

# Graduate Student Procedures Manual

Computer Science Department

Colorado State University

Welcome to Colorado State University Computer Science Department. The departmental policies and information in this manual are important to you as a graduate student. Additional departmental and university policies are given in the requirements for each graduate degree, the Graduate School Bulletin, and a variety of other documents. You will be expected to know, understand, and adhere to the departmental and university policies that relate to you.

This manual serves as an introduction to some of the basic procedures related to graduate students in the Computer Science Department. The early part of the manual provides information that you will need immediately upon your arrival in our Department. This is followed by an overview of Department resources that are available to you. The manual ends by describing a few general rules and procedures that are not particular to a particular degree program.

More information and helpful links:

- An electronic version of this manual is available at:  
<http://www.cs.colostate.edu/cstop/csacademics/csdegrees/gradprocedures.html>
- Other useful documentation can be found on the department website:  
<http://www.cs.colostate.edu/cstop/index.html>
- The Department Wiki provides an informal overview of the Department, University, and Fort Collins:  
[https://www.cs.colostate.edu/wiki/CSU\\_Computer\\_Science\\_Department\\_Wiki](https://www.cs.colostate.edu/wiki/CSU_Computer_Science_Department_Wiki)

Disclaimer: If you should discover that there is a conflict between departmental and university policies, university policies supersede those of the department. Also, please inform us of any such conflict.

# **Table of Contents**

## **I. Orientation**

1. Beginning Dates
2. Registering for Classes
3. Establishing Residency
4. Computer Policies and Resources
5. Offices, Desks, and Department Supplies
6. Checking Out

## **II. Academic Rules and Regulations**

1. Degree Requirements
2. Transferring Credits
3. Graduate Student Performance Evaluation
  - (a) Academic Probation
  - (b) Assistantship Performance
  - (c) Ph.D. Progress Review
4. Continuous Registration
5. Full-time Classification
6. Graduate School Website and Forms
7. Advisor Issues
8. Changing Degree Programs

# **I. Orientation**

## **1. Beginning Dates**

*August 15:* Arrive in Fort Collins prior to this date in order to meet legal requirements for becoming a Colorado resident the following year.

*August 16:* Around this date (it varies depending on the calendar), there are university meetings for new students and new teaching assistants, and department meetings for new teaching assistants (and students who want to become teaching assistants).

*Approx. August 20:* Classes begin. Just before this date, preregistration for classes ends. If you are not registered by this date, you will be charged a late registration fee. You can find the exact dates for the semester here:

[http://events.colostate.edu/day\\_default.asp?ID=7](http://events.colostate.edu/day_default.asp?ID=7)

## **2. Registering for Classes**

You may register for fall classes any time throughout the summer, but be sure to register for classes before the first day of class.

Registration is completed on the Internet. Information about how to register can be obtained through the registrar's office at <http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/Registrar/> or from the Computer Science Department main office. You will want to talk to your temporary advisor (whose name is on your admission form) about registering for the appropriate courses.

## **3. Establishing Residency**

If you are not a U.S. citizen, you may skip this section. Colorado law prohibits you from becoming a Colorado resident for tuition purposes. If you are a U.S. citizen, but not a Colorado resident, read this section very carefully.

Establishing residency will be among your major concerns when first arriving in Colorado, unless you were a Colorado resident at the time that you applied to CSU. By obtaining residency, you will drastically reduce your tuition costs by changing your classification from an out-of-state student to an in-state student. If you have a full assistantship (20 hours per week), all of your tuition will be paid for by the university. Graduate assistantships will only pay for out-of-state tuition your first year; after that, they will only pay in-state costs. Therefore, if you do not obtain residency after the first year, be prepared to spend a substantial amount of money on tuition.

Residency is obtained through a petitioning process with the university. The final deadline for submitting your petition is about three weeks before the semester in which you wish to obtain residency; however, Student Financial Services (SFS) recommends filing your petition three to four months early in order to have a decision by the time classes begin (double check dates and policies with the Student Financial Services office). Submitting a petition will require a

significant amount of time. Please allow ample time for the completion of the petition. Failure to submit your petition by the deadline may result in the rejection of your petition. Residency is not determined by the department; it is determined by the university.

SFS may suggest that you attend a residency workshop prior to submitting a petition. Information regarding these workshops can be found at the SFS Website (see link below).

In-state residency is granted after you have proven a Colorado domicile of one year, prior to the semester in which you are petitioning. A domicile is the legal term used to describe the place where a person has chosen to make a fixed and permanent home. Several factors must be met in order to establish a Colorado domicile. Simply living in Colorado for a year is not sufficient. Establishing a domicile requires physical presence and intent. Evidence of intent is established by the severance of ties with your former state of residence. The criteria necessary to obtain in-state tuition classification are governed by state law, not by CSU. If these conditions are not met, the CSU residency committee can deny in-state classification.

Rather than providing more details here, you should visit the Student Financial Services website: <http://sfs.colostate.edu>

#### **4. Computer Policies and Resources**

You must sign up for a CSU login, your eID, before you can register for classes. You may sign up for your eID online here: <http://eid.colostate.edu>. You will need your CSU ID number and your personal access code (or PAC) which will be sent to you soon after you are accepted into CSU.

Upon your arrival, contact the system staff to receive a login for the Department computers.

The Department has a few laptops available for short-term checkout (for example, for class presentations).

The use of Computer Science computing facilities is subject to broader CSU policies, which are posted at <http://www.colostate.edu/services/acns/policies.html>. In particular, any violation of the “Acceptable Use Policy for Computing and Networking Resources at Colorado State” may jeopardize your continued use of Department computing facilities.

#### **5. Offices, Desks, and Department Supplies**

Funded graduate students are assigned desks, each of which includes a networked computer. They are also assigned mailboxes that are not to be used for personal mail. Unfunded graduate students may be assigned desks on a space-available basis.

You will be assigned keys for access to assigned work areas. Please note the current policies for when these areas are to be secured (doors kept locked).

Department photocopiers are for use only by funded graduate students as part of their jobs. The Department provides supplies that may be used by funded graduate students when doing their jobs.

## **6. Checking Out**

When you leave the Department, either for the summer or when graduating, you must clean out your desk at the end of the semester (generally about May 15 or December 15).

If you are leaving the Department, you must leave your desk, shelves, and mailbox empty and clean. Return Department keys and laptops to the Department office. Check with the Department office staff concerning any termination paperwork. Consult with the systems staff concerning computer files, logins, and email accounts. If you wrote a dissertation, check with the Department secretary about leaving a copy (hard copy and/or electronic).

## **II. Academic Rules and Regulations**

Below is a subset of the academic rules and procedures that apply to graduate students in the Computer Science Department. This is an informal discussion. The official rules (which supersede any statements made by the Department) can be found in the Graduate School Bulletin:

<http://graduateschool.colostate.edu/index.asp?url=catalog>

### **1. Degree Requirements**

*Masters Degrees:*

- The Master of Science in Computer Science degree requires a thesis. The complete requirements are here: <http://www.cs.colostate.edu/advising/ms-req.html>
- The Master of Computer Science degree is a coursework-only degree. The complete requirements are here: <http://www.cs.colostate.edu/advising/mcs-req.html>

*Ph.D. Degree:*

The complete requirements for the Ph.D. degree can be found here:  
<http://www.cs.colostate.edu/advising/phd-req.html>

### **2. Transferring Credits**

Coursework taken at another university may be counted toward your degree as specified in the Graduate School Bulletin:

<http://graduateschool.colostate.edu/index.asp?url=catalog> (page 21 of the Graduate Study section).

Your advisor must agree to the inclusion of any transfer credits in your program of study. The basic guidelines from the Graduate School are:

- Coursework must be from an accredited university, at a level equivalent to the 500-level at CSU, with a grade of B or better. (Note: you may include credits at the 400-level taken at CSU, but transfer credit must be at the 500-level).
- Transfer credits are officially included only when the Graduate School approves your GS-6 (Program of Study) form, on which you list the transfer courses.

### **3. Graduate Student Performance Evaluation**

*(a) Academic Probation:* If your cumulative GPA drops below 3.0, you will be placed on academic probation. You have one semester to improve your GPA to 3.0 or above. While you are on academic probation, you cannot work for the Department as a research or teaching assistant. If you have been working as a graduate assistant, your employment will be terminated.

*(b) Graduate Assistant Performance:* Research Assistants are evaluated by the faculty member under whom they are working. Teaching assistants are frequently evaluated by the students in their classes, and/or by their supervising instructor.

*(c) Ph.D. Student Progress Review:* Every fall, all Ph.D. students who have earned the Masters or have been in the graduate program for more than 2 years are evaluated by the Department faculty. The students complete a form, listing his/her accomplishments for the past year and listing his/her goals for the coming year. The form is submitted to the advisor who forwards the form to the Graduate Committee. The students are evaluated by the entire faculty and the results are communicated to the student.

### **4. Continuous Registration**

The Graduate School requires that you be registered every semester (Fall and Spring, but not summer) while you are a graduate student. If you are not registered for at least one credit, you must register for "Continuous Registration" (CR). If you are working as a graduate assistant (GTA, GRA, GSA) for the Department, you must be registered for at least one credit (not CR). If you are graduating in the summer, you must be registered during that summer semester, either for credit or CR.

### **5. Full-time Classification**

There are many definitions for what it means to be a full-time student. Several years ago, we discovered at least 5 different definitions. Therefore, we suggest that if some entity wants to

know if you are a full-time student (or if the Department must certify that you are a full-time student) you should ask that entity for its definition of full-time.

## **6. Graduate School Website and Forms**

The Graduate School is the administrative authority above the Department level that is mostly responsible for you. Its website has a lot of information that may come in useful at different times while you are a graduate student: <http://graduateschool.colostate.edu>

In particular, the Graduate School has a variety of forms that you will be completing at various times. These can be found on the Graduate School's website. Note that several of these forms have deadlines, especially those forms related to your graduation.

One of the most important forms is the GS-6 Program of Study. Near the end of your second semester, you will complete this form in consultation with your advisor. On it you will list all the courses that you expect to apply toward your degree, plus the names of your advisor and committee members.

## **7. Advisor Issues**

*Note:* This section does not apply to MCS students because the MCS degree is a coursework degree, not a research degree. MCS students are advised by the Director of Graduate Studies.

All incoming students are assigned a temporary *academic* advisor. This faculty member will help you with your initial course selection. Selection of a permanent *research* advisor is a significant decision, and students are encouraged to gather as much information as possible to inform their choice. Students can become acquainted with a potential advisor by taking a class from the faculty member and/or by attending research group meetings conducted by the faculty member. The student and the potential advisor should have a serious discussion concerning goals and expectations from the student/advisor relationship. Each MS and Ph.D. student must have an advisory committee, selected by the student and the advisor, with the consent of each committee member. The Graduate School Bulletin describes how each committee is constituted. It is expected that the student will select an advisor and form this committee by the end of their first year in the graduate program.

Many graduate students in the Computer Science Department choose an advisor in their first year and remain with that advisor for their entire graduate career. After completing their MS degree, some students will choose a different advisor for their Ph.D.

The faculty advisor/graduate student relationship may be terminated because of dissatisfaction by either the student or the faculty advisor. In either case, it is important that both parties respect the needs of the other.

*Termination by Advisor:* If a faculty advisor is dissatisfied with the efforts of a student, it is her/his prerogative to terminate the relationship. To terminate the advisor-student relationship, the research advisor must notify the student and the department chair in writing,

giving reasons for the dissatisfaction in performance. The faculty advisor may elect to allow a probationary period, to allow the student to improve, or may decide upon immediate termination of the relationship.

*Termination by Student:* To terminate the advisor-student relationship, the student must notify the faculty advisor and the department chair in writing.

*Department Obligation:* The Department recognizes that the student-advisor relationship is a crucial element in the educational experience of graduate students. For this reason, a computer science graduate student without a research advisor is not considered to be in good academic standing in the Department. The Director of Graduate Studies will assume the role of academic advisor (in keeping with graduate school policy), but is not obligated to take over the role of research advisor. The Department is under no obligation to provide financial support, desk space, or any other educational materials for a student who is not in good standing.

## **8. Changing Degree Programs**

Students who decide to change between any two degree programs in the Department must submit the GS-7 (Request for Change of Department and/or Degree and Program) and GS-6 (Program of Study) forms to the Graduate School.

If a Ph.D. student wants to earn a Masters degree (on the way to a Ph.D.), the student must change from the Ph.D. program into the Masters program (file a GS-7 and GS-6), and later change back into the Ph.D. program (file another GS-7 and GS-6).