



Policy Handbook for Online Master of Science in Computer Science

Offered by Clemson University's School of Computing
In Partnership with Clemson Online

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Support Services

If you have any questions about the program or information outlined in this document, please reach out to one of the following resources, depending on your status.

- **If you are seeking enrollment in the program or applying for enrollment but have not yet enrolled**, please refer to [our website](#). Here you can fill out the Request Info form to get in contact with an Enrollment Counselor.
- **If you are already enrolled in the Performance-Based Admission (PBA) courses or the MS program**, please send all inquiries to mcs@clmson.edu.

Program Contacts

MS Program Coordinator	Carlos Cabrera
Student Services Coordinator	Chip Lang

Admissions

The online program offers a Performance-Based Admission (PBA) option. This means to gain admission, you'll complete two three-credit pathway courses on the Canvas platform. Once you've earned a grade of B or better in both those courses (and provided proof of your bachelor's degree) you'll be accepted into the degree program.

The PBA process does not require any formal background in computer science, nor does it require a formal application process. Of course, success in this degree program may require students to have adequate prior computing experience (e.g., job-related experience), even if this does not come from formal academic training in computer science.

To apply through the PBA process, you will complete the enrollment form, found [here](#). You will need to submit unofficial transcripts for PBA enrollment and official transcripts within your first semester of study.

Enrollment deadlines for Performance-Based Admission can be found [here](#).

***If you are not interested in the PBA process and want to start the online program as a degree-seeking MS student, a formal application process is required. This includes official English Proficiency scores (for international applicants), two letters of recommendation, unofficial transcripts, a personal statement, and a resume or CV.*

More information comparing the Performance-Based Admission process to the traditional application process can be found [here](#). The Fall deadline for the traditional application process is August 1st, and the Spring deadline is December 1st.

PBA Course Re-take Policy

If you participate in the Performance-Based Admissions process and do not pass the courses with a B or better on your first try, **you are allowed one re-take of the PBA courses** to receive admission into the Computer Science MS Online.

Please keep in mind that an overall 3.0 GPA is required to graduate from the MS. If you fail the PBA courses in your first attempt, this will impact your GPA, and you may be placed on Academic Probation.

Academic Probation

Students whose GPA falls below 3.0 are placed on academic probation and are required to complete a Graduate Student Plan of Success (GSPS) form to indicate their strategy to raise their GPA above the 3.0 threshold. The deadline to submit the GSPS form is by the last day to register or add a class for the next semester. Failure to submit a GSPS form by the deadline will result in a hold being placed on your account which will prevent you from dropping and/or registering for classes until the GSPS form is submitted. More information on the Academic Probation policy can be found in the [Graduate School Policy Handbook](#).

Graduate Academic Redemption Policy

Students who fail to pass the PBA courses on their first try might consider utilizing the Graduate Academic Redemption Policy (GARP). GARP allows students to re-take a course for a higher grade and replace the lower grade in their GPA calculation. The lower grade does remain on the transcript but does not count in the GPA calculation. The GARP policy can only be applied once during a student's academic program. More information on the GARP policy can be found in the [Graduate School Policy Handbook](#).

Deferring Admission

If you have applied to enroll in the PBA courses but have not yet enrolled, you may defer your admission up to one year. After one year, you will need to submit a new enrollment form for the PBA courses.

If you have taken the PBA courses but would like to defer your start date of the Computer Science MS program, you will need to complete the re-entry form prior to the start of the semester in which you want to continue progress on your program (see Continuous Enrollment).

Degree Requirements

Students enrolled in the Computer Science MS Online are required to take the ten courses (30 credit hours) listed below to complete the degree program. Any courses taken at Clemson that

are not listed here or any courses taken that are not on the online section, must be pre-approved by the Program Coordinator to be used toward the MS degree.

Pathway Courses (2 courses, 3 credits each)

- CPSC 8400 Design and Analysis of Algorithms
- CPSC 8740 AI-Receptive Software Development

Core Courses (8 courses, 3 credits each)

- CPSC 6300 Applied Data Science
- CPSC 6620 Database Management Systems
- HCC 6600 Human-Centered AI
- CPSC 8650 Data Mining
- CPSC 8430 Deep Learning
- CPSC 6140 Human-Computer Interaction
- HCC 8600 Applications of Human-AI Interaction, Collaboration, and Teaming
- CPSC 8440 Generative AI: Technical and Human Perspectives

***Note that these courses are a subset of the courses offered at the main campus program, and they are designed to meet the program requirements for Clemson's Computer Science MS. For more information on specific program requirements, you can refer to [this page](#).*

Graduation

To apply for graduation, students must complete the GS2 Committee Selection, GS2 Plan of Study, and MS Assessment in the semester prior to their intended graduation term.

More information on Graduation Deadlines can be found [here](#).

A cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher is required to graduate from the Computer Science MS at Clemson. This includes all courses taken at Clemson, even if they are not listed on your GS2.

GS2 Committee Selection & GS2 Plan of Study

The Graduate School requires that a GS2 be submitted to confirm graduate students are meeting graduation requirements for their program.

The GS2 Committee Selection for the Computer Science MS Online will only require listing the MS Program Coordinator as the committee chair. No other committee members are required.

The GS2 Plan of Study requires a list of the ten courses (30 credit hours) taken to complete the degree. Please list the ten courses outlined above, in Degree Requirements, unless you have prior approval from the MS Program Coordinator to include alternative courses.

More information on the GS2 and help with technical issues can be found [here](#).

A Plan of Study GPA of 3.0 or higher is required to graduate from the Computer Science MS at Clemson. This GPA includes the ten courses listed on your GS2, meaning that courses taken outside of this list will not count into the ***Plan of Study GPA calculation***.

MS Assessment

The MS Assessment is a self-assessment of the program's three student learning outcomes:

1. Students can frame a real-world problem such that it can be addressed computationally.
2. Students can evaluate multiple computational approaches to a problem and choose the most effective one. The different approaches may involve different algorithms and/or different software tools.
3. Students can apply reasoning and technical skills to solve a computational problem with minimal guidance.

The MS Assessment must be completed and reviewed to have your GS2 approved. More information on the MS Assessment can be found [here](#).

Transfer Credits

Online students may transfer up to 9 credit hours of coursework (3 courses) from an external program toward the Computer Science MS. Transfer coursework must be reviewed and approved by the MS Program Coordinator as an appropriate substitute for Online MSCS degree requirements.

For review of transfer credits, unofficial transcripts and a copy of the syllabus are typically required. Students enrolling in the PBA courses may submit these forms to the Enrollment Counselors.

If courses are approved for transfer, then official transcripts from the transfer institution must be sent to Clemson. Information on sending official transcripts can be found in the [Graduate School Policy Handbook](#). Transfer courses will be counted as courses outside the School of Computing and will be listed as CPSC 6999 or CPSC 8999 on the student's GS2 Plan of Study.

Bachelor-to-Graduate

Undergraduate students in Clemson's School of Computing interested in the Online MS program can still participate in the Bachelor-to-Graduate program, provided they meet the requirements for the BTG program.

Given the limited course offerings, students should ensure that course selection for the BTG program will meet all Computer Science MS program requirements. Students should also keep in mind the graduate school policy on 4000-level/6000-level courses when selecting their undergraduate coursework and bachelor-to-graduate coursework:

A student may not enroll in 6000-level courses for which the corresponding undergraduate 4000-level credit has been awarded, nor can graduate credit be awarded retroactively for 4000-level undergraduate courses already completed.

Students should also select the Online section while filling out the BTG form.

Time to Degree

The program can generally be completed in approximately 20 months if courses are taken according to the recommended sequence. All coursework applied toward the degree must be completed within the time-to-degree limit established by the Graduate School.

Students may take breaks in enrollment as necessary. However, **all ten courses (30 credit hours) must be completed within a 6-year time frame.**

Continuous Enrollment

There is no requirement for continuous enrollment. If a student wishes to stop out of their graduate program for any reason, no paperwork is required by the Graduate School. However, students are encouraged to notify their graduate program.

If you intend to pause enrollment for a full Fall or Spring semester, your account may go inactive. In this case, the Request for Re-Entrance form must be submitted prior to registering for classes. This form can be accessed [here](#) on the Graduate tab.

If you are not enrolled for more than two academic years, then additional documentation may be required to re-enroll in the MS program. Please keep in mind the Time to Degree requirements when taking a long leave of absence from the program.

Registration

Online MSCS sections can be identified by the campus code **AAR** and section number **500**.

Transferring between Clemson Programs

If a student wishes to transfer from the on-campus degree program to the online program, they may do so with the approval of the MS Program Coordinator. Careful consideration should be

taken when making the decision to switch programs to assure the student still meets all Computer Science MS degree requirements.

International students who want to switch from the on-campus program to the online program will have to forfeit their student visa status to enroll in the online program. Online programs do not support student visas. The student should reach out to the [International Services Office](#) for additional information.

If a student is looking to switch from the online program to the on-campus program, they may do so with the approval of the MS Program Coordinator. They must submit a full application, have appropriate background knowledge in Computer Science, and be admitted by the MS Program Coordinator and Graduate School. Students may make this switch to pursue the on-campus thesis track option for the Computer Science MS.

Academic Integrity

All students should familiarize themselves with Clemson's Academic Integrity policy. A full description of the Academic Integrity policy as well as the procedure for Academic Integrity Violations can be found in the [Graduate School Policy Handbook](#).

Dismissals

A student may be dismissed from the Graduate School for failure to maintain adequate academic status or progress, failure to meet required program expectations, student conduct issues, or academic integrity violations.

Students who have a GPA between 2.0-2.99 are on Academic Probation and should complete the Graduate Student Plan for Success (GSPS) form each semester. However, students who fail to maintain adequate academic status or maintain progress are considered for dismissal on a case-by-case basis. Dismissals for students whose GPA is in this range are determined through an agreement from the Computer Science MS program and Graduate School with the Graduate School sending the official dismissal notification to the student.

If a student's GPA falls below a 2.0, the dismissal process will be automatically initiated by the Graduate School, unless the student is in their first semester.

More information on the University's dismissal policy can be found in the [Graduate School Policy Handbook](#).

Academic Renewal

Any student who withdrew from the University or was dismissed from the Graduate School for failure to maintain an adequate academic status or satisfactory progress, and who has not

enrolled for a period of one or more academic years, may apply for readmission under special conditions known as academic renewal.

Under these conditions, all previous graduate credits and course grades will be ignored for purposes of evaluating a new GPA and academic status or satisfactory progress. Academic renewal may occur only once.

More information on the University's Academic Renewal policy and the procedure to apply for Academic Renewal can be found in the [Graduate School Policy Handbook](#).

Other References

For additional information on Clemson policies, School of Computing policies, and the Online program, you can visit the following resources.

[Graduate School Policy Handbook](#)

[School of Computing Handbook](#)

[Graduation Deadlines](#)