



Fifth-Year Master of Science in Computer Science

Student Handbook

2026–2027

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SECTION 1: Welcome & Introduction

As the Program Director of the Fifth-Year Master's in Computer Science, I am delighted to welcome you to the program.

The program is designed for students who are passionate about research and want to take the next step toward a Ph.D. or a career where they can put their research skills into practice. Our goal is to help you grow into an independent researcher. You will work closely with leading researchers and experts, while taking courses that support and complement your research.

- By graduation, we hope you will have become an independent researcher with deep knowledge of your research area and be well prepared for the next step in your career.

Throughout the program, you will be supported by your Research Advisor, the Program Manager, and the Program Director. We hope you will enjoy the opportunity to focus on research while being part of the amazing CMU community.

If I can help in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me at rubenm@andrew.cmu.edu.

While this handbook is specific to your academic experience in the department, it is just one element of the Graduate Student Handbook Suite. There are several other resources within the suite that you should consult when needed:

- [University-Wide Graduate Student Handbook](#) (Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs)
- [The Carnegie Mellon Student Handbook](#)

If the handbook is needed in a different format to address accessibility needs, the student should contact the Computer Science Master's Programs Manager.



Ruben Martins

SECTION 2: Program Overview

Many undergraduate students in the School of Computer Science (SCS) participate in research during their undergraduate studies. The Fifth-Year Master's Program is a research-oriented Master's Degree program administered by the Department of Computer Science. The program only accepts students with a Bachelor of Science degree from the School of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon University. The program is designed to give SCS students the chance to gain more research experience by working on a substantial research project resulting in a master's thesis. A portion of our graduates pursue Ph.D. programs at prestigious universities, whereas others transition into employment in industry.

In addition to students with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Computer Science (BSCS) from either the Pittsburgh or Qatar campus, students with a Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence (BSAI), Bachelor of Computer Science and Arts (BCSA), or students with an additional major in Computer Science from CMU are also eligible to enroll in the program. However, they need to satisfy additional breadth requirements before starting the program to gain additional knowledge in Computer Science that is referenced in the [Elective and Breadth Courses](#) section of this handbook.

Program Orientation

There is a short orientation toward the beginning of each semester. Attendance is strongly encouraged as the content will answer many questions you may have about program requirements, registration, and your master's thesis. It also gives you the opportunity to meet and present your questions to the program administration. You will be notified in advance of the date and time of the orientation session.

2.1: Program Objective

The objectives of the program are to (1) develop both research experience and technical depth within a specific area of Computer Science and (2) gain additional depth in Computer Science beyond the knowledge obtained as an undergraduate student.

2.2: Mission and Values

The Fifth-Year Master's– Research Program abides by the Mission and Values set forth by the Computer Science Department: <https://csd.cmu.edu/about>

SECTION 3: Degrees Offered

Master of Science in Computer Science - Research Thesis

SECTION 4: Departmental Personnel

4.1: Program Contacts

Ruben Martins

Program Director

GHC 7129

rubenm@andrew.cmu.edu

Professor Martins is the Director of the Program and is ultimately responsible for the overall conduct of the program and helps with any questions about program requirements. The Director has the power to interpret all policies and, with good cause, to grant exceptions to requirements and policies as well as to revise them. The Director has the power to delegate this authority.

Angy Malloy

Master's Programs Manager

GHC 9006

angy@cmu.edu

Angy Malloy is the Program Manager and is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Program. She is the first place you should turn for information about the Program and will act as your academic advisor. While you will make your decisions on which courses to take, both breadth and elective, at the advice of your Research Advisor because they are more involved in your academic advancement, Angy can help to make sure that your choices are satisfying your program requirements and that you stay on track to graduate on time. She can help you with most of your concerns or connect you with those who can.

Amanda Hornick

Graduate Programs Assistant

GHC 9006

ahornick@andrew.cmu.edu

Amanda Hornick is the Graduate Program Assistant and she is responsible for the course administration for all graduate-level programs in the Computer Science Department. She also manages waitlists for these programs as well as assists in the day-to-day operations of the Program.

4.2: Other Leadership Roles

The Fifth-Year Master's Program is hosted by the School of Computer Science. Most students will not need to interact with the SCS leadership directly, but it is probably useful for you to know who is in which role.

- Jignesh Patel, Interim Department Head, Computer Science Department
- David Garlan, Associate Dean, Master's Programs, School of Computer Science
- Martial Hebert, Dean, School of Computer Science

4.3: Department and School Contacts

Computer Science Department Key Contacts

Available online at: <https://csd.cmu.edu/key-contacts>

School of Computer Science Key Contacts

Available online at: <https://www.cs.cmu.edu/about-scs/key-contacts>

SECTION 5: Departmental Resources

General Student Resources:

<https://csd.cmu.edu/academics/current-student-resources>

Master's Student Resources: <https://csd.cmu.edu/academics/current-student-resources/masters-student-resources>

SECTION 6: Advising

Students in the program will have support from two separate advisors: an Academic Advisor and a Research Advisor.

6.1: Role of an Advisor and Advisor Assignments

Students may conduct their thesis research with an approved Research Advisor in any of the departments within the School of Computer Science. Research Advisors are typically tenure-track or research-track faculty members. Choosing a Research Advisor that holds an appointment in other schools or colleges within CMU would require approval and any

student looking to work with a Research Advisor outside of the School of Computer Science should contact the program director for more information.

The Research Advisor is responsible for overseeing and assessing the progress of the student's research as well as advising the student on both breadth and elective courses that align with their research. The Research Advisor is typically the main point of contact for course and career advice.

The Academic Advisor is responsible for reviewing student registrations and ensuring that the courses being taken are satisfying program requirements and following a schedule for the student to graduate on time. Students are required to review their academic plans and proposed schedules with their assigned Academic Advisor prior to registering for classes and prior to adding or dropping any courses intended to be used to satisfy program requirements.

The Academic Advisor also provides the student with procedural guidance on completing their thesis defense and document in a timely and satisfactory manner.

6.2: Advisor/Advisee Collaboration

Students should meet with their Research Advisor on a regular basis to ensure they are making satisfactory progress in their research. It is recommended that students meet with their Research Advisors at least once per week.

6.3: Review/Redress of Academic Issues

Final grades will be changed only in exceptional circumstances and only with the approval of the instructor and the department, unit, or program. Grading is a matter of sound discretion of the instructor and final grades are rarely changed without the consent of the instructor who assigned the grade. The following circumstances are the unusual exceptions that may warrant a grade appeal: (a) the final grade assigned for a course is based on manifest error (e.g., a clear error such as arithmetic error in computing a grade or failure to grade one of the answers on an exam), or (b) the faculty or staff member who assigned the grade did so in violation of a University policy.

It is often productive to clarify an issue with the relevant faculty member (instructor or research supervisor), then speak to your Academic Advisor. Others who may be involved in a grade appeal include the Program Director and/or the Computer Science department head (the department head may be most helpful when all parties to an issue are within the department). In addition, a university-level formal process is available.

The Summary of Graduate Student Appeal and Grievance Procedures, which covers a wide variety of academic and non-academic conduct, penalties, and administrative decisions, involving student and non-student conduct, may be found here:

<https://www.cmu.edu/graduate/policies/appeal-grievance-procedures.html>

Discussing a matter with the Program may provide important perspective, and hopefully a quick resolution to some issues, but students should not feel restricted to local resolution and should not hesitate to engage university resources and procedures when that seems appropriate.

SECTION 7: Master's Degree Requirements

7.1: Residency Requirements

Students must remain on campus for the duration of the program, including during their summer research semester. Even if their Research Advisor is absent from campus, the student should plan to work from the university during this time.

7.2: Registration Process

Students should work directly with the Program Manager for course registration of both course and research units to ensure they are completing the appropriate program units each semester. General course registration information is found on the Hub website at: <https://www.cmu.edu/hub/registrar/registration/index.html>

The course requirements have been designed to help students achieve the two main program objectives. Students are required to take at least two graduate breadth courses in different areas of computer science as described in the next section. Breadth courses are at the 700 or 800 level and are part of the School of Computer Science's catalog of courses. The remaining units, a minimum of 24, consist of 700 or 800 level elective courses. Students generally use these units to take courses related to their master's research, gaining additional depth into that area of computer science and contributing to the research objective of the program.

Students must also complete a significant research project as part of their degree that results in a thesis. The thesis research project should result in an oral thesis defense summarizing the results of the student's project as well as a final thesis document.

Academic Calendar

The Academic Calendar contains important dates, such as registration periods, add and drop deadlines, University holidays and observances, and the final exam period. The Academic Calendar can be found here: <https://www.cmu.edu/hub/calendar/index.html>.

Course Load

Because courses at Carnegie Mellon are very demanding, the program defines a maximum course load, which may be different for incoming and returning students. Academic Advisors can increase the maximum course load for an individual student, based upon that student's academic plan and achievement. Your Academic Advisor will increase your maximum course load, if needed, to allow you to register for any appropriate schedule. Please seek your Academic Advisor's guidance prior to registering, dropping, or adding classes.

Overlapping Courses

As attendance is expected in all courses, students are not permitted to enroll in courses that overlap in time. Please schedule only courses that you are able to attend.

Restricted Enrollment

Not all classes at Carnegie Mellon are open to all students. Some classes are restricted by program, by year, or by prerequisites. A few require permission of the instructor, portfolio reviews, auditions, etc. Some courses may have reservations governing how many students may enroll from particular programs or seniority levels. If you are encountering difficulty registering for a desired class, please see your Academic Advisor, who may (or may not) be able to help you register for certain courses within the School of Computer Science, and can often offer advice about similar or alternative courses, the likelihood of getting registered, etc.

7.3: Required Units for Degree Attainment

Students in the Fifth-Year Master's Program are required to take a minimum of 48 units of graduate courses in the School of Computer Science per semester for three semesters. A minimum of 144 units are required to complete the degree.

Time to Completion

The duration of the program is 12 months, including one standard academic year and one summer. Once a student has been accepted into the program, they can start the program in any of the three semesters following the semester in which they were accepted. Students can only start the program after they have completed all the requirements for their CMU bachelor's degree.

Early Completion or Extension of Program

Early completion is not an option.

The course and research requirements are performed concurrently and are typically completed in twelve months (one standard academic year and one summer), however, exceptions can be made. Extensions can be provided on a case-by-case basis for extenuating circumstances or research delays.

Master's students who require longer than the standard time to complete their degree requirements are expected to remain in close contact with their graduate program and will be certified at the end of the semester in which they have completed their degree requirements. If you do not complete the program within the standard 12-month period, you will be subject to additional tuition charges.

International students must consult with the Office of International Education as early as possible to evaluate the possibility of an extension.

7.4: Typical Program Schedule

An example of the per-semester enrollment throughout the tenure of a Fifth-Year Master's Student is as follows:

Spring Semester

- 24 units of 15-697 for research credit
- 12 units of breadth course – area 1
- 12 units of an elective course that supports or complements your research topic

Summer Semester

- 48 units of 15-697 for research credit

Fall Semester

- 24 units of 15-697 for research credit
- 12 units of breadth course – area 2
- 12 units of an elective course that supports or complements your research topic

Thesis Document & Defense

- Oral defense and finalized (approved by advisor and reader) thesis document turned in.
- Both the thesis document and thesis presentation must be approved by the student's advisor and a "reader", a second faculty member familiar with the student's research area.

This schedule can be adjusted based on which semester the student's desired breadth and

elective courses are offered, but the thesis must be completed before the final semester.

7.5: Elective and Breadth Courses

Elective Courses

Students must enroll in a minimum of 24 units of elective courses that consist of 700 or 800 level courses. Students generally decide on these courses with guidance from their Research Advisor and use these units to take courses related to their master's research, gaining additional depth into that area of computer science and contributing to the research objective of the program.

Breadth Courses

The Fifth-Year Master's Program uses the same list of breadth courses as the Computer Science Department's Doctoral Program. Fifth-Year Master's students are required to take a course in two separate breadth areas. The list of Breadth Courses is organized by area and can be found on the following web page:

<https://csd.cmu.edu/academics/doctoral-resources/doctoral-breadth-courses>.

In this list, some courses are marked with an * (asterisk) and some are marked with a — (dash). Courses marked with an * are recommended for students that may be less familiar or experienced in that specific area of computer science. These courses are:

- designed to be accessible to all computer science graduate students, not just those with prior knowledge in the area
- typically, only assume an undergraduate background in the relevant area; and
- are offered on a regular basis so students can plan ahead.

Courses marked with a — (dash) should only be taken by students who have a solid background in that specific area of computer science. You should refer to the list of courses when planning your registration for each semester to confirm current availability of courses. Available breadth courses are subject to change.

Additional Breadth Requirements for CMU BSAI or BCSA Students

The Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence (BSAI) degree and the Bachelor of Computer Science and Arts (BCSA) share many of the technical course requirements with the BSCS, but they differ in breadth requirements. Given this overlap, students who graduated from these programs can also apply to the Computer Science Fifth-Year Master's program. However, they are required to complete additional breadth courses before starting the program, so they have breadth in computer science that is like that of BSCS students. Details on the BSCS requirements can be found on the undergraduate curriculum page: <https://csd.cmu.edu/academics/undergraduate/requirements>

Before they can start the Fifth-Year MS program, students in the BSAI program must take two breadth area courses:

- 15-451 - Algorithm Design and Analysis
- One course satisfying either the BSCS requirement in Logics/Languages or Software Systems.

Before they can start in the Fifth-Year MS program, students in the BCSA program must take the following three courses:

- 15-451 - Algorithm Design and Analysis
- Two courses from separate lines of the following areas of constrained electives:
 - Artificial Intelligence
 - Logic and Languages
 - Software System Design

Both of these bachelor's degree programs include SCS electives that students can use to satisfy this breadth requirement before they graduate with their degree. Refer to the undergraduate course catalog for a list of available SCS courses. BSAI students and BCSA students should include a short paragraph in their two-page statement documenting how they meet, or plan to meet, the BSCS breadth requirement listed above. The courses must be taken before the student starts the Fifth-Year Master's Program.

7.6: Department Policy on Double Counting Courses

No course from the undergraduate degree can be double counted. A course can only be used toward the master's degree if it does not count toward satisfying any part of your bachelor's degree.

7.7: Department Policy for Courses Outside the Department/College

With prior approval from the Program Director, it may also be possible to take an elective course outside of the School of Computer Science if the course is recommended by the student's Research Advisor and the content is very relevant to the student's master's thesis research.

7.8: Protocol for Evaluation of Transfer Credit

One, 12-unit, graduate course of 700 or 800-level taken at Carnegie Mellon prior to matriculation into the Master's Program may be eligible to be counted toward the program Requirements. This course cannot satisfy any requirement, including a unit count requirement, of any degree or certification earned prior to, or concurrent with, any portion

of the Master's Program. To request such credit, students are required to provide to the Program Manager the course that they want to count towards the master's degree. The Program Manager will confirm the eligibility of the course.

7.9: Teaching Requirements/Opportunities

The Fifth-Year Master's Program is designed to be an in-person, full-time program. Employment on or off campus while enrolled is prohibited.

7.10: Research Requirements

Students are required to complete 96 units of research to satisfy degree requirements typically as 24 units each in a fall and spring semester as well as 48 units in a summer semester.

Students receive a letter grade as their evaluation of their research progress. In order to remain in good standing, students must receive a grade of B- or above for their research.

7.11: Internship/Co-op Requirements and Opportunities

The Fifth-Year Master's Program is designed to be an in-person, full-time program. Internships on or off campus while enrolled are prohibited.

7.12: Thesis Requirement

Thesis Committee

Each student should create a thesis committee consisting of their Research Advisor and a second member. The second member should be a faculty member from the School of Computer Science or someone who has advising privileges in the Computer Science Department. The thesis defense must be held on the CMU Pittsburgh campus and the student as well as the two thesis committee members **must be physically present** for the thesis defense. For the thesis to be considered complete, the thesis committee must also approve the finalized thesis document.

Archival Technical Report Number and Thesis Document Template

The student is required to email Catherine Copetas (copetas@cs.cmu.edu) to obtain an archival technical report number as well as a thesis document template (LaTeX) for the thesis document. Once the thesis is finalized, the document will be archived in the SCS Report Archive.

Scheduling a Thesis Defense

- Thesis defenses should only be scheduled during academic periods - not during holidays, weekends, etc. and should be scheduled within normal business hours. Exceptions must be approved by the Program Director of the Fifth-Year Master's program.
- The student should coordinate with the committee members and finalize the date of the thesis defense at least two weeks in advance to allow time for review of the document and comments by the committee.
- Thesis presentations cannot be scheduled to overlap with other master's thesis defenses or doctoral proposals and defenses. Be sure to check with the Program Manager before finalizing a defense date to make sure there are no other presentations scheduled at the chosen time.
- Once you have settled on a date and time, the Program Manager or Graduate Program Assistant will help you to reserve a room. The room that is reserved for the defense must be available to the public and must accommodate a reasonably large number of people (~30). Please copy your advisor on all correspondence to the Program Manager or Graduate Program Assistant regarding defense scheduling.
- Thesis defenses are announced **at least one week** prior to the thesis presentation date. The student will need to send the following required information to the Program Manager for the thesis defense advertisement:
 - Date
 - Time
 - Place
 - Thesis Title
 - Thesis committee members
 - Thesis Abstract - Fewer than 350 words describing the thesis in ASCII text.
 - Link to the shared, draft thesis document formatted as a *.pdf file.

The advertisement will be distributed via electronic communication as well as physical postings.

Day of Oral Examination

Please arrive at the reserved room for your defense at least 20 minutes in advance to ensure the room is arranged appropriately, that you are able to connect to the audio/visual equipment successfully and you are able to present.

Submitting a Final Thesis Document

- Check for proper title page format.
- If you are financially supported by your advisor at Carnegie Mellon, check research credits with Ann Stetser and/or Todd Seth.
- Email your finalized document to Catherine Copetas, copying the Research Advisor and the Program Manager. This notifies the program that your document is finalized and approved by your advisor and allows Catherine to archive the final document.

7.13: Certification and Commencement

Certification

After a thesis defense, the Research Advisor notifies the Program Manager via email that the student has passed the oral defense. The student will submit their completed, final thesis document via email to Catherine Copetas (copetas@cs.cmu.edu), copying the Research Advisor and Program Manager. Once all of this is completed, a final research grade will be posted and the student's certification will be entered into the University system.

Students should refer to the CMU Policy on master's Student Statute of Limitations (www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/masters-students-statute-of-limitations.html) regarding guidelines and restrictions which place an upper limit on the maximum length of time allowable for master's degree completion and certification.

Commencement

Only students who have submitted the final version of their MS thesis document by the May deadline are allowed to participate in the MS diploma ceremony held at the end of the Spring semester. Students who hand in their thesis during the summer semester can participate in the next year's diploma ceremony.

After Completing the Program

Students should update their diploma mailing address in SIO and should also be sure to note in SIO if they plan to attend their diploma ceremony. If a student does not plan to continue their affiliation with CMU, they should transition their CMU email addresses to a CMU alumni email address.

Enrollment Verification

Enrollment Services is the only University office that can provide an official letter of enrollment, official transcript and enrollment verification. Enrollment verification can be requested online through The HUB at <https://www.cmu.edu/hub/registrar/student-records/verifications/>.

U.S. government regulations require F-1 and J-1 international students to be enrolled in an in-person degree program, with in-person expectation coursework. Even though this immigration requirement is specifically for international students, residency requirements for this program are consistent for both international and domestic students.

SECTION 8: Department Policies & Protocols

8.1: Department Policy for Withdrawing from a Course

Newly admitted students will receive information about course registration. The timetable for course registration, as well as for adding and dropping courses is set by the University as published in the official academic calendar, which can be found here:

<https://www.cmu.edu/hub/calendar/>

Especially after the end of the Add period, you should consult your Academic Advisor before dropping a class. Frequently you should discuss the situation with your Research Advisor and course instructor(s) as well. It is generally quite unwise to drop a class without appropriate consultation.

Students taking undergraduate and master's level courses must follow the procedures and deadlines for adding, dropping, or withdrawing from courses as identified on the academic calendar. Information can be found at <https://www.cmu.edu/hub/registrar/course-changes/index.html>. There is a separate calendar for doctoral level courses.

8.2: New Policies / “Grandfather” Policy

A student is generally bound to the Requirements in force at the time of matriculation but may elect to satisfy any curriculum Requirements more recent than those under which they matriculated, e.g. a student matriculating in the 2026-2027 academic year may elect to satisfy the Requirements in force during the 2026-2027 academic year.

Because the master's program is relatively short and in a relatively rapidly changing area, students returning from Leave or Suspension may not be able to return under the same catalogue year, e.g. Requirements, under which they originally matriculated, as the supporting courses may no longer be offered or offered in their original form. Under these circumstances, the Director may approve exceptions to the prior Requirements or require that the returning student satisfy the requirements of more current Requirements, at the Director's option.

Additionally, the Director may revise the Requirements from time to time, so long as these revisions do not unreasonably impede the graduation of those in good standing. The Director may approve exceptions to revised requirements to mitigate the impact of revisions upon those affected.

8.3: Other Policies and Protocols

Intellectual Property

The Program incorporates the University's policy on intellectual property, which can be found here: <https://www.cmu.edu/policies/administrative-and-governance/intellectual-property.html>

Privacy and FERPA

Please review the University's full privacy policy: <https://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/privacy-rights-students.html>

Academic Integrity

Please understand that CMU's standards for academic integrity are high and may differ significantly from the standards at other places you may have studied. Conduct which may be accepted or commonplace elsewhere may result in you failing a class here, and may also lead to stronger sanctions, such as temporary suspension, permanent dismissal from the Program, and/or expulsion from CMU.

As just one example, we understand that at some institutions it is acceptable to submit code written by somebody else if you can explain it in detail when asked to. At CMU the submission of any code written by anybody else usually counts as an academic integrity violation, often results in a failing course grade, and may result in additional sanctions.

All work you submit must be your own, you must not use the work of others without proper citation, and you must not use resources, including other persons, except as authorized by the course or project for which you are submitting the work. The University Policy on Academic Integrity includes the University expectations around academic integrity and provides definitions of cheating, plagiarism, and unauthorized assistance.

A review of the University's Academic Disciplinary Actions procedures is also recommended: <https://www.cmu.edu/student-affairs/theword/academic-discipline/index.html>

These procedures outline the process for investigating, reporting, and adjudicating violations of the University Policy on Academic Integrity. The procedures also outline the appeal process.

Graduation and Award of Degree

The University's academic regulations govern graduation and the award of academic degrees, including the -Year Master's degree program. The Director shall not unreasonably withhold the certification for graduation of any candidate who satisfies the Requirements of the Program. But, strictly speaking, neither this certification nor this recommendation

guarantee that the University shall award a degree. For example, the University may withhold degrees for individuals who have unsatisfied financial obligations.

Process for Leave of Absence

The program follows the University process:

<https://www.cmu.edu/hub/registrar/leaves-and-withdrawals/>

The Student Return Policy can be found at the following website:

<https://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/return-student.html>

Program Transfer within CSD, SCS or CMU

Each degree program within Carnegie Mellon operates according to its own admissions process. Admission into one program does not guarantee admission into any other program, nor does it grant any preference. Students within Carnegie Mellon seeking to transfer into the Fifth-Year Master's Program should contact the Manager for information about applying. Students within the Program who seek to transfer to another program at Carnegie Mellon should contact that program for information about their requirements and process.

Deferred Matriculation

The Fifth Year Master's Program is designed to be just as it's named: a program to follow your 4th year of studies to further your research experience and broaden your knowledge in more specific areas of computer science. Because of this structure, the program does not issue deferrals.

If you find yourself in a position where you are unable to begin the Fifth Year Master's Program within the 3 semesters following your acceptance, you are welcome to apply to the primary MSCS program. While the structure of that program is different in that it is a course-based program, it does provide the opportunity to engage in research.

SECTION 9: Grading & Evaluation

9.1: Grading Scale/System

Grades

Courses must be taken for a letter grade. In addition, a student's Research Advisor will assign a letter grade for research units each semester. This grade is assessed based on the research progress during that semester. In order for a course to count toward graduation requirements, a letter grade of B- or higher must be obtained.

Regardless of the home department or level of the course, a passing grade is B- or higher in order for the course to count toward graduation requirements. Students are required to achieve a passing grade in each of their courses as well as for their research grades; no credit will be given for grades of C+ or below.

University Policy on Grades: <https://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/grading.html>

9.2: Department Policy on Grades for Retaking a Course

If it is necessary to retake a class, CMU's standard policy is that both attempts appear on the transcript and both grades contribute to overall QPA. In exceptional circumstances (e.g., documented medical issues), a student can petition the Program Director to count only the subsequent grade.

9.3: Department Policy on Pass/Fail, Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

Pass/Fail grades do not count toward program requirements.

9.4: Department Policy for Incompletes

The Computer Science Department follows the [university's procedure regarding Incomplete grades](#).

9.5: GPA Requirements and QPA Requirements for Graduation

During each semester, students must achieve a QPA of at least 3.0 across all courses taken. Students must also maintain a cumulative QPA of at least 3.0 throughout the program.

9.6: Satisfactory Academic Standing

Any student who fails to achieve the minimum QPA, or otherwise fails to make appropriate progress toward graduation falls out of Good Standing with the Program. The first time a student falls out of Good Standing, the student is subject to Academic Probation, which serves as a warning to the student and may also trigger supportive actions on the part of the program, such as advising meetings and reduced maximum course load.

If, after one semester, the student has not returned to Good Standing, or should a student fall out of Good Standing more than once during the Program, the student is subject to Academic Suspension, which is a mandatory, but temporary, leave from the University. It serves as an opportunity for the student to reevaluate goals, reflect on the requirements for success, and return to the University better prepared to succeed.

Any student, who having ever previously been placed on Academic Suspension, fails to remain in Good Standing, may be Dismissed from the program (i.e., expelled). Dismissal indicates a complete and permanent separation of the student from the Program.

SECTION 10: Funding & Financial Support

10.1: Statement of Department Financial Support

The Fifth-Year Master's Program does not offer scholarships or financial assistance. However, some research advisors may be able to provide funding via tuition support. Students should discuss funding with their Research Advisor before they apply.

10.2: Stipend

The Fifth-Year Master's Program does not provide stipends.

10.3: Fees and Tuition

It is essential that your tuition and other fees be paid on time. The University has a variety of mechanisms to sanction those with delinquent accounts, including withholding degrees, transcripts and registration. Academic departments do not usually receive information about a student's financial situation, so we are unable to help you with financial difficulties and processes. Please contact the HUB for more information about financial policies, procedures, and practices: <http://www.cmu.edu/hub/>

The Program adheres to the University's procedures, policies, and process with respect to the student's financial obligations. These policies can be found here: <https://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/tuition-fees-adjustment.html>

Neither the department nor the program assess any student fees in addition to the University required student fees.

10.4: Travel/Conference and Research Funding

[Conference Funding](#) is a funding application process for students to attend a conference as a presenter.

[Professional Engagement Funding](#) is a funding application process for students to attend a conference as a participant without presenting.

[Scholarly Project Funding](#) is a funding application process for small research grant funds. The funding for each of these comes from the Graduate Student Assembly and the Office of the Provost, and the processes are managed by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs.

The Computer Science Department does not have its own fund for conferences or scholarly projects.

10.5: Department Policy on Outside Employment

The Fifth-Year Master's Program is designed to be an in-person, full-time program. Employment on or off campus while enrolled is prohibited.