on appointment as Teaching Fellows for two more years for their home department as a condition of their fellowship support, as indicated in their official letter of admission from the Dean of the Graduate School.

The DGS should familiarize himself/herself with the different [Fellowship Categories](#) and the [Graduate Student Teaching Guidelines](#), as well as the “Sample Teaching Appointment Letter” found in the appendix of this handbook.

GSAS Teaching Scholars Program

The GSAS Teaching Scholars Program affords advanced doctoral students—those who have already received the MPhil—the opportunity to prepare and teach independently a course of their own devising. More information is available on the [Teaching Scholars page](#).

Grading by MA Students

Departments may wish to hire qualified registered MA students to grade or perform other tasks to assist professors or supplement the work of TAs in undergraduate courses. Such tasks should not include leading a discussion section. Departmental requests to hire MA graders should be included in the TA spreadsheet before the start of each semester.

Contact the GSAS Office of Communications (gsas-communications@columbia.edu) if you have an opening that you would like to advertise across a variety of MA programs.

Graduation

To receive their degree and participate in the GSAS Convocation and University Commencement ceremonies, students must apply to graduate and be certified by their department or program.

The MA Degree

Both students in freestanding MA programs and students who receive the MA while progressing toward the PhD degree follow the process below to graduate.

The student must [apply for graduation](#) in order to receive the MA degree. Degrees are awarded three times a year—in October, February, and April—and each degree conferral date has a corresponding [application deadline](#).

Once students have applied to graduate, the Registrar sends a list of such students to the department or program. It is the DGS's responsibility to certify students for graduation and return the results to the Registrar's Office **no later than five working days** before graduation in October, February, and May.

The MPhil Degree

Once all requirements have been completed, the student submits an [Application for the MPhil Degree](#) to the DGS. The DGS must then sign the form and submit it to the GSAS Office of Student Affairs by the [deadline](#) that corresponds to the intended degree conferral date.

The PhD or DMA Degree

After passing the defense, the student will be given an Approval Card. The DGS or chair signs the card indicating that any necessary revisions have been completed; the student is then authorized to deposit the dissertation.

Degrees are awarded three times a year—in October, February, and April—and each degree conferral date has a corresponding [dissertation deposit deadline](#). If a deadline is missed, the degree will be conferred at the next available conferral date. **Degrees cannot and will not be awarded retroactively.**

For more information, contact the [Dissertation Office](#).

Leaves of Absence, Withdrawals, and Reinstatement

Leaves of Absence

Leaves of absence allow students who must interrupt their studies for a compelling reason—for example, a sustained medical condition that prevents attendance, or a personal matter requiring absence from campus—to be exempt from the [continuous registration](#) requirement. A leave of absence “stops the clock” on time-to-degree requirements; consequently, students should take an official leave of absence rather than simply ceasing to attend classes or not registering for classes in a given semester.

Leaves are available only to students whose academic and administrative standing (as defined by the student's department or program and GSAS) permits them to continue in the degree program when they return from leave. That is, students about to be terminated may not apply for a leave. Students who are not in good academic standing when the leave begins will be permitted to return in a probationary status.

Leaves of absence may be taken for one or two semesters; under unusual circumstances, students may apply for a third or fourth semester of leave. The period of leave may not exceed two years (four semesters). If absence from graduate study will exceed four semesters, students will be asked if they wish to withdraw. Leaves will not be processed retroactively.

Students who take a leave of absence or who do not register for the semester are not considered to be active Columbia students, and will not be able to fulfill requirements for the degree while they are not registered and/or on leave. While on leave, students do not register and cannot use University facilities, including housing. Students on leaves of absence are not eligible to defer payment of University and government loans. See below for specific information regarding use of facilities and repayment of loans.

Students on a J1 or F1 visa who are intending to take a leave of absence should contact the [International Students and Scholars Office](#) as soon as possible.

Informing GSAS of a Leave

Students who intend to take a leave must submit the [Leave of Absence Form](#) to the Office of Student Affairs. GSAS will contact the DGS to ascertain the student's academic standing.

The DGS indicates **either** that

1. the student is in good academic standing; or
2. the student is not in good standing and must meet certain academic conditions or deadlines relating to progress upon return.

Any such conditions, the timetable for their completion, and the consequences that will ensue should they fail to be completed should be shared with the GSAS Office of Student Affairs, which will communicate this information to the student.

Medical Leaves of Absence

A student who must interrupt study temporarily because of illness or injury may take a medical leave of absence, contingent upon the submission of documentation from a health-care professional confirming that the student is unable to engage in graduate study. The medical provider must submit such documentation by fax (212-854-2863) or by email (gsas-studentaffairs@columbia.edu) no later than one week after the student submits the [Leave of Absence Form](#); the documentation may include a statement as to when the student can be expected to resume studies.

Graduate students in the Arts and Sciences are eligible to take a medical leave at any time. Medical leaves, however, are available only to students whose academic and administrative standing (as defined by the student's program and GSAS) permits them to continue in the degree program when they return from leave. While on leave, students must be actively engaged in a course of medical treatment for the condition(s) that occasioned the leave. Medical leave for a given semester cannot be processed at any time after the final day of classes for that semester.

Students who take an official medical leave of absence during the first thirty days of a term are eligible to remain enrolled in the [Columbia Student Medical Insurance Plan](#) and the [Columbia Health Program](#). Students should read the full details of the Columbia Health policy and procedures on withdrawal due to medical leave in the insurance plan brochure (available on the [Columbia Health website](#)) and contact the Columbia Health Insurance Office for further important information.

Military Leaves of Absence

Students who must interrupt study temporarily to fulfill a compulsory military obligation for a specific length of time may take a military leave of absence to fulfill that obligation. The student seeking a military leave of absence must provide the GSAS Office of Student Affairs with written documentation from the appropriate military authorities (including dates of the period of obligation).

Personal Leaves of Absence

Students who must interrupt study temporarily for reasons other than those described above may take a personal leave of absence. Reasons may include, but are not limited to, financial status; childcare; illness, bereavement, or other critical matters in one's family; changes in one's outside employment; and other situations as required by applicable law.

- **Personal Leaves of Absence for PhD/DMA Students**

A student in a program leading to the PhD or DMA is eligible for a personal leave of absence only after satisfactory completion of at least one year of study. Doctoral students in their first year who wish to leave the University should instead withdraw.

Personal leaves after the MPhil may be taken only in exceptional circumstances in which students must temporarily suspend their studies to care for the serious medical condition of an immediate family member, or in other situations as required by applicable law.

- **Personal Leaves of Absence for MA Students**

A student in a master's program that does not lead to a doctoral degree is eligible for a personal leave of absence after satisfactory completion of at least one semester of study. Master's students in their first semester who wish to leave the University should instead withdraw.

Registration and Completion of Requirements

Students on leave of absence are not considered to be registered Columbia students. No tuition is charged for semesters for which a leave of absence has been processed. Official leaves are entered on a student's permanent academic record. The period of the leave is not counted toward the time allowed for completion of the degree requirements. A student on leave may not fulfill requirements for the degree. The period of the leave will not be counted toward the time allowed for completion of an Incomplete. Other degree requirements, including language exams, oral exams, and dissertation research and writing, may not be completed while a student is on leave.

Use of Facilities and Services While on Leave

A student on leave may not use University facilities, including housing, nor receive financial aid. Email accounts are normally suspended within six to nine months after the leave is processed. Library access may be requested for specific short periods of time and specific reasons by application to the GSAS Office of Student Affairs. Please note that students who are on leave and

who previously have been awarded a Columbia degree will continue to receive email at their LionMail account. They may also be able to use facilities such as the [libraries](#); see the [Columbia Alumni Association website](#) for more information.

For more information about health insurance and University housing while on leave, see the [Leaves of Absence page](#) of the GSAS website.

Leaves and Financial Aid

Students on leave may not receive any University funding or financial aid. Students who plan to take a leave should consult the [GSAS Office of Financial Aid](#) with questions about how the leave will affect their financial aid.

Students who have participated in educational loan programs (e.g., federal, private, or institutional programs) should be advised that their educational loans will enter into repayment during the time of their leave. Such students should be in direct contact with their loan servicer(s) for more information about deferment and or forbearance options while on leave.

To be considered for fellowships—including reinstatement of multiyear doctoral fellowships held immediately prior to the leave—or financial aid other than loans, students returning from leave should contact the [GSAS Office of Financial Aid](#) by the following deadlines:

- January 31 for the fall semester
- October 1 for the spring semester

When students notify the GSAS Office of Financial Aid of their intent to return, the decision to award financial aid, including reinstatement of previously awarded aid, will be based on satisfactory academic progress prior to the leave and departmental recommendation.

Withdrawals

To withdraw is to give formal notice that one is leaving the University at the end of a given semester without intending to return. A student who intends to withdraw from the University must provide official notification at once and in writing by submitting the [Withdrawal Form](#) to the GSAS Office of Student Affairs.

All students who withdraw during a semester in which they are registered are charged a \$75 withdrawal fee by the Office of the University Registrar. A withdrawing student may be eligible for a prorated tuition refund, calculated from the date on which the GSAS Office of Student Affairs receives the Withdrawal Form from the student. The Registrar's Office publishes a [schedule of refunds for tuition and fees](#) based on the week in which withdrawal is processed. Students should contact the [GSAS Office of Financial Aid](#) for information about the effect of withdrawal on financial assistance.

For more information about how withdrawal affects health insurance and University housing, see the [Withdrawals page](#) of the GSAS website.

Students on a J1 or F1 visa who plan to withdraw must contact the [International Students and Scholars Office](#) as soon as possible.

Returning from Official Leaves

Students must submit a [Return from Leave of Absence Form](#) no later than July 15 if they plan to return for the fall semester, and no later than December 1 if they plan to return for the spring semester (see “Loans, Fellowships, and Other Financial Aid” regarding deadlines for reinstatement of multiyear doctoral fellowships and for financial aid other than loans).

Students returning from a medical leave must also submit to Columbia Health (see below for specific addresses) a letter from the health-care professional who provided treatment for the condition that occasioned the leave. Such letters must contain the following information:

- description of treatment the student received, including medications that the student was prescribed for the condition that warranted the leave
- the health-care professional’s impression of the student’s readiness to return to their studies
- any recommendations regarding continued treatment after the student has resumed their studies

Letters addressing psychiatric or psychological conditions should be sent directly to Dr. Allan Cassorla by fax (212-854-9473) or by email (aac4@columbia.edu). Letters addressing other medical conditions should be sent directly to Dr. Brenda Aiken by email (ba220@columbia.edu). In cases where a student has received both medical and psychiatric/psychological treatment, or the diagnosis is unclear, the relevant health-care professional(s) should submit their letter(s) to both Dr. Cassorla and Dr. Aiken. Letters written in a language other than English must be accompanied by an English translation. All letters supporting a student’s return must be sent no later than July 29 for students planning to return in the fall semester, and no later than December 15 for students planning to return in the spring semester.

Dr. Cassorla and/or Dr. Aiken will review all letters and either approve the return or request additional information. In some cases, students will be asked to schedule an in-person consultation.

Once approved to return, students may register during their assigned registration appointment times.

Returning from Unofficial Leaves

Doctoral Students

A student in a doctoral program in the Arts and Sciences who leaves the University without having obtained a leave of absence must [apply again for admission](#) to the doctoral program as a new student. Admission for return to graduate study is granted at the discretion of the department and GSAS, and will count against the department’s admissions allocation. Any student who is readmitted with funding cannot receive guaranteed funding for more than five total years of enrollment (i.e., with the student’s earlier enrollment and new enrollment calculated together).

If admitted, the student will become subject to all current requirements as interpreted by the GSAS Office of Student Affairs with regard to the student's case. In cases where there has been a prolonged interruption of studies, a department may require a student to retake examinations and/or courses as appropriate.

Master's Students

Students in a master's program in the Arts and Sciences who have been absent from their program for four or fewer semesters without having obtained a leave of absence must apply for reinstatement, to be granted at the discretion of the department or program and GSAS.

To request reinstatement, students must submit the [Application for Return to MA Study](#) to the GSAS Office of Student Affairs *at least eight weeks* before the first day of registration for the term in which they intend to resume studies. The department or program must then submit the [Return to MA Study: Evaluation of Application form](#) to the GSAS Office of Student Affairs.

MA students who have been on an unofficial leave for more than four semesters will be required to [apply again for admission](#).

Studying Away from Campus

In certain instances, GSAS doctoral students may study outside Columbia when specific educational opportunities supplement those available at the University. For complete information, see the [Studying Away from Columbia page](#) of the GSAS website.

After they have enrolled at Columbia, MA students may not use courses taken outside Columbia nor at affiliate institutions (Jewish Theological Seminary, Teachers College, Union Theological Seminary) to fulfill degree requirements.

Exchange Scholar Program

The Exchange Scholar Program enables a PhD student in an [Arts and Sciences program](#) to study at one of the following graduate schools for a limited period of time in order to take advantage of particular educational opportunities not available at Columbia:

- Brown
- UC Berkeley
- UChicago
- Cornell
- Harvard
- MIT
- UPenn
- Princeton
- Stanford
- Yale

To be eligible, students must first have completed one year of study in the home PhD program and be within the seven-year academic funding limit. Students on GSAS funding may participate only if they hold an MPhil degree and if their fellowship does not include a teaching requirement. Permission is granted by the student's department and by the Vice Dean of GSAS, as well as by the host school. Interested students should complete and submit the [Exchange Scholar Application form](#).

For additional information, contact the GSAS Office of Student Affairs at 212-854-8903 or gsas-studentaffairs@columbia.edu.

Inter-University Doctoral Consortium (IUDC)

The Graduate School is a member of the Inter-University Doctoral Consortium (IUDC), which provides for cross-registration among member institutions. Participating schools are:

- CUNY Graduate Center
- Fordham University
- The New School for Social Research
- New York University (including the Institute of Fine Arts)
- Princeton University
- Rutgers University
- Stony Brook University
- Teachers College (TC) is also a member of the IUDC, but Columbia students interested in TC classes should cross-register within Columbia rather than use IUDC.

The program is open to Arts and Sciences PhD students in years two through six. First-year PhD students with a master's degree from another institution may petition for the opportunity to participate. MA students are not eligible for this program.

Students register at Columbia for the course(s) they plan to take at the visiting institution by submitting an [IUDC form](#) to the GSAS Office of Student Affairs in 107 Low Library. The host institution may also require students to register there. Students follow the host school's regulations, and so should familiarize themselves with the academic regulations of the host university, including its grading system, applicable deadlines, and calendar. Classes may be taken for a grade and will appear on the Columbia transcript. Students will receive a letter or ID card that allows them library reading privileges at the host institution. Columbia students attending New York University may use their CUID card.

Note: IUDC is limited to fall and spring semesters. Summer session or intersession courses are not eligible for the IUDC.

For more information, visit the [Inter-University Doctoral Consortium page](#) or contact the GSAS Office of Student Affairs at gsas-studentaffairs@columbia.edu.

Letters of Introduction

Students who need to conduct research in libraries, archives, museums, or other such institutions may request letters of introduction, or “blue seal” letters, from either the director of graduate studies or the chair of their department or program.

The letter should be printed on departmental letterhead and then signed by the chair or DGS. In the event that an institution requires that the letter contain an official seal, please have your student bring the signed letter to the GSAS Office of Student Affairs in 107 Low Library; Student Affairs staff will then affix the GSAS seal to the letter.

Letter templates are available on the [GSAS website](#).

Conducting Research Abroad

The DGS should inform Columbia students conducting research abroad that they must register with [International SOS](#), an emergency services program that helps with unexpected medical or security issues.

Academic Integrity and Disciplinary Procedures

Academic Integrity and Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)

Graduate students are expected to exhibit the high level of personal and academic integrity and honesty required of all members of an academic community as they engage in scholarly discourse and research. Definitions for plagiarism, cheating, and other incidents of academic dishonesty, and links to resources for plagiarism education and responsible conduct of research, are available on the [Academic Integrity and Responsible Conduct of Research page](#) of the GSAS website.

All incoming students are expected to complete an academic integrity tutorial sent to them before arriving on campus.

Columbia University also offers Responsible Conduct of Research training developed by the [Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative](#), or CITI Program, at the University of Miami. Students who are or will be supported by funding from the NIH or NSF are required to complete this training. All GSAS students, however, stand to benefit from the training, which explores graduate students’ rights and responsibilities across a variety of disciplines, and addresses how to identify and prevent accidental misconduct as well as mistreatment and abuse from others.

Sample Statement on Academic Integrity for Instructor Syllabi

A sample statement on academic integrity for use in syllabi is [available online](#).

Human Subjects Research – Institutional Review Board

Columbia University operates in compliance with the policies and regulations of the Federalwide Assurance issued by the federal Office of Human Research Protections, which regulates the institution’s conduct of research involving human subjects. This agreement requires institutions that receive federal research funds to provide a comprehensive, ongoing training program in basic human subjects protections and to verify that all applicants for IRB approval have undergone this training. Compliance with this assurance also requires the University to ensure

that all research conducted at the institution is reviewed by the IRB when necessary. For more information, see the [Institutional Review Regarding Human Subjects page](#) of the GSAS website.

Disciplinary Procedures

Dean's Discipline

Dean's Discipline is the process used to investigate and respond to allegations of academic or behavioral misconduct of a graduate student in GSAS. Academic dishonesty violates the principle of intellectual integrity that is the foundation of this institution. Violating that principle is one of the most serious offenses that a student can commit.

For a full description of GSAS and University policies, the violation of which may result in Dean's Discipline, please refer to GSAS definitions of [good academic and administrative standing](#), the [Essential Policies for the Columbia Community](#), and the Columbia University [Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Student Policies on Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking](#).

In partnership with GSAS, [Student Conduct and Community Standards](#) (SCCS) facilitates the Dean's Discipline process. Students, faculty, and staff may file a report directly to SCCS for any incident involving a GSAS student. Please visit [SCCS's website](#) to learn more about [academic or behavioral violations](#) or to [report an incident of misconduct](#). The full Dean's Discipline process is outlined in the [Standards and Discipline document](#) and on the [Grievances and Disciplinary Procedures page](#) of the GSAS website.

Summer Session

During the 2020-2021 academic year, Arts and Sciences academic departments will offer courses in the summer, per the [University's revised Academic Calendar](#).

Courses offered and administered by the School of Professional Studies (SPS) are separately available to GSAS students. As such, the [tuition for SPS summer session courses](#) may vary from that charged for courses administered by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. For information pertaining to Residence Units and credits for GSAS students taking summer courses, see the Summer Session page of the GSAS website. For the SPS summer term academic calendar, see the [Calendars page](#) of the SPS website.

Doctoral students may receive a summer tuition fellowship for essential language training and other required courses. Rules and the application form can be found [here](#).

Awards and Prizes

Students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences are regularly honored with awards and prizes for their outstanding achievements in research and teaching. There is no application procedure for the Bancroft Award, Baron Prize, or Presidential Teaching Awards; rather, students are nominated by faculty and, in the case of the Presidential Teaching Awards, faculty and undergraduates.

[Bancroft Award](#)

The [Bancroft Award](#) includes a \$7,500 publishing subvention and is given to a Columbia student annually for an outstanding dissertation in American history (or biography), diplomacy, or international affairs. Nominations are made by the PhD defense committee, and the publication subsidy is transferable to the press that commits to publishing the winner's manuscript.

[The Salo and Jeanette Baron Prize in Jewish Studies](#)

Established in 1983 by Salo and Jeanette Baron, the [Baron Prize](#) is awarded every four years to recognize the best doctoral dissertation in Jewish Studies completed in that period.

[Presidential Teaching Awards](#)

Established in 1996, the [Presidential Teaching Awards](#) honor outstanding graduate student teachers for the influence they have on the development of their students and for maintaining the University's long-standing reputation for educational excellence.

GSAS Compass (Career Development)

Please note that GSAS Compass's physical space will be closed until further notice because of COVID-19. Fall 2020 programming will be conducted virtually.

GSAS Compass helps doctoral and master's students in the Arts and Sciences to identify, work toward, and achieve their post-graduation career goals. The office's objectives are to:

- Create an inclusive culture that fosters exploration, nurtures diverse interests, and assists in preparing GSAS students for a range of careers that are well suited to their individual skills, interests, values, and personalities
- Empower students to harness their academic training in any career path they pursue

GSAS Compass accomplishes these objectives through a variety of career development services tailored to master's and doctoral students, including career development workshops, employer events, networking opportunities, and [one-on-one advising](#).

We work closely with departments to tailor programming and advising to meet the diverse needs of GSAS students. The office is available to work with departments on career-related programming and alumni career panels, and its staff is also available to meet with students in one-on-one career advising appointments to discuss career options, review job application materials, and prepare for interviews.

To learn more, visit [this webpage](#) or write to gsas-compass@columbia.edu.

Rachel Bernard, PhD
Director of Graduate Career Development
r.bernard@columbia.edu
212-854-2854

Francesca Fanelli
Associate Director of Graduate Career Development
fpf2107@columbia.edu
212-854-3414

Office of Academic Diversity and Inclusion

Please note that the OADI's physical space will be closed until further notice because of COVID-19. Fall 2020 programming will be conducted virtually.

The Office of Academic Diversity and Inclusion is the GSAS space in which the school's commitment to create an intellectual collective that reflects the disparate experiences of its constituents is enacted daily and intentionally.

OADI's objectives are to:

- Reduce institutional barriers to high-quality graduate education and training for students from groups that historically have been underrepresented in US higher education settings, namely domestic Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Native American or Pacific Islander
- Enhance the graduate-student experience to promote intellectual growth and excellence, especially among those whose identities are marginalized
- Prepare graduate students from *all* backgrounds in the principles of diversity, inclusion, and educational equity

OADI offers workshops, panel presentations, seminars, and other programs and events that are specifically targeted to unique needs expressed by the student populations we serve. These initiatives celebrate students' heritage, cultures, and identities as a way of affirming their sense of belonging here at Columbia; advance their research and scholarship; prepare them for career exploration and progression; and promote inclusive climates on campus and within departments.

OADI invites DGSs and MAPDs to direct GSAS students from historically underrepresented and otherwise marginalized groups to visit the Office of Academic Diversity and Inclusion in 107 Low to learn more about programs and other available resources. OADI welcomes all students to participate in its programs, especially as they consider the role of diversity, equity, and inclusion in their own work as scholars, teachers, and professionals.

OADI is working to create new systems and mechanisms for supporting departments in their efforts to attract, recruit, and retain more students from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups to and throughout their graduate degree programs. This work includes but is not limited to:

- Tracking, analyzing, and reporting on admissions data and trends by department
- Collaborating with DGSs and departments to develop and refine diversity outreach and recruitment plans and activities, including helping identify talented students and encouraging them to apply and to accept an offer of admission
- Representing Columbia University at regional and national conferences where students from underrepresented backgrounds attend in large numbers, and sharing with them details and contact information for doctoral and master's programs
- Sourcing and sharing data and knowledge on promising practices in equitable admissions practices and retaining students through degree completion
- Consulting with departments about how GSAS can support and augment efforts to create a more inclusive environment for all students in your department

- Working with DGSs, MAPDs, and departments and programs to provide specialized support for students from underrepresented or marginalized groups who may be experiencing unique challenges based on their backgrounds
- Connecting faculty and students to resources for enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in pathways to the professoriate through our national partnerships

To learn more, write to gsas-diversity@columbia.edu or visit gsas.columbia.edu/diversity.

Celina Chatman Nelson
Associate Dean for Academic Diversity and Inclusion
Chatman.nelson@columbia.edu
212-851-9851

Afiya Wilson
Student Affairs Officer for Diversity and Inclusion
afiya.wilson@columbia.edu
212-854-2866

Student Life

University Offices on Campus

- [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CPS\)](#): 212-854-2878
- [Health Services](#): 212-854-2284

After-hours on-call clinician: 212-854-7426

- [Public Safety](#): 212-854-5555
- [Public Affairs](#): 212-854-5573
- Columbia Residential: 212-854-9300
- [University Life](#): 212-853-1628

Student Emergencies

1. Whom to contact in GSAS for an emergency:

Richard Slusarczyk, Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs, rs37@columbia.edu, 212-854-8428 (office), 347-326-0784 (cell)

2. What to do in an emergency involving a GSAS student (steps are listed in the order in which they should be taken):

Psychological Crisis

1. Suggest that the student contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS). If the student is in immediate distress, offer to walk the student to the CPS office (eighth floor of Lerner Hall; 212-854-2878).
2. Contact Public Safety if the student appears to be a threat to himself or herself or others. 212-854-5555 for emergencies.
3. Contact GSAS: Richard Slusarczyk, details above.
4. Determine whether the student is teaching a class that needs to be covered.
5. When the immediate crisis has passed, discuss with the student additional resources and possible next steps, including a medical leave of absence. Feel free to consult CPS staff or the University Chaplain; they are very helpful in providing suggestions for how to approach this discussion.

Medical Crisis

1. Call 911 in an emergency
2. Call Public Safety if the student requires immediate first aid, or transport to a hospital: 212-854-5555 for emergencies.
3. If not an emergency, suggest that the student contact Health Services.
4. Contact GSAS.
5. Determine whether the student is teaching a class that needs to be covered in the next 24 hours.
6. When the immediate crisis has passed, discuss with the student additional resources and possible next steps, including a medical leave of absence.

Gender-Based and Sexual Misconduct

Students who wish to report an incident involving an alleged violation of the University's [Gender-Based Misconduct Policy for Students](#) (sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, gender-based harassment, stalking, domestic violence, and dating violence) may use the "File a Report" button in the upper-right corner of the [Sexual Respect website](#).

[This essential website also includes confidential resources \(Sexual Violence Response; Counseling Services\) and not-confidential resources \(Public Safety, Gender-Based Misconduct Office\).](#)

Also see the "Gender-Based Misconduct Reporting Requirements for Faculty and Staff" in the appendix of this handbook. Faculty and staff are **mandatory reporters**.

If there is an immediate risk to a student's health or safety, please contact Columbia Public Safety at 212-854-5555.

Student Arrest

1. If you receive notification of the arrest from someone outside of Columbia's administration, contact Public Safety with the information. Public Safety will communicate with the police department.
2. Contact GSAS.
3. Determine whether the student is teaching a class that needs to be covered.
4. After the crisis has passed and depending on the circumstances, discuss with the student additional resources and possible next steps, including a personal leave of absence.

Note: GSAS is not allowed to recommend lawyers to students who inquire about legal assistance of any sort. You may, however, direct students to the *website* of the [Office of the General Counsel](#), which includes links to external websites for reference purposes. Please note that the Office of the General Counsel does not itself supply legal assistance to students.

Student in Danger Abroad

Columbia students traveling abroad while doing research toward their degree or conducting University business are covered by International SOS, an emergency services program that helps with unexpected medical or security issues.

1. Direct the student to the [Columbia portal for International SOS](#).
2. Inform Richard Slusarczyk, Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs: rs37@columbia.edu, 212-854-8428 (office), 347-326-0784 (cell)
3. Contact the University's [Office of Global Support](#).

Student Death

Note: If you receive information from someone other than a University or family source, please make every effort to verify the information first.

1. Inform Richard Slusarczyk, Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs: rs37@columbia.edu, 212-854-8428 (office), 347-326-0784 (cell)
2. Inform Richard J. Eichler, executive director of Counseling and Psychological Services (for grief counseling for fellow graduate students and for undergraduate students the deceased may have taught): rei@columbia.edu.
3. Inform Public Safety.
4. If student was teaching a class, arrange for a substitute.

The GSAS Office of Student Affairs will assign a senior staff member to work with your department on coordinating the various details that need to be addressed in the ensuing days and months, including identifying professional support for grieving students and faculty memorial services, and more.

Teaching Assistant Emergencies

1. Alert the course instructor of record if the student is a TA; the students taking the course if the TA is the instructor of record; or the Core office if the student is a Preceptor.
2. Contact Vice Dean Andrea Solomon to discuss the scope of the problem and next steps (short- or long-term coverage, communications, involvement of CPS, etc.).

Student Grievances

The GSAS Procedure for Student Grievances governs cases in which a student has a complaint against any individual subject to the authority of the Dean, such as a GSAS administrator or a fellow GSAS student. Grievances against Arts and Sciences faculty members are governed by the [procedures of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences](#).

When the student meets with the DGS for advice, the latter should either mediate as requested by the student or direct the student elsewhere, depending on the issue. For a list of appropriate offices, and procedures for complaints concerning academic and nonacademic matters, see the [Grievance Policy page](#) of the GSAS website.

International Students

The [International Student and Scholars Office](#) (ISSO) coordinates services for the more than 14,000 international students, scholars, interns, and family members who join the Columbia community annually. The ISSO staff is a source for essential information regarding immigration and Department of State regulations that affect international students studying in the US. The DGS should refrain from attempting to answer any international student's questions pertaining to visas, permits, and other federal regulations, and instead refer the student directly to ISSO.

ISSO Contact Information

Telephone: 212-854-3587
Fax: 212-851-1235
Email: isso@columbia.edu
Website: isso.columbia.edu

English-Language Testing for International Students

Non-native English speakers admitted to the Graduate School may be asked to take the ALP Essay Exam administered by the Columbia University American Language Program and may, depending on the results of this test, be required to take English language courses in addition to ordinary degree coursework.

Non-native English speakers who will be Teaching Fellows may also be asked to take the [OWL/TOP test of spoken English](#), administered by the American Language Program, before beginning their teaching duties.

Housing

An overview of housing and off-campus apartment-hunting services provided by the University is available on the [Housing page](#) of the GSAS website.

Doctoral Students

Doctoral students in an [Arts and Sciences program](#) are currently guaranteed continuous housing for five academic years if they apply by the deadline noted in the acceptance letter, accept the housing offer, and remain registered and in good-standing at GSAS.

Students may be granted housing extensions for one year at a time; however, no doctoral student is granted an extension past year seven, or seven years beyond their first semester of registration. To be considered for an extension of one academic year, students must apply by the Columbia Residential deadline in mid- to late February.

Students taking a leave of absence must vacate Columbia housing and are not guaranteed housing after they return.

Upon completing the dissertation defense, regardless of the outcome, doctoral candidates are required to vacate housing within 60 days of the defense.

Note: If doctoral students do not apply for housing, decline an initial offer of housing, or choose to leave their housing assignment before the five-year period ends, subsequent request for Columbia housing may not be granted.

Master's Students

Housing is not guaranteed to MA students, and incoming MA students should not expect to be assigned housing, though they may still apply for it. Those who receive housing are limited to one academic year and must be enrolled full time in both semesters. Up to one additional year of housing may be granted based on the academic department's timeline for full-time study.

Students taking a leave of absence must vacate Columbia housing and are not guaranteed housing after they return.

Housing Extensions for MA Students

Entering MA students who receive Columbia housing beginning in the fall semester typically sign academic-year leases that end on May 31. Students who want an extension on their housing through the summer (ending August 15), the following fall, or the following academic year must submit a request to Columbia Residential by that office's published deadline beginning mid- to late February. Extensions are granted only to MA students in programs requiring more than two semesters of study.

DGSs should communicate to students that eligibility for a visa extension does not increase an international student's chance of receiving a housing extension.

Housing Calendar

Note: The calendar below reflects the University housing process for October 2019 to September 2020. The timetable and procedures for the coming year are subject to change.

October 1	Spring housing applications become available in the Columbia Residential portal.
Mid-November	Columbia Residential notifies GSAS of the number of housing allotments available for GSAS students seeking spring housing.
December 1	Deadline for all GSAS students to apply for spring housing
Mid-February	Current students may submit housing extensions for the next academic year.
March 1	Fall housing applications become available in Columbia Residential portal.
March 15	Columbia Residential stops accepting transfer requests on a rolling basis. (Students in first and last year of housing are not prioritized.)
Late March	Deadline for fifth- and sixth-year doctoral students in an Arts and Sciences program and first-year master's students whose leases end on May 31 to request a housing extension.

March-April	GSAS makes decisions on housing extensions. Columbia Residential notifies GSAS of the number of housing allotments available for GSAS students seeking fall housing. (This processing period was extended this year due to COVID-19.)
May-June	GSAS housing liaison approves incoming PhD students for housing. A select number of students participate in housing selection process each week. (This processing period was extended this year due to COVID-19.)
June 1	Deadline for incoming doctoral students to apply for fall housing. (Incoming students will be approved for housing by early June.)
June 15	Deadline for incoming MA and continuing doctoral students to apply for fall housing
Mid-June through July	GSAS determines the amount of housing available for MA students and continuing PhD students after incoming PhD students are processed. The GSAS housing liaison uses a lottery to select students who will receive remaining housing. A select number of students participate in housing selection process each week.
Mid- to Late July	All students who did not receive housing or turned down an offer from Columbia Residential are placed on a general waitlist, which includes students from other Columbia divisions in addition to GSAS. (The waitlist was cancelled for Fall 2020. As an alternative, schools processed applications through this time period.)
August 16	Columbia Residential begins accepting transfer requests on a rolling basis. (Students in first and last year of housing are not prioritized.)
Late July–late September	Columbia Residential typically distributes housing to students on the waitlist as it becomes available. (The waitlist was cancelled for Fall 2020. As an alternative, schools processed applications through this time period.)

Campus Resources

Libraries

Desk Space for Post-MPhil Students

The Columbia Libraries and GSAS collaborate in assigning carrels to eligible post-MPhil students in a limited number of Humanities and Social Science departments. Because demand exceeds supply, each participating department has its own policy for choosing and maintaining a waitlist; in addition, there are the following general eligibility criteria set by GSAS and the libraries:

- Students must have earned the MPhil.
- Departments must support the application for the post-MPhil research desk space, in accordance with their own selection policies.
- Students must have submitted the Dissertation Progress Meeting form.
- Students may not be assigned a desk space beyond their seventh year of PhD registration.
- If the space is not claimed and used within the first thirty days following assignment, the space will be reassigned to the next student on the eligible student waitlist.

Note: Assigned library research carrel space is not available to students in freestanding master's programs, and because of COVID-19, access to libraries and carrels will be limited during the 2020-21 academic year.

Library Affiliation for MA Students Writing a Thesis

For access to library facilities, thesis-writing students in freestanding MA programs who are not registered for any courses may apply for library affiliation using the [Library Affiliation Request form](#).

Graduate Student Center

Please note that the Graduate Student Center will be closed until further notice because of COVID-19.

Located on the campus level of Philosophy Hall, the Graduate Student Center offers a dedicated space on campus for formal and informal interaction among graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and faculty across disciplines and schools. Graduate student groups may via the GSAS website request to reserve the Seminar Room (302 Philosophy) adjacent to the Graduate Student Center (301).

See the [Graduate Student Center page](#) for more information.

GSAS Writing Studio

Please note that the GSAS Writing Studio's physical space will be closed until further notice because of COVID-19. Fall 2020 programming will be conducted virtually.

The GSAS Writing Studio, located in 319 and 321 Lehman Library, is a space on campus dedicated to supporting doctoral students in the process of writing their dissertation. It is available to students for dissertation writing groups, writing workshops and retreats, and long stretches of concentrated individual writing.

See the [GSAS Writing Studio page](#) for more information.

Dodge Fitness Center

Please note that Dodge Fitness Center will be closed until further notice because of COVID-19.

The University Facilities Fee includes membership to the Dodge Fitness Center.

Students who register in the Matriculation and Facilities registration category (M&F) are not assessed the University Facilities Fee; however, the Graduate School will cover the Dodge access membership fee during the academic year (fall and spring semesters only) for all funding-eligible GSAS doctoral students.

See the [Dodge Fitness Center page](#) for more information.

Chaplain

The Office of the University Chaplain ministers to the individual faiths of Columbia University's diverse community of scholars, students, and staff from many different faith traditions while promoting interfaith and intercultural understanding.

See the [Chaplain's website](#) for more information.

Columbia Health

Columbia Health provides integrated, accessible services and programs that support the well-being of the campus community and the personal and academic development of students on the Morningside campus.

See [Columbia Health's website](#) for more information. For an overview of the student medical insurance plan, see the [Columbia Health page](#) of the GSAS website.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS)

Counseling and Psychological Services offers short-term individual counseling, student support groups, medication consultation, training, and emergency consultation.

See the [CPS website](#) for more information.

Disability Services

Departments may not provide disabilities accommodations on their own.

Disability Services (DS), facilitates equal access for graduate students with disabilities by coordinating with GSAS reasonable accommodations and support services and cultivating a campus culture that is sensitive and responsive to the needs of students. Students seeking accommodations or support services from Disability Services are required to register with that office, and provide documentation to be reviewed. Students are not eligible to receive accommodations until the registration process is complete. GSAS receives notification of each student's specific requirements, and works with the department to implement prescribed accommodations.

See the [Disability Services website](#) for more information.

Public Safety

The mission of the Department of Public Safety is to enhance the quality of life for the entire Columbia community by maintaining a secure and open environment where the safety of all is balanced with the rights of the individual.

To reach Public Safety to report a security, fire, or medical emergency, dial:

- Morningside: on campus (99), off campus (212-854-5555)
- Medical Center: on campus (212-305-7979), off campus (212-305-8100)

Additional information is available on the [Public Safety website](#).

Shuttle Buses

The University operates a number of shuttle bus routes:

- Intercampus Shuttle
- Evening Shuttle
- Lamont-Doherty Shuttle
- George Washington Bridge/Fort Lee Shuttle

Routes and schedule information are available on the [Columbia Transportation website](#).

Students Who Are Parents

The Graduate School supports its students who are parents or become parents: please review the family-friendly policies and resources listed below.

Parental Accommodation

The Parental Accommodation provides a twelve-week period of accommodation to Arts and Sciences PhD and DMA students who become parents. Students in years one through seven who give birth, adopt, or become legal guardians or foster parents, as well as students whose spouse or partner gives birth, can have responsibilities associated with their doctoral program suspended for twelve calendar weeks. During that time, students will retain any GSAS funding they were scheduled to receive. Parental accommodation typically begins after the date of birth, adoption, or guardianship, but must begin no later than three months after this date.

New parents may also take an additional semester of accommodation, without funding, after the conclusion of the initial accommodation period. Students who elect to take an additional semester of unfunded accommodation will retain eligibility for housing, health coverage, and access to University facilities; however, they will be responsible for paying the Matriculation and Facilities tuition and health fees for the semester. Students will not be eligible to work for their departments or as research assistants during this time.

For the full policy, visit the [Parental Accommodation Page](#) of the GSAS website.

Child-Care Subsidy

During the 2020-2021 academic year only, the amount of the GSAS Child-Care Subsidy will be doubled. Parents who are fully funded doctoral students in an Arts and Sciences program may be eligible to receive one \$4,000 subsidy per academic year for each child who is 1) under the age of five and 2) not yet attending kindergarten. If both parents meet the requirement above, they both may apply individually for the child-care subsidy. Parents may submit the [Child-Care Subsidy Application form](#) once per academic year, and are encouraged to do so by October 1. Students who are on leave or become new parents may apply by December 15, March 1, or June 1. Visit the [Resources for Parents page](#) for details and the application form.

Adoption Assistance Program

This benefit is available to a student who: 1) is in an Arts and Sciences doctoral program, 2) is fully funded, 3) has adopted a child who is under the age of eighteen, and 4) has finalized the adoption process within the past six months. This benefit provides a one-time reimbursement of up to \$5,000 for expenses incurred on or after the parent's first day of enrollment in GSAS. There is a limit of one \$5,000 reimbursement per adopted child, even if both parents are GSAS students. Visit the [Resources for Parents page](#) for details.

Medical Insurance for Dependents

Students who enroll in the Columbia Student Medical Insurance Plan may also choose to purchase the optional insurance for eligible dependents. Doctoral students in the Arts and Sciences who are fully funded or on appointments beyond their funded years, and who choose to enroll their dependents in the Dependent Plan, are entitled to a GSAS fellowship that covers the full cost of the plan. The GSAS Office of Financial Aid will apply the fellowship to eligible student accounts shortly after the end of the enrollment period. For more information, visit the [Columbia Health page](#) of the GSAS website.

Additional Resources

The University's [Office of Work/Life](#) offers information about childcare and schooling, breastfeeding support, and back-up care. Columbia Health offers [support groups](#) on a variety of topics, including time management and relationships. The [GSAS Parents Group](#) and [Columbia University Family Support Network \(CUFSN\)](#) both manage email lists and newsletters for students with families.

Graduate Student Government

Students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences are represented by two councils, both of which facilitate communication between graduate students and the Columbia administration through meetings with the Dean of GSAS:

- The **Arts and Sciences Graduate Council (ASGC)** consists of student-elected representatives from doctoral and master's programs in the Arts and Sciences. ASGC organizes and sponsors social, cultural, and academic events to improve the quality of life for graduate students and to foster student interaction across disciplines. ASGC also provides travel grants to support students who are presenting at conferences.
- The **PhD Council (PhDC)** is composed of student-elected representatives from the eleven Columbia graduate schools that administer doctoral programs. Representatives advocate on behalf of doctoral students across the University.

Appendix

GSAS Forms to be Completed by Faculty

Please see below for links to GSAS forms for faculty members to complete and submit.

Dissertation Office Forms

- [Application for Master of Philosophy](#)
(completed by department)
- [Application for Master of Philosophy - Teachers College](#)
(completed by Teachers College Office of Doctoral Studies)
- [Report of the Dissertation Proposal Committee](#)
(completed by department)
- [Application for the Dissertation Defense](#)
(completed by department)
- [Application for the Dissertation Defense - Teachers College](#)
(completed by Teachers College Office of Doctoral Studies)

Other Forms

- [Course Approval Request Form](#)
- [Return to MA Study: Evaluation of Application](#)

GSAS Forms to be Completed by Students

Please see below for links to GSAS forms for students to complete and submit.

Student Affairs Forms

- [Application for Transfer Credit](#)
- [Registration Adjustment Form](#)
(formerly known as the Add/Drop form)
- [Columbia Library Affiliation Form](#)
(for students in freestanding MA programs)
- [Parental Accommodation Form](#)
(doctoral students in Arts and Sciences programs)
- [Application for Child-Care Subsidy](#)
(doctoral students in Arts and Sciences programs)
- [Adoption Assistance Program](#)
(doctoral students in Arts and Sciences programs)

Leaves of Absence, Withdrawals, Reinstatement

- [Leave of Absence](#)
- [Withdrawal from the University](#)
- [Application for MA Reinstatement](#)
- [Return from a Leave of Absence](#)

Exchange Scholars and Inter-University Doctoral Consortium (IUDC)

- Exchange Scholar Application
 - [Columbia students who wish to study elsewhere](#)
 - [Non-Columbia students who wish to study at Columbia](#)
- [Inter-University Doctoral Consortium \(IUDC\) Registration Form](#)

Financial Aid Forms

- Request for Loans and/or Federal Work-Study
[2020-2021](#)
- Graduate PLUS Loan Request and Credit Authorization
[2020-2021](#)
- Federal Verification Worksheets (download from [Student Financial Services](#))
 - Standard Verification
 - Child Support Paid
 - Customized Verification
 - Aggregate Verification
 - Household Resource
- FAFSA on the Web Worksheet
[2020-2021](#)
- Columbia University Federal School Code: 002707
- [Private Education Loan Applicant Self-Certification Form](#)
- [Statement of Understanding for External Fellowship Awards](#)
- [Summer Tuition Credit Application Form](#)
- [Consent to Release Financial Records](#)
- Loan Reduction Application
[2020-2021](#)

Sample Warning Letter for Students in Unsatisfactory Academic Standing

Dear **[Student Name]**:

This letter is formal notification that your academic standing in the **[MA/PhD]** Program in **[Program Name]** is currently unsatisfactory and that you are now in a probationary state of enrollment in the program. I write to you now to describe the terms of your probationary state and the academic standards of conduct expected of you if you wish to continue in the program.

Our program requires **[list minimum requirements]**. In order to return to good standing, you must achieve the following: **[cite the tasks to be completed, goals to be achieved, etc., in order for the student to return to good standing, and the deadlines by when they should be met]**. If you do not meet these specific conditions, you will not be permitted to enroll for a subsequent term.

If you choose to remain in the program rather than to withdraw immediately, then you must sign two copies of this letter in my presence and **by no later than 5:00 p.m. on [date]**. The department will retain one copy of the letter. If you decide to withdraw from the program, please notify me and complete the [Request for Withdrawal form](#).

Sincerely,

Sign and date below to indicate that you have read and understood this letter.

Student Signature:

Date:

Witnessed:

Date:

Sample Teaching Appointment Letter

Dear **[Student Name]**,

The faculty of the Department of **[XXXX]** is pleased to communicate your appointment as a GSAS Teaching Fellow for **[Fall 20XX and/or Spring 20XX]**. All fellowships are subject to the [regulations set forth by the Graduate School](#) and the [Graduate Student Teaching Guidelines](#).

This appointment recognizes your good academic and pedagogical progress, and is awarded with an expectation that you will maintain a high level of academic achievement in your studies next year.

We encourage you to take part in the activities and support provided by the [Center for Teaching and Learning \(CTL\)](#). These include orientations, targeted workshops, certification programs, fellowships, informal discussions at the Teachers' Lounge, and private consultations. Consult the website and join the listserv for details about upcoming events. In addition to the CTL resources, the Department of **[XXXX]** offers departmental pedagogical training. There will also be a required TA orientation meeting at the beginning of the school year: **[Date/Time]**.

This appointment provides coverage of full-time tuition, the 90-level medical insurance plan, health fees, and facilities fees, plus a nine-month stipend of **[\$XX,XXX]**, **[\$XX,XXX]** of which will be disbursed in two stipend installments (late August and early January); and **[\$X,XXX]** of which will be disbursed in semimonthly checks from September **[20XX]** to May **[20XX]**. The appointment also provides coverage of the International Student Fee, if applicable.

Your GSAS Teaching Fellowship includes the following teaching assignment:

[Fall 20XX Course Number, Title, Date/Time]
[Spring 20XX Course Number, Title, Date/Time]

The work required of teaching assistants varies greatly from course to course and even within the same course if taught by differing professors in differing semesters.

Students should expect to be asked to:

- Aid in the preparation of course materials
- Attend all lectures
- Hold two sections per week
- Hold office hours of two hours each week
- Grade
- Lecture in class
- Hold labs

Any particular course may involve some or all of these requirements. Please keep in mind basic professional requirements: The timing of sections should be made in consultation with faculty with the needs of undergraduate students foremost; students must arrive for lectures on time; permission for absence from a lecture or a section must be obtained from the professor ahead of time; all grading must be completed in a timely fashion as specified by the professor.

Funded doctoral students in [Arts and Sciences programs](#) who are appointed as student officers may not spend more than 20 hours per week in the discharge of the responsibilities associated

with their fellowship *and* those associated with any other activity within or outside Columbia for which they are compensated. The expected time commitment for the duties of a Teaching Fellow is roughly 15 to 20 hours per week on average.

The faculty of the department makes Teaching Fellowship assignments after reviewing each student's academic progress, and taking into account student interests, faculty preferences, undergraduate enrollments, and the fair distribution of workload among graduate Teaching Fellows. Assignments also take into account the desire to expose students to diverse pedagogical experiences and responsibilities. Until registration resumes in early September, assignments for **[Fall 20XX/Spring 20XX]** must be considered provisional. Although the faculty has planned carefully for the coming academic year, contingencies sometimes arise, and it may be necessary to make adjustments in both faculty and graduate instructor assignments early in the semester.

Please indicate your acceptance of this fellowship to **[Name]** upon receiving this letter. By **[Date]**, you will need to complete all of the necessary financial forms. **[Name]** will be in touch with you about the requisite forms. Failure to complete the required paperwork from GSAS and the department may result in delayed processing of stipends and monthly checks.

Congratulations, and best wishes for a productive next year. If you have any questions about your appointment, please consult either **[Name]** or me.

Sincerely,

[Name]
Director of Graduate Studies
Department of **[XXXX]**

Gender-Based Misconduct Reporting Requirements for Faculty and Staff

University employees (faculty and staff)ⁱ have an obligation under federal law and University policy to immediately report gender-based misconduct experienced by undergraduate and graduate students.ⁱⁱ This FAQ explains what you must do.

What should I say to a student who starts talking with me about an incident of gender-based misconduct?

1. If a student is in immediate danger, call the University's Public Safety Department at 212-854-5555 (Morningside) or 212-305-7979 (Medical Center) or the New York Police Department at 911.
2. Let the student know right away—before they disclose any information to you, if possible—that you have an obligation to report the incident. This enables students to choose whether to share information with you or to seek out “confidential” resources, listed in point 3 below, that do not have the same reporting responsibility. Some students are comfortable with reporting; others are not. When you explain your reporting responsibility, please assure the student that nothing in the reporting process allows their personal identifying information to be shared publicly.
3. Share these on-campus resources, as appropriate. They are for students who are in crisis and in need of immediate professional support and for students who just want to know where else to turn.

The [Gender-Based Misconduct Office](#) has case managers who can help determine if students need accommodations (such as changes to exam dates or housing) and assist students with referrals and resources. This “non-confidential” office will protect students’ privacy to the greatest extent possible and will disclose identifying information to others only on a need-to-know basis. The office can be reached at 212-854-1717 or titleix@columbia.edu.

In addition, the following confidential resources do not have a reporting obligation and will not reveal to others any identifiable information about the student:

Sexual Violence Response/Rape Crisis and Anti-Violence Support Center:

Professional and peer counselors available in person into the evening and available 24/7/365 at 212-854-HELP

Columbia Health (Morningside) for Columbia and Teachers College students:

- Medical Services: 212-854-9797
- Counseling and Psychological Services: 212-854-2878

Ombuds Office: 212-854-1234

Columbia University Medical Center Health Services:

- Medical Services: 212-305-3400
- Counseling and Psychological Services: 212-305-3400

Barnard Health Services:

- Medical Services: 877-941-1695
- Counseling and Psychological Services: 212-854-2092

University Chaplain: 212-854-1493

Additional resources can be found [here](#).

If a student tells me they have experienced gender-based misconduct, how do I submit a report?

You can use the [Gender-Based Sexual Misconduct Report Form](#), call the Gender-Based Misconduct Office at 212-854-1717, or email the office at titleix@columbia.edu. This will reach the Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Student Concerns and will fulfill your reporting responsibility.

What will I need to include in my report?

You will need to include any information you have, including the name(s) of the student(s) or others involved in any incidents and information about the incidents. If you don't know students' names but have information about an incident, you must report that. Likewise, if you have names but no detailed information about an incident, you must report that as well.

What kinds of gender-based misconduct trigger my reporting obligation?

The University policy identifies ten types of gender-based misconduct that violate our policy and require a report if you hear about them. They are (1) nonconsensual sexual intercourse; (2) nonconsensual sexual contact; (3) domestic violence; (4) dating violence; (5) sexual exploitation; (6) stalking; (7) sexual harassment; (8) gender-based harassment; (9) intimidation that reasonably leads the student to fear for their physical well-being or to engage in sexual conduct for self-protection; and (10) retaliation for participating in any way in the gender-based misconduct disciplinary process, including by reporting an incident. Click [here](#) for detailed definitions.

Importantly, you don't need to be concerned with whether there is enough information to report or whether an incident fits the policy definition. When you report the information you have learned, even if it seems minor, the Gender-Based Misconduct Office will determine the appropriate next steps.

Do I need to report if: (1) I hear about an incident from someone else; (2) the student does not know the name of the person who committed an offense; (3) the offender is not a student or not affiliated with Columbia; or (4) the incident took place away from campus or when school was not in session?

Yes. The University seeks to ensure that our students have access to the appropriate resources and that our community is safe.

What happens when I file a report?

If you have the names of students involved, the Gender-Based Misconduct Office will reach out to them. For students who have experienced gender-based misconduct, a case manager will help determine if they need accommodations, referrals, and resources as described above. For any student who has been accused of violating the policy, the office will also work directly with him or her if an investigation is initiated.

Do I need to do anything after I have filed a report?

No. Once you file a report, your reporting obligation is complete, though you should keep any notes you have taken for future reference as the Gender-Based Misconduct Office may follow up with you if they have any questions as they are processing the report. The Gender-Based Misconduct Office will follow up with the students involved to help arrange accommodations and access to additional resources, as appropriate. You can continue to talk with the student over time, but please continue to communicate with the Gender-Based Misconduct Office if you learn additional information.

Do I have reporting responsibilities if I hear that faculty or staff have experienced gender-based misconduct? If so, what are they?

University officers have a duty to report gender-based misconduct involving employees to the Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Faculty and Staff Concerns at eoaa@columbia.edu or 212-854-6699.

You can also share these resources for faculty and staff: (1) the [Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action](#); (2) [Human Resources](#); (3) the confidential [Ombuds Office](#); and (4) the confidential Employee Assistance Program. [St. Luke's Crime Victims Treatment Center](#) (212-523-4728) provides medical services and counseling near campus for survivors of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, childhood sexual abuse, and other forms of violence and crime.

For further information about the Gender-Based Misconduct Policy for Students, resources, and more, please see the University's Sexual Respect website at sexualrespect.columbia.edu.

ⁱ Included are University officers, residential program staff, teaching assistants (including graduate students and postdocs), and adjunct faculty. Barnard and Teachers College faculty and staff should consult their Title IX coordinator for additional information and resources.

ⁱⁱ Because requirements regarding postdoctoral students vary, contact the Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Faculty and Staff Concerns at eoaa@columbia.edu or 212-854-6699.