

MASTER of CYBERSECURITY & LEADERSHIP (MCL)

GRADUATE HANDBOOK

2026 - 2027 Academic Year

Updated 6-24-2026

All Master of Cybersecurity and Leadership (MCL) students are responsible for understanding the information and policies contained in this handbook. This includes information to websites and documents. Information found on the websites for the School of Engineering and Technology (SET), the UW Graduate School, and UW Tacoma supersedes information found in this handbook. This handbook is subject to change. Please refer to the program website for the most recent version: <https://tacoma.uw.edu/set/graduate-resources>

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Schedule GPA Advising Appointment: <https://tacoma.uw.edu/set/advising>

Faculty Directory: <https://tacoma.uw.edu/set/facultyresearch>

All MCL graduate students are subscribed to the **UW SET Grad** email listserv (allsetgrad@lists.uw.edu) and the **MCL Student** email listserv (uwtacoma_mcl@uw.edu) their first quarter of enrollment. This is very important, as we will post course information, deadlines, and other notices on a regular basis. Students are encouraged to add the listserv emails to their contacts to prevent these messages from going to spam/junk.

In addition, please sign up with **UW Alert** to receive updates via text or email regarding emergency closures of campus: <https://washington.edu/safety/alert>

The **Graduate Program Chair/Coordinator (GPC)** oversees matters relating to the graduate curriculum and the courses, including the review process of proposals for capstone projects, and

course substitutions. The GPC also provides advising of a substantive, academic nature and functions as the faculty liaison to the UW Graduate School.

The **Graduate Program Advisor (GPA)** is responsible for helping students with the technical pieces of graduate student life, such as deadlines, forms, and formal procedures. The GPA also functions as the staff liaison to the UW Graduate School.

MCL students will complete a team-based capstone project while enrolled in TCSL 591: Capstone Project I and TCSL 592: Capstone Project II over Winter Quarter and Spring Quarter respectively.

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1. Overview of SET and MCL Program

The MCL program at UW Tacoma equips professionals and military personnel with technical backgrounds to enhance their leadership and cybersecurity skills for career advancement. By integrating resources from the School of Engineering and Technology (SET) and the Milgard School of Business (MSB), the program fosters innovative solutions for information assurance and cybersecurity challenges, positioning graduates for success and entrepreneurial opportunities in Washington State's cybersecurity landscape.

MISSION

SET aims to provide the highest quality computing, engineering, science, and technology education for a diverse population and engage in research and innovation that benefits the community by fostering social mobility and economic development.

VISION

SET is a unique public-private partnership in higher education that serves as a catalyst for generating energy and interest in computing science and engineering disciplines by:

- Addressing the need to ensure the availability of well-educated bachelor's and graduate-level computing science and engineering professionals in numbers sufficient to support and fuel the growth of Washington State's high-tech industries.
- Providing every Washington State citizen access and opportunity to prepare for, and advance in, outstanding and rewarding technology careers.

VALUES

- Research and Teaching
- Community
- Impact
- Excellence
- Innovation
- Identity

GOALS

- **Teaching/Research:** To develop and enhance teaching and research.
- **Student Enrollment/Retention:** To expand and diversify student enrollment and strengthen retention.
- **Identity:** To establish a clear and recognizable local, state, national, and international identity.
- **Program Improvement:** To continuously assess, improve, and evolve our program offerings.
- **Community Outreach:** To extend our reach and increase collaborative support within the community.

For a complete overview of SET's Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals, please visit:

<https://tacoma.uw.edu/set/about/mission-goals>

2. Important Dates

Please be aware of all important dates, including registration dates at:

<https://tacoma.uw.edu/registrar/academic-calendar>

UW Graduate School deadlines at: <https://grad.uw.edu/calendars/student-dates-deadlines/>

3. MCL Curriculum, Capstone Project, and Course Schedule

In line with UW Graduate School requirements ([Policy 1.1](#)), the degree requirements for the MCL program are the following:

- A minimum of 40 credits are required for the MCL degree.
- A minimum grade of 2.70 is required in each course counted towards the degree.
- A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 is required for graduation.
- Students must be registered for at least 2 credits in the quarter the degree is earned.
- Students must complete all degree requirements within 6 years.
- Please see the “*Grading System*” section for detailed information about grading options.

MCL is a non-thesis, 40 credit-hour cohort-based program. The curriculum is dually taught between faculty from SET and MSB. The technically-oriented curriculum focuses on understanding the basic operations and functionality of cybersecurity systems and information assurance. This is complemented by a more behaviorally-oriented curriculum that emphasizes the management of technical professionals and organizational leadership.

Ten (10) required courses are offered sequentially over four consecutive academic quarters - or twelve (12) months. A Cybersecurity course from SET and a Business course from MSB are delivered concurrently over Summer, Autumn, Winter, and Spring Quarters, totaling eight (8) courses. Another two (2) required capstone courses are offered for both Winter and Spring Quarters. These courses set the foundation for completing the team-based capstone projects by the conclusion of the program.

MCL students will complete a team-based capstone project while enrolled in TCSL 591: Capstone Project I and TCSL 592: Capstone Project II over Winter Quarter and Spring Quarter respectively.

The capstone project is a two-quarter team effort that engages business or government in the region. Teams of three MCL students define their own focus and develop deliverables in conjunction with an outside partner entity. The project tackles complex issues facing all sectors of business and government. The project is intended to synthesize the academic, technical, and leadership components of the MCL program and to address real-world cybersecurity and technology management issues. Direct project duration approximately 20 weeks, starting in early January and culminating in June.

The capstone project focus is usually on information assurance, risk management, and policy and governance with senior management of an organization being the ultimate customer. Some

projects can be highly technical in nature depending on the needs of the partnering organization. Individual outcomes are measured through student reflection. Cohort outcomes are evaluated with student program exit surveys. The MCL program actively solicits capstone customer feedback to aid in evaluation of individual engagements and to assist faculty in program development over time.

Final MCL Team-Based Capstone Project Presentations often involve proprietary industry data, confidentiality agreements, non-disclosure obligations, pending or active intellectual property claims, including patent applications, export-controlled research, or other sensitive materials subject to legal, regulatory, or contractual constraints. For this reason, the final MCL Capstone Project Presentations are typically arranged internally with program leadership.

Students who wish to make additional scholarly contributions to their program and/or the greater STEM community at UW Tacoma are encouraged to present at UW Tacoma’s annual SET Research Showcase and/or quarterly colloquia. Students may present individually or in groups. This is optional but an integral and important part of your graduate-education experience and broader professional development.

Students may also choose to publish their own research in academic journals and/or present at a local, national, or global conference. This is optional.

2026 - 2027 Course Schedule

SUMMER	AUTUMN	WINTER	SPRING
TCSL 550: Networking and Internet Security (5 credits) TCSL 520: Business Essentials (5 credits)	TCSL 510: Principles of Cybersecurity (5 credits) TCSL 580: Project Management (5 credits)	TCSL 530: Cyber Risk Management (4 credits) TCSL 540: Leadership and Team Dynamics (4 credits) TCSL 591: Capstone Project I (2 credits)	TCSL 570: Cyber Forensics and Security Management (4 credits) TCSL 560: Strategic Organization Change (4 credits) TCSL 592: Capstone Project II (2 credits)

4. Course Descriptions

TCSL 510: Principles of Cybersecurity (5 credits)

Required

This course examines concepts, elements, strategies, and skills related to the information assurance lifecycle - policies, practices, mechanisms, dissemination, and validation - that ensure the confidentiality,

integrity, and availability of information and information systems. The information assurance planning process, including determination and organizational goals, the threat spectrum, risk, and legal and ethical issues are analyzed. Through readings, lectures, and discussions with academic and industry professionals, labs and security response exercises, students develop proficiencies in cybersecurity principles.

TCSL 520: Business Essentials (5 credits)

Required

This course covers effective approaches to information security management and overviews the key concepts, tools, and technologies that are vital in today's challenging business environment. Business concepts, including communication, marketing, accounting, finance, business law, and ethics will be discussed. Through discussions, exercises, and assignments, students gain experience in applying their knowledge to business situations and making business decisions. Interpersonal, technical, and problem-solving skills are emphasized.

TCSL 530: Cyber Risk Management (4 credits)

Required

This course examines the concepts, processes, and skills related to risk management in information assurance, including assessment, analysis, and mitigation planning. Structured approaches will analyze risk management processes that facilitate information assurance decision-making. Content will be taught through quantitative software and qualitative methodologies as well as labs, lectures, and discussions. Students develop risk management competencies through completing and presenting risk assessments to industry professionals.

TCSL 540: Leadership and Team Dynamics (4 credits)

Required

This course focuses on conceptual training and practices so students can analyze and diagnose individual, group, and network dynamics, evaluate organizational structures and processes, determine strategic and tactical options as a manager, and engage in managerial actions that enhance individual, team, and organizational performances. Students will develop critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and leadership skills.

TCSL 550: Networking and Internet Security (5 credits)

Required

This course looks at the issues of information security with a focus on raising students' awareness of the difficulties of maintaining a secure network environment, and providing them with fundamental knowledge and skills to implement and manage appropriate security practices and controls in an organization's network. Covers concepts of encryption and network security, explores threats posed to internet-based systems, and assesses network vulnerabilities. Students will learn operating system attacks

and countermeasures, application attacks and countermeasures, and cryptographic applications as well as legal and ethical security practice.

TCSL 560: Strategic Organization Change (4 credits)

Required

Readings, cases, experiential exercises, and discussions will explore theories, concepts, tools, and techniques for aligning an organization's strategy to the environment and creating, leading, and managing change. This course examines concepts, tools, and techniques for understanding change dynamics and how successful cyber leaders and change agents create, implement, and manage change. It also investigates perspectives on strategic change, considers change methodologies, and explores best practices.

TCSL 570: Cyber Forensics and Security Management (4 credits)

Required

This course applies and combines information assurance concepts, processes, and skills to solve case studies from practitioner experiences and explores the role of policy in creating successful information assurance programs. Leading private, public, and government sector organizations will present real cybersecurity/risk management projects impacting their enterprises. Teams perform cybersecurity assessments and evaluations and present written evaluations and recommendations to organizational leaders.

TCSL 580: Project Management (5 credits)

Required

This course builds on the foundations for information technology services and project management. It is focused on the key aspects of commoditization of hardware (e.g., on-demand, utility computing, cloud computing), software (i.e., software-as-a-service model), and business processes. The course introduces the IT product development and service delivery processes with sound management principles for on-budget and on-time, high quality projects that meet users' needs. Students will review fundamentals and learn to offer practical solutions for these challenges.

TCSL 591: Capstone Project I (2 credits)

Required

Small teams collaborate with government and industry partners to develop valuable contributions for a capstone customer in cybersecurity and business operations. Students secure customers, define a project plan, and create a statement of work contract.

TCSL 592: Capstone Project II (2 credits)

Required

This course is a continuation of TCSL 591. Students collaborate with regional government and industry partners and develop valuable contributions for a capstone customer in cybersecurity and business operations. With a customer, student teams execute and deliver the project statement of work previously developed in Capstone I.

TCSL 600: Independent Study or Research (5 credits)

Optional

*Can count up to 5 credits maximum towards degree requirements if approved for course substitution. See section “**Transfer Credits, Course Substitutions, and Independent Study Courses**” for more information.*

Requires a Graduate Faculty Advisor and submitted [Independent Registration Form](#) prior to registration.

TCSL 601: Internship (5 credits)

Optional

Credits do not count towards degree requirements.

Requires a Graduate Faculty Advisor, Internship Sponsor, and submitted [Internship Registration Form](#) prior to registration.

5. Course Days, Times, and Quarters Offered

Due to the cohort-model of the program, courses are offered sequentially and consecutively once per year. For example, TCSL 550 is only offered once per year in Summer Quarter. If a student fails to register or does not earn a passing grade in that course that quarter, the student will need to wait until the next academic year to take the course. ***Students who find themselves in such a situation should contact their Graduate Program Advisor (GPA), Victoria Olive (olivev@uw.edu) immediately, as this can result in significant graduation delays.***

Classes are held in-person on the UW Tacoma campus Saturday mornings and afternoons unless otherwise posted on the [UW Tacoma Time Schedule](#).

MCL is a full-time, accelerated graduate program. Students are encouraged to miss no more than two (2) classes per quarter. Completion of the program with the current cohort is an expectation of each participant. Please speak to your GPA and your instructors as soon as possible if for any reason you cannot meet the attendance expectation because of special circumstances, such as illness, family emergencies, planned absences, or active-duty military responsibilities.

In some cases, MCL students may elect and/or be eligible to enroll in classes part-time. If you are seriously considering a part-time schedule, please book an appointment with your GPA,

Victoria Olive. Your GPA can assist you with navigating this complex academic planning and coordination: <https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/set/advising>

6. Overview of Registration in the MCL Program

MCL students cannot self-register for courses. Because the MCL program is a fee-based rather than a tuition-based program, registration cannot be completed directly by the student through the standard university self-registration systems. Course registration is instead processed on the student's behalf by the Graduate Program Advisor (GPA)

However, registration remains a student-initiated process. Students must notify the GPA of the course(s) they intend to enroll in each quarter by submitting a Course Enrollment Request Form: <https://apply.tacoma.uw.edu/register/cer>

Submission of this form serves as the student's acknowledgement of their intent to be registered and grants the GPA authorization to forward the enrollment request to the registrar's office on the student's behalf.

Registration Periods

Although MCL classes typically begin during the third or fourth week of June, newly admitted and incoming MCL students cannot be registered until Registration Period II. Not to worry, though. TCSL-coded courses are reserved for MCL students only so your spot in the course has already been secured.

Students who have completed their first quarter in the MCL program are thereafter permitted to be registered beginning in Registration Period I along with all other continuing graduate students.

Registration Periods and their opening/closing dates for each Academic Quarter can be found on the Office of the Registrar's website: <https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/registrar/registration-periods>

Course Enrollment Request Form

Each quarter, students are required to submit a Course Enrollment Request Form indicating the courses they intend to take: <https://apply.tacoma.uw.edu/register/cer>

The GPA will send students a reminder the week prior to the applicable registration period followed by a second reminder after registration opens.

Failure to submit the form in a timely manner will delay the student's registration and may result in additional costs, late add/drop fees and/or possible tuition forfeiture.

Graduate Advising and UW MyPlan

Students should consult their UW MyPlan prior to submitting the Course Enrollment Request Form: <https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/fa/it/myuw-portal>

Your GPA will have entered course recommendations in MyPlan based on the MCL curriculum, the student's satisfactory progress toward graduation, and any other important milestones or issues that could significantly delay graduation.

Students should review these recommendations carefully. Please book an advising appointment with your GPA if you have questions: <https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/set/advising>

7. Transfer Credits, Course Substitutions, and Independent Study Courses

Transfer Credits

MCL does not accept transfer credits of graduate-level coursework from the University of Washington and other institutions. This is because all courses in the curriculum are specifically designed and required to fulfill the program's educational objectives. The program does not include elective courses, as each course is essential to the core learning outcomes and professional preparation the program aims to deliver. This ensures that every MCL graduate has completed the same rigorous and cohesive coursework, providing a consistent and comprehensive education experience.

Course Substitutions and Independent Study Courses

MCL students may petition to substitute one (1) required MCL course with TCSL 600: Independent Study based on a careful evaluation of their previous academic and/or professional experience. TCSL 591: Capstone Project I and TCSL 592: Capstone Project II cannot be considered for substitution in any circumstance.

Important Note: When requesting a course substitution, students must copy (cc) their GPA, Victoria Olive (olivev@uw.edu), in all email communications.

These are the steps for the petition process:

- **Obtain written permission from the Required Course instructor.** Students must secure written approval from the instructor of the Required Course they wish to substitute with TCSL 600: Independent Study.
- **Secure a Graduate Faculty Advisor.** After receiving written permission from the Required Course instructor, students must identify and secure a Graduate Faculty Advisor from the full-time MCL faculty roster to supervise their independent study.
- **Obtain written permission from the MCL Program Chair.** Students must secure written approval from the MCL GPC, Dr. Yan Bai (yanb@uw.edu).
- **Submit the Independent Study Registration Form and Independent Study Proposal.** Once all permissions are obtained, students and their Graduate Faculty Advisor must complete and submit a signed [Independent Study Registration Form](#) to finalize their petition. Students will also work with their Graduate Faculty Advisor to create an Independent Study Proposal and will submit this alongside their Independent Study Registration Form. An Independent Study Proposal generally requires a student to define the topic and goals of the independent study, determine workload and deliverables, and establish evaluation criteria. Students should consult with their Graduate Faculty Advisor when creating the Independent Study Proposal to ensure it aligns with MCL program objectives and outcomes.
- **GPA registers students for the specified independent study credits.** After the GPC gives final approval to the GPA, the GPA will register the student for the specified independent study course and credits within five (5) business days.

A course substitution for TCSL 600: Independent Study is contingent upon the successful completion of these steps and the final approval by the GPC. Students are encouraged to plan ahead to allow sufficient time for the approval process and to meet university registration deadlines.

The completed Independent Study Registration Form and the Independent Study Proposal must be uploaded into the system no later than seven (7) business days prior to the start of the academic quarter. Students who miss this deadline may not be registered for TCSL 600: Independent Study.

8. Filing for Graduation - Request a Master's Degree

The below timeline is a general guideline, based on UW Graduate School policies and procedures, to help students understand the graduation process. Eligibility for graduation is determined by satisfactory completion of all UW Graduate School and program degree requirements by the last day of the quarter a student intends to graduate.

As a cohort-model program, all MCL students are expected to graduate in Spring Quarter.

Refer to [dates and deadlines](#) for quarterly deadline information and [Policy 1.1](#) to review UW Graduate School degree requirements.

Beginning of the Quarter

Students must maintain registration as a full-time or part-time graduate student (2 credits minimum) for the quarter the degree is conferred.

The [Master's Degree Request](#) (application to graduate) for the current quarter in session becomes available to complete on the first day of instruction through the last day of the quarter.

Submitting this request will generate a degree audit. Any incomplete or in-progress requirements should be discussed with your Graduate Program Advisor.

International students should review the [International Student and Scholar Services \(ISSS\) final quarter registration information and checklist](#).

Last Day of the Quarter

Students who miss the deadline to file a Master's Degree Request for the current quarter will not be graduated until the following quarter.

Those who miss this deadline should refer to [UW Graduate School Policy 3.6: Graduate Registration Waiver](#). Students eligible for the Graduate Registration Waiver must submit fee payment per instructions.

After the Quarter Ends

The Graduate Program Advisor submits degree recommendations to GEMS during the week after the quarter ends. GEMS cannot graduate a student until the GPA has recommended their graduation. Once recommended, GEMS advisors will review individual degree audits for each student and process graduation requests.

Students will receive an email when their graduation has been recommended and when their degree has been granted by the UW Graduate School.

Degrees will be posted to UW transcripts 2 business days after the UW Graduate School processes the student's graduation. Students should confirm that their degree has been posted

before ordering official transcripts. This can be done by viewing unofficial transcripts in the [MyUW student portal](#).

Students that need proof of degree completion before their degree has been posted should request a letter of certification from the forms section of the UW Graduate School's website:

<https://grad.uw.edu/grad-school-policies/additional-resources/>

Students may login and enter their requested diploma name and diploma mailing address by using the [online diploma name and address form](#). If students do not enter anything on the form, the Office of University Registrar (OUR) will print the diploma using the student's UW record name and mail their diploma to the permanent address on their UW record.

OUR physically mails diplomas 2 - 3 months following graduation.

Although students may complete the program in any quarter, the annual Commencement and Graduate Hooding Ceremonies only occur once a year in Spring Quarter. Participation in these ceremonies is optional but does require online registration. Students should watch their UW email during their final quarter and contact their GPA for information.

Students completing the program in Summer Quarter may participate in these ceremonies in Spring Quarter.

9. Funding Opportunities

MCL does not offer research assistantships, teaching assistantships, or other paid research positions.

Through a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant designed to strengthen the cadre of information assurance professionals who protect the government's critical information infrastructure, SET is able to offer a limited number of recipients (usually between 3 - 5 per academic year) an annual stipend \$37,000 for graduate students interested in studying information assurance and cybersecurity. CyberCorps®: Scholarship for Service (SFS) scholars receive support for one or three years, depending on their academic pathway.

To learn more, see [CyberCorps®: Scholarship for Service](#) page. Only US citizens and permanent residents are eligible to apply for SFS.

SET awards a few competitive scholarships to students each year, as well as limited research assistantship, teaching assistantship and hourly paid positions.

SET department and program-specific scholarships can be reviewed at:
<https://tacoma.uw.edu/set/admission/scholarships>

Students seeking funding should utilize the resources provided by the [Graduate Funding Information Service \(GFIS\)](#) at gfis@uw.edu.

Funding resources are also provided through the [UW Tacoma Office of Global Affairs](#).

10. International Students

Students on F-1 visas will pay non-resident tuition. F-1 students are eligible to apply for research assistantship and/or teaching assistantship positions and may work on campus for up to 19.5 hours per week.

Students on H-4 visas should reach out to the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) team at uwtiss@uw.edu for questions about in-state tuition and employment options.

International students must contact the Office of the Registrar for residency petitions and all related information. Visit the website for more information:
<https://tacoma.uw.edu/registrar/residency>

International students should contact the [International Student and Scholar Services Office \(ISSS\)](#) for advising prior to making any visa changes. In addition, the ISSS coordinates the CPT and OPT approval process. Students should contact their ISSS advisor first, then follow up with their Graduate Program Advisor.

Please note that new students are not eligible for CPT. International students must complete 3 academic quarters as full-time students before they can be eligible for CPT. For instance, an international student starting in Autumn Quarter would need to complete Autumn Quarter, Winter Quarter, and Spring Quarter. They would then be eligible for CPT starting Summer Quarter.

International students should remain in close contact with their International Student Advisor. Students must inform their International Student Advisor immediately about major changes, such as requesting academic leave, family emergencies, sickness, injury, changes in registration, etc.

Additionally, we strongly recommend that newly matriculated international students schedule an introductory meeting with the International Student Advisor after [New International Student Orientation](#) to ensure a smooth transition.

11. Index of Graduate School Memoranda

The Index of Graduate School Policies includes graduate program policies maintained by the UW Graduate School. Content is reviewed and modified as needed. Final decisions regarding the implementation or continuation of policies receive the advice of the Graduate School Council. All of these policies are available online: <https://grad.uw.edu/grad-school-policies/>

Continuous Enrollment and On-Leave Status

Graduate students are required to maintain graduate status during their program of study. Failure to maintain this status requires reinstatement to the graduate program and the University of Washington.

Students who desire to take a quarter or quarters off without going through the reinstatement process must apply for on-leave status for each quarter they do not register. For complete details regarding on-leave policies, refer to [Policy 3.5: Graduate On-Leave Status](#).

Procedure for Requesting Leave

Beginning September 28, 2011, students requesting on-leave status must submit an [online Request for On-Leave Status via MyGrad Program](#). For a given quarter, students can submit the request as early as two weeks prior to the first day of instruction and must submit payment of the non-refundable fee no later than 11:59PM PST on the last day of instruction.

Leave is granted on a quarterly basis, though the following students may request up to 4 consecutive quarters of leave at one time: Peace Corps Master's International (PCMI) students, military personnel with deployment orders, and some UW Fulbright grantees. With the exception of military personnel with deployment orders, students will be required to pay the fee for each quarter of leave requested.

Please refer to the UW Graduate School's Academic Calendar for quarterly deadlines for requesting leave: <https://grad.uw.edu/calendars/student-dates-deadlines/>

Reinstatement to the Graduate School

Students previously registered in the Graduate School who have failed to maintain graduate student status, i.e. on-leave status was not secured and registration was not maintained, but wish to resume studies within the same degree program must file a request for reinstatement to the UW Graduate School.

Requests for reinstatement are filed online through the [MyGrad Program Reinstatement portal](#). Students will need a valid UW NetID and password.

Requests will first be reviewed and approved by the department. Once the department has approved the request and the Graduate School has confirmed the student's eligibility for reinstatement, students will be notified to pay a non-refundable reinstatement fee before registering for the requested quarter of reinstatement.

Time to Degree and Limits for On-Leave Status

The Graduate School normally allows 6 years from the quarter of admission to complete all requirements for the master's degree. ***Periods spent on-leave or out of status are included in these limits.***

Before approving a Petition for On-Leave Status for a student whose leave period will take them in excess of these limits, the Graduate Program Advisor must first file a Petition to the Dean of the Graduate School via the MyGrad Program Portal explaining why this action is being requested. This Petition to the Dean must be approved by the Graduate School before the Petition for On-Leave Status is filed.

For more information, visit: <https://grad.uw.edu/policies/graduate-on-leave-status/>

Grading System

Numerical grades shall be entered as numbers, the possible values being 4.0, 3.9, ... and decreasing by one-tenth until 1.7 is reached. Grades below 1.7 will be recorded as 0.0 by the Registrar and no credit is earned.

A minimum grade of 2.7 is required in each course that is to be counted toward a graduate degree. A minimum cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of 3.0 is required for graduation.

Please refer to the [University Grading System](#) for details.

Please note that some courses like Thesis and Capstone are structured to be Credit/No-Credit (C/NC).

If you have questions about the grading structure for your courses, please connect with your Graduate Program Advisor.

Incomplete Grades

An Incomplete (I) may be given only when the student has been in attendance and has done satisfactory work to within 2 weeks of the end of the quarter and has furnished proof satisfactory to the instructor that the work cannot be completed because of illness or other circumstances beyond the student's control.

To obtain credit for the course, a student must successfully complete the work and the instructor must submit a grade. An incomplete received by the graduate student does not automatically convert to a grade of 0.0 but the "I" will remain as a permanent part of the student's record.

A student must convert an Incomplete into a passing grade by the last day of the next quarter (summer not included). If a student does not convert the Incomplete into a passing grade after one quarter, the Incomplete grade will change to a failing grade (or the default grade your instructor provided).

In no case may an Incomplete be converted into a passing grade after a lapse of two (2) years without the approval of the Graduate School.

Courses taken as Credit/No-Credit (C/NC) will change to NC.

S/NS Grade Policy

Students may elect to take certain courses on a Satisfactory/Not Satisfactory (S/NS) basis. However, credits from courses with the S/NS grading option will not count towards the program degree requirements and are not computed into GPA calculations.

Students should consult with their Graduate Program Advisor prior to changing a numerically graded courses to the S/NS option.

Reviewing Performance and Progress ([UW Graduate School Policy 3.7.2](#))

Faculty should assess student progress using a variety of professional behavior and academic metrics to determine if a student has completed sufficient work at reasonable performance levels. It is acceptable to compare a student's performance and progress relative to that of other students in the program or to individually negotiated schedules if consistently used. The following elements may be considered when evaluating a student's performance and progress:

- Performance and progress in the fulfillment of degree program requirements as outlined in the graduate program's documentation distributed to students upon enrollment.
- Maintenance of a minimum cumulative and quarterly 3.0 grade point average (GPA) while the student is enrolled in the UW Graduate School. A program may petition the

Graduate School to consider exceptions to the 3.0 GPA minimum requirement for graduation if the student demonstrates steady and consistent progress.

Program faculty, the Graduate Program Chair/Coordinator (GPC), Graduate Program Advisor (GPA), or an advisory/supervisory committee designated by the graduate program, are responsible for regular reviews of student performance. At doctoral candidate level, the doctoral supervisory committee reviews student progress and does so, in consultation with the GPC, as needed.

- The graduate program faculty should review a student's performance and progress at least annually.
- The GPC and GPA should provide ongoing advising of students.
- For accelerated or shorter term graduate programs that are six quarters or fewer, student performance and progress should be reviewed quarterly. Unsatisfactory performance may require mid-quarter reviews and interventions.
- Students not meeting milestones, including those whose cumulative or quarterly grade point average (GPA) falls below a 3.0, should be reviewed quarterly.
- Students not meeting milestones should be provided with a written explanation of performance expectations, clear descriptions of performance benchmarks and outcomes that would demonstrate improvements, and a timetable for demonstrating progress or achievement of these benchmarks.
- For students in the research or fieldwork phase of a graduate program, program faculty should review student progress at least annually, with greater frequency as determined by program expectations and student performance.

Unsatisfactory Performance and Progress ([UW Graduate School Policy 3.73](#))

The following three status levels are used to indicate unsatisfactory performance, to communicate clear expectations to the student, and consequences should those expectations not be met in the time indicated. The goal of each step is to establish clear expectations and outline a path to return to satisfactory progress.

Academic Notification

Formerly “Warn/Warning.” This is an early status for a student who has failed to meet expectations for performance or progress. Academic notifications are optional in the Academic Alert process and are managed internally by the program with a goal of resolving problems before escalating to academic alert. The program may issue multiple academic notification letters to a student and the UW Graduate School is notified. The Graduate School recommends that programs use the academic notification status prior to an academic alert status.

Academic Alert

Formerly “Probation.” This status is used for a student who has failed to resolve problems with student performance and progress that the program has previously documented and communicated to the student. Programs send an academic alert recommendation to the study with a copy to the UW Graduate School no later than the 10th business day of the academic alert quarter.

The Graduate school does a post review of academic alert letters sent to students by the department. At least one quarter of academic alert must be issued prior to **Final Academic Alert** (see below). Two additional quarters of academic alert may be issued at the program’s discretion and the Graduate school must receive documents supporting academic alert recommendations each quarter. All alert letters must cite:

- The reason for the academic alert.
- Steps the student must take to remove the academic alert.
- The consequences the student will face if steps were not taken to remove the academic alert.

Final Academic Alert

Formerly “Final Probation.” This status is used for a student who has failed to resolve the documented problems in the student’s academic alert status as submitted to the UW Graduate School. Programs send a final academic alert recommendation to the student with a copy to the Graduate School no later than the 10th business day of the final academic alert quarter.

The UW Graduate School will review the final academic alert letter and, if accepted, the Graduate School will send an additional letter from the Dean of the Graduate School to the student informing the student of final academic alert status. The graduate program must issue one quarter of final academic alert prior to a **Drop** (see below) from the program, except in clearly documented situations as discussed below. A program may request an additional quarter of final academic alert in extenuating circumstances. The Graduate School must receive documents supporting this recommendation and will send letters to the student informing the student of the final academic alert status. All final academic alert letters must cite:

- The reason for the final academic alert.
- Steps the student must take to remove the final academic alert.
- The consequences the student will face if steps were not taken to remove the final academic alert.

A graduate program may recommend a student be placed on academic alert status while the student is on leave. The program may not change a student’s academic alert status while the

student remains on leave. The student must apply for leave status each quarter which is then approved by the department ([UW Graduate School Policy 3.5](#)).

Additional considerations as described in the graduate program policy provided to students may result in an immediate recommendation to drop a student without progressing through Academic Alert and Final Academic Alert. The most common examples of this are unsatisfactory performance in the following:

- Qualifying or preliminary examinations as defined in a graduate program policy.
- Doctoral General Exam or Final Exam performance. If graduate faculty determine the student did not pass the general or final exam, the graduate faculty may indicate on the committee signature form that the student is recommended to be dropped from the program. See [UW Graduate School Policy 1.1](#) for general exam and final exam requirements.

To request a change to student status, the Graduate Program Chair/Coordinator must send a letter to the UW Graduate School with supporting documentation. A status change is recorded in the student record but does not appear on the student transcript.

A student in an academic alert status who is not on an approved On-Leave status may submit a request for reinstatement. If reinstated, the department will determine if the student will be reinstated with the academic alert status in place when the student left the university based on the program's internal academic performance and progress policy. See [UW Graduate School Policy 3.5](#) for leave policy to maintain graduate student status.

Academic Drop ([UW Graduate School Policy 3.7.4](#))

An **Academic Drop** is an official action that terminates a student's enrollment from a graduate program because either the student has failed to resolve documented problems in the student's final academic alert status, or the student has one of the performance issues outlined above.

Graduate programs should submit academic drop recommendations to the UW Graduate School prior to the start of the quarter but no later than the 5th business day of the drop quarter. The Graduate School approves the academic drop and drop status will appear on the student's official transcript.

Academic drop letters are sent to the student from the department and from the Dean of the Graduate School. When dropped, a student is not eligible to complete the program or return later to complete the degree. A student dropped from one graduate program may apply and enroll in a different graduate program if accepted.

Appeals ([UW Graduate School Policy 3.7.5](#))

Appeals must follow the process outlined in [UW Graduate School Policy 3.8](#) for the Academic Grievance Procedure.

Repeating a Course

Students may repeat any course. Both the first and second grades will be included in the cumulative GPA. Subsequent grades will not be calculated but will appear on the permanent record. The number of credits earned in the course will apply towards the degree requirements only one time.

12. Campus Support

There are several campus resources that students can use to get additional support, either for counseling and mental health or for specific kinds of help, including reading, writing, math, and study skills.

Because MCL is dually taught by the School of Engineering and Technology (SET) and the Milgard School of Business (MSB), MCL students have unique access to the Milgard Success Center at UW Tacoma: <https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/business/success>

The Milgard Success Center provides students with practical professional guidance on internships and employment to fuel career development. It also creates opportunities for alumni to network, develop additional skills, and give back to their alma mater.

Students are also strongly encouraged to explore the HuskiesCare services available to them: <https://tacoma.concerncenter.com>