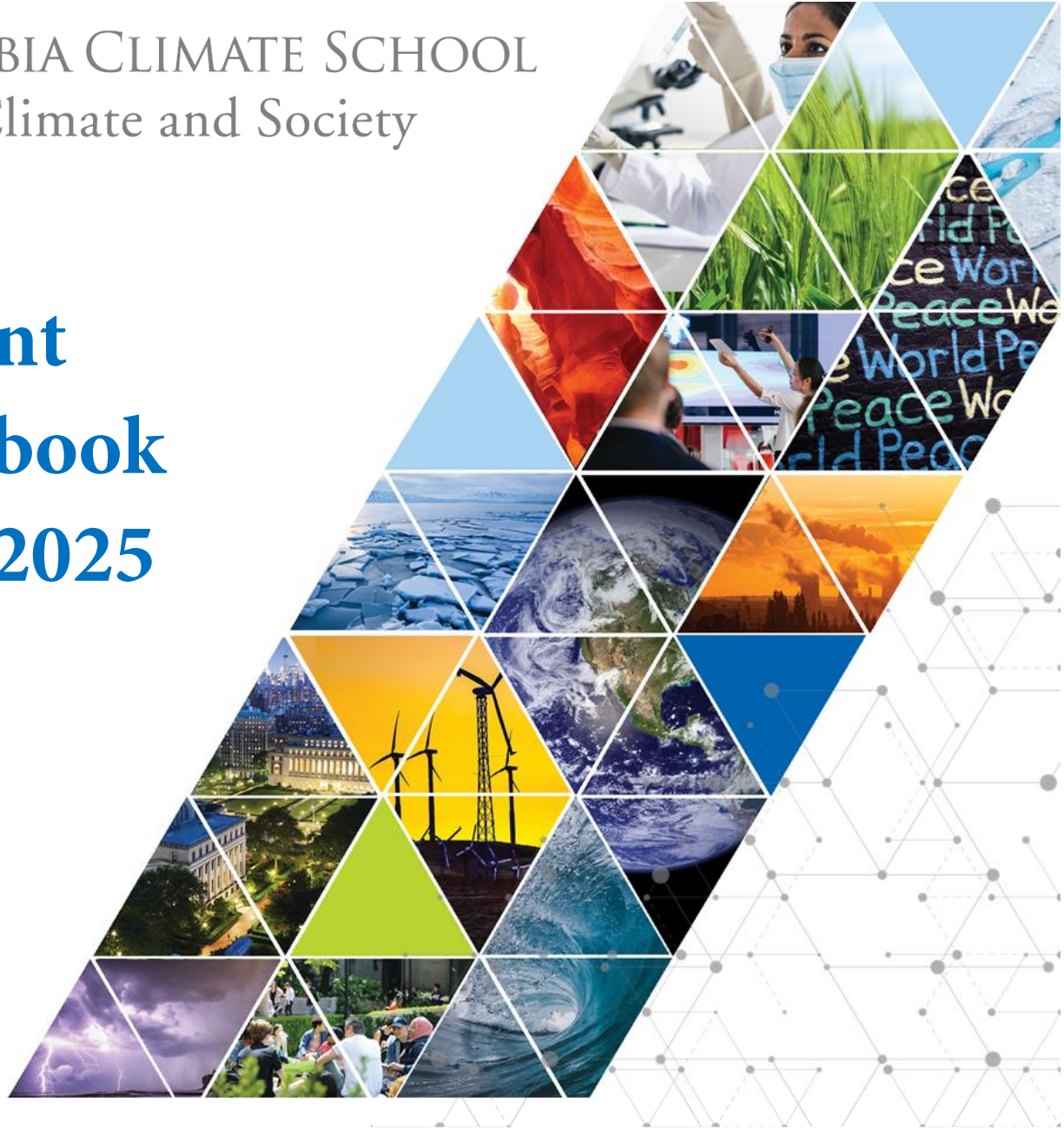


 COLUMBIA CLIMATE SCHOOL  
MA in Climate and Society

# Student Handbook 2024-2025



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## WELCOME

The MA in Climate and Society will prepare students to translate complex scientific information and understand the risks a shifting climate poses and how to take advantage of the predictable aspects of natural climate variability. This handbook brings awareness to key policies, practices, resources, and services at the school and the university.

This version of the handbook was published August 2024. The policies here are applicable to Fall 2024 incoming students.

## PROGRAM CONTACTS

The C+S program administrators are here to enhance the learning environment and support initiatives to help students achieve their academic and professional goals.

### **Alfred Ayoub, MBA**

Senior Director of Admissions and Marketing

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Oversees: Admissions; Financial Aid; Veterans Education Benefits

### **Hanna Chipman, MA**

Program Manager

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Oversees: Registration; Student Communications; C+S Events; Student Government

### **Damaris Dias**

Assistant Director of Academic Enrollment

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Oversees: Admissions Applications; Enrollment; Recruitment

### **Justine Herrera, MA**

Senior Director of Academic Programs

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Oversees: Academic Policies; Part-time Program; Partner Programs

### **Mindi Levinson, MA**

Director of Career Management

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Oversees: Career Coaching and Development; Internship and Full-time Job Opportunities; Employer Outreach/Relations and Events

### **Ava Rupert**

Career Development Officer

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Oversees: Career Coaching and Development; Internship and Full-time Job Opportunities; Employer Outreach/Relations and Events

### **Caitlin Sarro, MPP**

Program Manager

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Oversees: Careers; Alumni Relations; Cross-program Events

### **Cari Shimkus, MA**

Director of Enrollment and Data Strategy

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Oversees: Course Planning; Registration; Student Data

### **Natalie Unwin-Kuroneri, MPA**

Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs

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Oversees: Student Affairs; Alumni Relations; Disability Coordinator

### **Yana Zeltser, MA**

Program Manager

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Oversees: Professional Development; Employer Outreach/Relations and Events; Research, Fieldwork & Internship Opportunities

## COMMUNITY STANDARDS

### Academic Integrity

As members of the Columbia University community, all students are expected to uphold the highest standards of respect, integrity, and civility. These core values are key components of the Columbia University experience and reflect the community's expectations of its students. Students are expected to behave honestly, civilly, and respectfully in all aspects of their lives. Students who violate standards of behavior related to academic or behavioral conduct interfere with their ability, and the ability of others, to take advantage of the full complement of university life and will thus be subject to Dean's Discipline.

Academic misconduct violates the principle of intellectual integrity that is the foundation of our institution. To violate that principle is one of the most serious offenses a student can commit. Faculty and instructors may list specific expectations on a course syllabus.

Examples of Academic Integrity Violations:

- Facilitation of academic dishonesty
- Unauthorized assistance
- Unauthorized collaboration
- Bribery
- Cheating
- Dishonesty
- Failing to safeguard work
- Plagiarism of self
- Unauthorized giving/taking of academic materials
- Sabotage
- Violation(s) of testing conditions

To learn more, visit the [Center for Student Success and Intervention](#) page.

### Essential Policies

As members of the Columbia University community, all students are expected to uphold the highest standards of respect, integrity, and civility. These core values are key components of the Columbia University experience and reflect the community's expectations of its students. Students are expected to conduct themselves in an honest, civil, and respectful manner in all aspects of their lives. Students who violate standards of behavior related to academic or behavioral conduct interfere with their ability, and the ability of others, to take advantage of the full complement of University life, and will thus be subject to Dean's Discipline. Detailed descriptions of the policies that apply to all students can be found on the Center for Student Success and Intervention's [policies website](#).

### Reporting Concerns

As members of the community, students have a shared responsibility to ensure that Columbia University is a safe community and workplace where everyone can learn, live, work and express

themselves. All members of the Columbia community are responsible for upholding these standards and reporting behavior that violates them. [Reports of concern](#) can be submitted to University Life.

### Student Email Communication

Columbia University has established email as an official means of communication with students and expects every student to read email frequently and consistently. A student's failure to read University communications in a timely manner does not exempt them from knowing and complying with such communications' content.

## ENROLLMENT AND TUITION

Comprehensive information on all applicable tuition and fees are posted in the Student Financial Services [website](#). Students whose enrollment status is full-time will incur University fees associated with that status. Students below full-time status interested in selecting student services may be able to opt in. Full-time students are automatically enrolled in the [student health insurance plan](#), unless they have comparable coverage and [waive out](#). No student can waive the Health and Related Services fee.

### Residence Units (RU)

Students enrolled at The Climate School are charged tuition and fees via a residence unit (RU). Full-time students are required to register for 1 residence unit in the fall and spring semesters and an extended residence unit for the summer semester. Part-time students are required to register for ½ residence units in the fall and spring semesters and an extended residence unit for the final summer semester. Students who enroll for credits more than these maximums outlined will be billed for those credits at the per-credit rate.

### Residence Unit Timeline

Enrollment Status	Fall 1	Spring 1	Summer 1	Fall 2	Spring 2	Summer 2
<b>Full-time</b>	<b>1 RU</b> (20 credits max)	<b>1 RU</b> (20 credits max)	<b>Extended RU</b> (20 credits max)	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Part-time</b>	<b>½ RU</b> (3 courses max)	<b>½ RU</b> (3 courses max)	<b>N/A*</b>	<b>½ RU</b> (3 courses max)	<b>½ RU</b> (3 courses max)	<b>Extended RU</b> (3 courses max)

*\*part-time students who want to enroll in summer course(s) must reach out to the Academic Affairs Office for permission. In addition, students receiving financial aid must reach out to Financial Aid about enrolling in summer course(s).*

## DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The following sections detail some key features and requirements for the MA in Climate + Society degree program. Students should review this section in its entirety and refer to the appropriate resources for further specifics.

## Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA)

The Climate School requires all students to have a cumulative and core GPA of 3.0 or better to graduate. The Climate School will not confer degrees to students whose GPA falls below a 3.0.

## Full-time program

Full-time students complete the program in 3 semesters and must accumulate at least 34 credits over the 3 semesters. Provided below is the timeline for full-time students.

Fall	Spring	Summer
Dynamics of Climate Variability and Change	Quantitative Methods for Climate Applications	Internship** or Capstone
Climate Change Adaptation (including a discussion section)	Applications in Climate and Society	Elective #5
Elective #1	Climate Change Mitigation*	
Elective #2	Elective #4	
Elective #3		
1 Residence Unit	1 Residence Unit	Extended residence unit
Fall Minimum: 15 credits	Spring Minimum: 13 credits	Summer Minimum: 6 credits

\*Climate Change Mitigation normally offered in the fall semester but for AY 24-25, will be offered in Spring 2025

\*\*NOTE TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: Participation in the summer internship course requires the completion of the CPT paperwork. Please refer to the [JSSO](#) for questions regarding CPT.

## Part-time program

Students enrolled in the part-time program include one or more of the following profiles: people with demonstrated significant work experience in a climate or climate adjacent space; working professionals who can easily transition to climate or a related field where they can apply the program to that profession.

Part-time students complete the program in 5 semesters and must accumulate at least 34 credits over the 5 semesters. Provided below is the suggested timeline for part-time students.

Fall 1	Spring 1	Fall 2	Spring 2	Summer
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Climate Change Adaptation (including discussion section)	Quantitative Methods for Climate Applications	Climate Change Mitigation	Elective #2	Internship or Capstone
Dynamics of Climate Variability and Change	Applications in Climate and Society	Elective #1	Elective #3	Electives #4 & #5
½ Residence units	½ Residence units	½ Residence units	½ Residence units	Extended residence unit
Fall 1 Minimum: 6 credits	Spring 1 Minimum: 7 credits	Fall 2 minimum: 6 credits	Spring 2 minimum: 6 credits	Summer Minimum: 9 credits

### Core Courses

Every student in the Climate and Society program follows a sequence of study that includes [five core courses and a culminating experience](#) in the form of a summer capstone workshop. These core courses are designed to give students a common set of skills and a shared professional working knowledge of climate dynamics on regional and global scales, statistical evaluation, risk management, communication, justice and applied research.

### Electives Courses

To complete the program, students must take at least 15 elective credits in addition to the core course requirements. The Climate School has a growing list of [elective courses](#) that students can choose from. It is not guaranteed that elective courses are offered every semester or academic year. Students may also choose to enroll in any electives across the University, provided they allow for [cross-registration](#), if they are taken for a letter grade and at the graduate level (course code of 4000+).

### Specializations

[Specializations](#) provide students with the opportunity to focus their elective courses on a particular area of study and gain tools and knowledge relevant to specific career paths. The two current specializations are: Disaster Risk Management and Climate + Built Environment. (NOTE: Students are not required to declare a specialization). Students who choose to declare a specialization must do so in early September.

### Advising

#### Faculty advising

Students are assigned a faculty advisor during their first semester. The faculty advisor is a mentor and guide through the degree program. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with degree requirements and track their progress through those requirements.

## Program advising

For any questions about course registration, degree requirements, and/or paperwork approvals, contact [C+S administrators](#).

## Course Evaluations

Course evaluations are an important part of being a student at the Climate School. The Climate School values your honest feedback about instructors and course experience. Students are required to submit a course evaluation for each of their Climate School courses through CourseWorks. Course grades will be suppressed on SSOL until a student has completed the course evaluation.

## Graduating from the Program

The Climate School primarily confers degrees in October; however, exceptions are made for students with deviated academic plans. Students who apply for graduation will have their academic record reviewed by the Academic Affairs Office to ensure compliance with all degree requirements and financial obligations.

Class Day refers to the individual school within the University. Each of Columbia's twenty-one schools, colleges and affiliate institutions hold their own ceremonies to honor the graduating class. Students can participate in [Climate School Class Day](#) if their degree is expected to be conferred the following October of the next academic year.

Commencement is held in May on a single day for all graduating students across the University.

## GRADING POLICIES

**The below policies apply only to Climate School courses.** Students who cross-register for classes at other Columbia University schools should refer to the policies of each respective school. The Climate School does not dictate a standard grading scale, and faculty ultimately have discretion in setting their grade ranges.

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

### Letter Grades

Grade		Weighted GPA Value
A+	Reserved for highly exceptional achievement.	4.33
A	Excellent. Outstanding achievement.	4.00
A-	Excellent work, close to outstanding.	3.67
B+	Very good. Solid achievement expected of most graduate students.	3.33

B	Good. Acceptable achievement.	3.00
B-	Acceptable achievement, but below what is generally expected of graduate students.	2.67
C+	Low achievement, above minimally acceptable level.	2.33
C	Low achievement, but only minimally acceptable.	2.00
C-	Very low performance.	1.67
F	Failure. Course usually may not be repeated unless it is a required course.	0.00

### Pass/Fail (P/F) Grading Option

The Pass/Fail grading option can be used for one 3-credit elective or two 1.5 credit electives to satisfy the 15-elective credit minimum for the program. Once a student has attained 34 approved credits, any additional courses can be taken P/F. The deadline to opt to take a course P/F can be found in the [academic calendar](#). Requests for taking a course pass/fail must be received before the deadline; late requests will not be accepted. Please note some courses, at the instructor's discretion and according to course content, are graded only on a pass/fail basis. Courses with a predetermined grading of pass/fail do not count against these limits.

**P grades do not factor into students' GPA. If you receive an F grade for a course that is P/F, it will be calculated into your GPA.** Students can elect to take a course P/F in SSOL. If the P/F election is not available through SSOL, then the student will need to submit a registration adjustment form to the [Academic Affairs Office](#).

### R Credit (R)

The Columbia Climate School does not allow students to audit courses. Auditing a course means that a student will sit in a class without registering or doing any coursework. The course DOES NOT appear on a student's SSOL account.

The alternative to auditing is taking a course for **R credit**. R credit courses will be factored into the total credit count for the semester, but it will not be counted towards the 34 approved credits required for the degree or a student's GPA.

Students wanting to take a course for R credit must 1) consult with C+S Admin on the implications of taking a course for R credit 2) Obtain email approval to take the class for R credit from the course instructor 3) Instructors will select "R" as the final grade (instead of A, B, C) at the end of the semester.

The deadline to opt to take a course for R can be found on the [academic calendar](#).

If a student takes a course for R credit, they may not take the same course again for a letter grade. If a student receives an Incomplete for the R credit course, the instructor may change the grade to

Incomplete or Dropped. If the course is dropped after the drop deadline, a Withdrawal (W) will appear on a student's transcript.

#### R Credit vs. Pass/Fail

Students who take a course for P/F are still assessed and expected to complete all graded assignments. Students who take a course for R credit are not required to take the final assessment but must meet other course requirements unless exceptions are made by the instructor in writing.

#### Other Transcript Notations

##### Credit Pending (CP)

The mark of CP implies satisfactory progress. It is differentiated from IN in that CP should be used in cases where minimal coursework is outstanding (e.g., 1-2 missing assignments, extension to complete or submit a final examination). Upon completion, a final qualitative grade is assigned and credit allowed.

**The deadline for all coursework to be submitted and a final grade assessed is the day before the start of classes in the next given term.**

##### Incomplete (IN)

The mark of IN is given to a student who has satisfactorily met all the requirements of a course except for the completion of certain assigned papers or reports or the final examination, which the student has been compelled to postpone for reasons that are 1) beyond the student's control and 2) satisfactory to the instructor. Students must arrange for the mark of IN directly with the course instructor and submit a [formal request](#) to the school.

**The deadline for all coursework to be submitted and a final grade assessed should be 6 weeks or less from the date final grades for a given term are due. INs unresolved by the deadline will convert to the final letter-grade earned with missing materials accounted for, which may result in an F.**

##### Withdrawal (W)

Students may drop a class without notation on their transcripts before the deadline dates specified in the [academic calendar](#). After the deadline, the notation of W is assigned to students who have discontinued attendance prior to the due date of substantive work. The course instructor, in consultation with Academic Affairs Office, will determine what constitutes substantive work for a particular course. A W is not calculated into a student's GPA.

## SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS

The following policy on satisfactory academic progress (SAP) is applicable to all students at the Columbia Climate School. To comply with applicable regulations and for the sake of brevity, the School provides this single SAP policy which includes Federal regulations specific to students receiving FSA.

## Compilation of Federal Regulations (CFR)

### 34 CFR 668.16(e) – Administrative Capability

Columbia University has the administrative capability to adequately administer the Satisfactory Academic Policy (SAP) program.

### 34 CFR 668.32(f) – Student Eligibility

**General Federal Methodology:** All students applying for financial assistance must submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine their federal eligibility. Notification of the school's academic requirements is made in person and via electronic and paper formats. These requirements are as strict as the school's academic progress policy for students not receiving assistance under the Title IV and Higher Education Act programs.

### 34 CFR 668.34 – Student Assistance General Provisions

This policy sets reasonable satisfactory academic progress policy standards for determining whether an otherwise eligible student is making satisfactory academic progress in one's educational program and may receive assistance under the Title IV and Higher Education Act programs.

Academic progress requirements at the Climate School are identical for all students, irrespective of their financial aid application or eligibility status or whether they receive Title IV aid.

The Academic Affairs Office ensures the consistent application of SAP standards to all Federal Student Aid (FSA) programs and FSA recipients within institutionally defined categories of students.

### At least as strict...

Academic progress requirements at the Climate School are identical for all students, irrespective of their financial aid application or eligibility status or whether they receive Title IV aid.

## Consistent Application

The Academic Affairs Office ensures the consistent application of SAP standards to all Federal Student Aid (FSA) programs and FSA recipients within institutionally defined categories of students.

## Evaluating Satisfactory Academic Progress and Academic Standing

Students are responsible for tracking and maintaining their own academic progress and ensuring they have met all University and School requirements. **The Academic Affairs Office conducts SAP evaluations at the end of each term and sets expectations to help students return to satisfactory academic progress and good academic standing.** Students not achieving SAP should expect notifications from Academic Affairs after final grades are submitted. When evaluating academic progress, the School reviews:

- [Core and Cumulative GPA](#)
- Completion of coursework at the required [pace of completion](#)

### Grade Point Average (GPA)

Students are expected to maintain cumulative and core GPA of no less than 3.0. Students must keep track of their academic progress at the core and overall GPA level. Academic Affairs supports students by also informing students when their GPA's fall below a 3.0. The Academic Affairs Office will notify students whose core and/or cumulative GPA falls below 3.0. All students whose core and cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 are considered not making satisfactory academic progress and in poor academic standing and may be terminated from their degree program.

### Maximum Timeframe (Credits) and Pace of Completion

The Academic Affairs Office audits students' academic progress each semester to ensure students meet the benchmarks of their respective degree programs and are meeting an acceptable pace of completion. To successfully complete earned credits, students must receive a passing grade. Non-passing grade designations include F and W. The pace of completion by which students are expected to progress through their degree programs is the percentage value calculated by a student's minimum required credits divided by the maximum number of credits a student is allowed to attempt as a degree-seeking candidate (also known as the maximum timeframe). Should the percentage value of earned credits divided by attempted credits fall below the pace of completion, a student would be considered as not making satisfactory academic progress and in poor academic standing. Below is a non-exhaustive list of how the most common unearned credits negatively impact a student's satisfactory academic progress.

### F Grade

Students who earn an F grade cannot repeat the course unless it is a requirement for the completion of the degree program. In cases when the course is required, the student must re-register for the course and obtain a satisfactory grade. The F remains on the transcript even after the course is retaken for a passing grade. In instances when a student is assigned an F in a pre-requisite course, the student may not begin the subsequent course until re-sitting for a passing grade (if allotted the opportunity).

**Students who earn more than one F grade – whether in a single semester or across multiple semesters – are considered not making satisfactory academic progress and in poor academic standing.** The SAP implications of an F may only be rectified by:

- retaking a course for a passing grade (only one additional opportunity is provided).
- or by complying with a School approved academic plan.

**Students who fail to meet either of these expectations may be terminated from their degree program.**

### *Pace of Completion for Fs*

Further implications of an F can be understood in terms of one's pace of completion. Fs factor into a student's attempted credit, which means that a student's pace of completion will fall below 100 percent. Students below 100 percent may be considered not making satisfactory academic progress and in poor academic standing.

### *Course Repetitions and GPA*

Students cannot repeat courses for credit toward their degrees or to improve their GPAs, except in cases when a student has received an F in a required course. While the new grade will not replace the F grade on the transcript, the Academic Affairs Office will informally recalculate a student's GPA for the purpose of determining SAP without considering the F. Repeated courses count toward the maximum number of attempted credits toward the degree. Repeated courses may incur additional tuition and fees.

### *Incompletes (IN)*

The implications of carrying INs into a new semester can be understood in terms of pace of completion. Incompletes are considered unearned credits and push a student's pace of completion below 100 percent. Carrying any number of INs will incur some intervention by the Academic Affairs Office. The pace of completion implications of an IN may only be rectified by replacing the IN no later than the deadline provided on the student's completed [Official Request for an Incomplete Form](#). INs assigned a final grade will be calculated into a student's cumulative GPA to determine if any adjustments to their SAP assessment is required.

If a student holds an IN for a course that is a pre-requisite for a subsequent course, the student may not begin the subsequent course until the IN is resolved. Any number of INs may prevent a student from beginning their culminating experience (capstone or internship).

## *Status Definitions for Satisfactory Academic Progress and Academic Standing*

### *Federal Student Aid-Specific Definitions*

Certain status definitions are applicable only to students who receive FSA and who find themselves not making SAP. Students who fail to achieve SAP are placed either into an FSA Warning or FSA Probation status.

### *FSA Warning*

The Climate School places students who receive FSA into a Warning status the first time they do not achieve SAP. Disbursement of FSA is allowed without disruption. Students will receive an email notifying them of this Warning status and the accompanying School-specific status, which may indicate School-level intervention. Students in an FSA Warning status must return to achieving SAP in the next semester of enrollment, or they will be placed in a [Probation status](#). It is possible for a student to not achieve SAP in one semester (Warning), achieve SAP in the subsequent semester, and then be placed into a Warning status again in the third semester should SAP not be achieved.

### *FSA Probation*

A student who does not achieve SAP following the semester of FSA Warning will automatically be placed into a Probation status and **the disbursement of FSA will be held until the student submits a successful [SAP appeal](#)**. Students will receive an email notifying them of this Probation status and any accompanying School-specific status.

Some academic plans may take more than one semester for a student to achieve SAP. It is possible for students to remain in a Probation status for successive semesters, as long as they keep to their

academic plans. Even in these cases, a student's FSA will be held until the academic plan can be reassessed based on the student's performance during the first semester of probation.

#### Notifications of SAP and Academic Standing Status

Students who are not meeting achieving SAP and in poor academic standing must be notified of their status. **The Academic Affairs Office will notify all students via email to the [student's Columbia email account](#).** Students should expect notification following the deadline for faculty to submit grades.

#### Consequences of Not Achieving Satisfactory Academic Progress

When evaluating academic progress, the School checks a qualitative measure (GPA), as well as completion of coursework at the required pace of completion (unearned credit verse earned credit). Students are not achieving SAP if they qualify for any of the above-mentioned status definitions for Satisfactory Academic Progress and Academic Standing and are:

- at risk of losing their FSA eligibility (per the Federal Student Aid-Specific Definitions)
- at risk of jeopardizing their degree candidacy at the Climate School and may be eligible for termination from their degree program
- at risk of being removed from activities or services: A student may be restricted from participation in academic or extracurricular activities and/or University organizations (including appointments, awards, leadership roles, committee roles, etc.) or restricted from university services.

Students notified of their SAP and Academic Standing Status may be required to submit an [Academic Agreement](#) or [Academic Plan](#) after their performance during the most recently reviewed semester.

#### Academic Agreement

Students in need of signing an Academic Agreement will be provided with a set of academic standards that they must abide by to assist students in returning to satisfactory academic progress. Standards may include target GPAs for subsequent semester, retaking a course, and more.

**Failure to meet the standards noted in the Academic Agreement may prevent a student from returning to satisfactory academic progress, thereby impacting their eligibility for Federal Student Aid and their degree candidacy with the Climate School.**

#### Academic Plans

Students in need of an Academic Plan develop them in partnership with the Academic Affairs Office. Academic Plans will provide academic standards and course requirements designed to help students return to satisfactory academic progress. Standards may include target GPAs for subsequent semester, retaking a course, and more. Designated course requirements may span between one and three semesters. Academic Plans are signed by the student and the Academic Affairs Office.

**Failure to adhere to the conditions of an Academic Plan may prevent a student from returning to satisfactory academic progress, thereby impacting their eligibility for Federal Student Aid as well as their degree candidacy with the Climate School.**

### Restoring FSA Eligibility for Students on Probation

Students who have not met SAP standards in consecutive semesters are determined to be ineligible for Federal Student Aid (FSA) because of an FSA Probation status. Students have the option to appeal the decision. The previously outlined requirements for Academic Agreements and Academic Plans satisfy an FSA appeal's requirements. Students who fail to submit either an Academic Agreement or Academic Plan as directed by their notification will remain ineligible for Federal Student Aid.

### Termination Due to Poor Satisfactory Academic Progress and Academic Standing

**Students who are not making satisfactory academic progress and are in poor academic standing in one or more semesters may be terminated from their degree program.** A student terminated from their degree program will receive an official letter from the Academic Affairs Office. If the student disagrees with the decision of termination, the student may appeal to the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Administration within seven business days of receiving the official notification. Grounds for appeal are considered on two criteria:

- **Procedural Error:** Student must identify and define with specificity any errors in the evaluation of their academic progress and how it negatively impacted the final decision.
- **New Information:** Students wishing to submit new information must explain why this information was not made available to school officials when notified of their SAP and Academic Standing Status and how this information would have substantially impacted the final decision.

The Senior Associate Dean of Academic Administration will review the appeal. The decision of the appeal is final and will be sent to the student within seven business days of the appeal request.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND REINSTATEMENT FROM LEAVE

Students who need to pause their studies must apply for a formal Leave of Absence (LOA). **Students are not permitted to advance in their degree program while on LOA.** This may include requirements such as earning course credits or completing a culminating experience.

Deadlines and procedures for requesting a return from leave are noted below. Students are expected to monitor their Columbia email while on leave, as this is the official means of [communication used at The Climate School](#). Leave of absence requests are generally approved for one to two semesters with a maximum of three semesters.

Any general questions regarding LOA should be directed to the [Academic Affairs Office](#).

### Types of Leave

#### Voluntary Leave (including Uniformed Service Leave of Absence)

A voluntary leave from The Climate School is granted to students who wish to take time away from their studies for various reasons, including employment opportunities, personal or family circumstances, and military service. **A voluntary leave of absence (LOA) is not designated for a student's own health condition** (see [Medical Leave](#)). Students taking any type of leave will have a

registration hold placed on their account until a formal request to resume the program has been approved by the Academic Affairs Office.

#### *Requesting Voluntary Leave*

To take a voluntary leave of absence, complete the following:

- Meet with the Academic Affairs Office as soon as possible to discuss the leave and potential impact on your academic progression.
- Make a formal request by submitting the [Leave of Absence Request Form](#) from Student Financial Services.

Students will receive an email informing them if the request for leave of absence has been approved. Students expecting a refund after an approved leave request and withdrawal from the semester should contact the [Student Service Center](#) with any questions.

#### *Medical Leave*

A student should pursue a medical leave of absence when experiencing health challenges that prohibit them from performing at their optimum and a pause is necessary to return to good health. **If a student experiences a health emergency that requires a lengthy hospital stay, the School will ask them to take a leave of absence.**

#### *Requesting Medical Leave*

To take a medical leave of absence, complete the following:

- Meet with the Academic Affairs Office as soon as possible to discuss the leave and potential impact on your academic progression
- Make a formal request by submitting the [Leave of Absence Request Form](#) from Student Financial Services.
- For a Medical Leave to be granted, students must include a letter from a licensed medical professional indicating:
  - Support for the leave of absence
  - Their recommendation for the length of leave
  - Please do not include diagnostic or private medical information

Students will receive an email informing them if the request for a leave of absence has been approved. Students expecting a refund after an approved leave request and withdrawal from the semester should contact the [Student Service Center](#) with any questions.

#### *While on leave*

##### *International Students*

If you are an international student, you must immediately contact the [International Students and Scholars Office \(ISSO\)](#) to discuss next steps related to your visa status. International students taking anything other than a medical leave must leave the United States within 15 days of their withdrawal date.

### *Academic Standing while on leave*

If a student begins a leave on or before the add/drop deadline listed in the [academic calendar](#), any previously registered courses for the semester will be removed from the student's academic record and will not count toward required residency units. If a leave begins after that deadline, courses may remain on the transcript, and the semester may count toward required residency units.

Courses left on the transcript may be assigned a [Withdrawal \(W\) or Incomplete \(IN\)](#), whichever is deemed appropriate following consultation with the course instructor. Should an IN be deemed appropriate and in compliance with the IN policy, students would resume work on rectifying the INs when they return from leave and are subject to the IN deadline of that semester. **Unless the requesting student is unavailable, the Request for Incomplete form must be submitted alongside the Leave of Absence Request form.** Otherwise, a final letter-grade with missing materials accounted for may be assigned.

**Students departing after the add/drop deadline may see an impact to their satisfactory academic progress.** Please note that whatever [academic standing](#) students depart with at the start of the leave, they will then assume upon return to their degree programs.

### *Financial Aid and Tuition Balance while on leave*

For a student taking a leave for any reason, it is vital that students communicate with the [Financial Aid Office](#) regarding any aid received. A student who is away from their program for more than a semester may be required to begin loan repayments; therefore, it is important to schedule an exit interview with Financial Aid to discuss the options for a particular loan before requesting a leave. A student who defaults on a loan will be unable to receive any further aid until appropriate payments are made.

All financial obligations to the University must be cleared before reinstatement. **A student with a tuition balance will have a Student Financial Services hold and will not be able to register for classes.** It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any debt that could prevent registration.

### *Housing while on leave*

Students who live in university housing and opt to take a leave must contact the [Office of Housing Services](#), as they may have to vacate their on-campus housing assignment. Students taking a leave will not be penalized for breaking their lease. Students must follow all moving-out procedures set forth by the Office of Housing Services.

### *Campus Involvement while on Leave*

While on leave, students will remove themselves from the greater-Columbia University community and not participate in activities such as auditing classes, required culminating experience, student groups, University event programming, or otherwise spend time on campus. Therefore, the student Columbia ID and swipe access are deactivated during the leave.

### *Health Insurance*

If students are covered by the Student Health on Haven insurance plan, they should contact the [Insurance Office](#) to discuss coverage while on leave. If students have waived Columbia insurance, they must contact their own insurance provider for details on coverage.

### *Reinstatement from Medical Leave*

Students returning from an approved medical leave must include a letter from a licensed medical professional supporting their return to the academic program. Please note that students on medical leave will not be reinstated to attend a Columbia summer session. Students returning from medical leave should meet with the Academic Affairs Office during the first two weeks of the semester to ensure a smooth transition back to the campus community.

## WITHDRAWAL

### *Withdrawal from courses*

#### *Withdrawal from a single course*

Students may register and withdraw from semester courses during registration periods posted on the [academic calendar](#) and in accordance with their assigned registration appointment times posted on [Student Services Online \(SSOL\)](#). Registration typically consists of one to two registration periods and the Change of Program Period. After the program period change, students must get approval to add or drop a course from their schedule. From the close of the change of program period through the “Last day to drop without it appearing on transcript” posted on the [academic calendar](#).

Students attempting to withdraw from a single course after the change of program deadline should follow [posted registration procedures](#) for dropping full semester or 1st and 2nd quarter classes from their schedule.

Failure (intentional or otherwise) to attend classes does not constitute a formal withdrawal or drop of a class. Students who cease attending but do not formally drop a class will receive a grade of [W \(Withdrawal\)](#) for the course.

In circumstances when students have been referred to the Honor Board or the Dean’s Discipline process, a student may not withdraw from the course in question to avoid participation in subsequent hearings and possible sanctions.

### *Withdrawal from a term*

Registered students, who decide to withdraw from all classes in a semester or fully withdraw from their degree program, must complete the [Withdrawal Request Form](#) from Student Financial Services to initiate the withdrawal process.

**Not registering for classes does not equate to a withdrawal from one’s degree program.** If a registered student decides to withdraw from all classes in a term, the student still has not effectively withdrawn from the degree program. The University Registrar determines the [refund rate](#) for full withdrawal; the School determines the deadlines for dropping classes without notations on one’s transcript. These deadlines are the same for fully withdrawing from a degree program as they are for

dropping an individual class. In most cases, ancillary fees will remain on the account, in addition to a **\$75 withdrawal fee**.

Students who plan to return to the program must request a [Leave of Absence Request Form](#) from Student Financial Services.