

School of Arts and Social Sciences
Student Handbook

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For advice or information on a particular subject area, contact the school secretary and she will schedule an appointment for you to speak with the student affairs chair or the liaison for that specific area. Remember also that faculty are always willing to answer your questions about the area of study they represent.

First Year: You've been admitted – what's next?

Browse the calendar: For new students, university regulations often sound like a foreign language. Credits, core subjects, degree requirements – it can all feel quite overwhelming. The first thing you need to remember is that we have that covered. First year advisors are there to explain all of the terms to you; student affairs chairs are happy to discuss program regulations to help you make the best choice for you; student services development officers have tools to help you learn about career paths. Take the time to look at course descriptions to get a sense of the various subjects available to you. Browse through the academic regulations to get a sense of the rights and responsibilities you sign on for when you enter into a program. And familiarize yourself with the services offered in the Learning Commons. They are there to help you achieve your academic goals.

Considering a Program of Study

University degrees are described as being either 3 or 4 years, but that can be misleading. A year in 'university-speak' is the equivalent of 30 earned credits. That means that you will have taken and passed a combination of 3 and 6 credit courses which add up to 30 credits. For many students, especially those taking reduced loads (less than 30 credits in an academic year), the degree will take longer than 3 or 4 years to complete. A better way to think about your degree is to see it in terms of total number of credits required: to graduate with a 3-year BA, you will need to complete 90 credits, of which a certain percentage must be at the 2000, 3000 and sometimes 4000 level, while a 4-year degree requires the completion of 120 credits. Both types of degrees have distribution requirements; for details on this, read **degree structure** below.

First year advising: Every program has a set of core requirements. For some, like the BACS, the core subjects are taken in sequence over the period of study. For other programs, the core is a group of courses that create breadth and form a foundation for further study. First year advisors will help you make the choices that work best for you, but it will help them if you have thought about these issues:

Assessing interests: Because of the large number of choices in university, students are best served when they consider in advance what subjects they are likely to be interested in or curious about. Find out what the various courses look like. Also think about what subject areas you might want to take additional courses in. Not all courses are represented in the Core, so if there is a subject that you are interested in but it is not in the Core, make sure that you take the 1000-level introduction in your first year.

Looking ahead: Not all students know what they want to do after university, but they tend to have a general idea of the direction they want to take. You will have noticed as you read some of the course descriptions that most courses have **prerequisites**. This means that in order to take that course, you need to take another course first. For example, in order to take Psychology 2601, you will need to have taken Psychology 1101 and 1103. Since Psychology is not required in the BA Core, you would have to let your first year advisor know that you are interested in Psychology and want the option of taking upper level courses in it. Think about getting the prerequisites for the subjects that you are interested in. If you find out that the subject is not for you, the course will still fit either somewhere in your Core or in your electives (see below for **The Three Year Degree** and **The Four Year Degree**).

Understanding the Core

The BA Core has 5 categories; students must take a total of 6 credits in each category: Core 1 – English; Core 2 – Humanities (History, Philosophy, Religious Studies); Core 3 – Social Sciences (Anthropology/Sociology, Political Science), or Mi'kmaq Studies; Core 4 – Art, Drama, Music, Folklore, Cinema, or Communication; Core 5 – Math, Accounting, Management Science, Quantitative Research Methods, Science (Chemistry, Biology, Geology, Physics, Integrative Science) or Philosophy of Science. The total number of credits in the Core is 30 credits. You will find several choices in each category listed in the template that you will get from your advisor, many of which will be prerequisites for upper level courses should you decide to engage in further study in that subject area. For those core categories that

have multiple subject areas, you may if you choose take 3-credits from one discipline (another name for subject area) and 3-credits from one of another discipline in the same category. **Just remember that the Core is 30 credits taken over 5 categories with 6 credits from each category.**

You do not need to finish the Core in the first year. If there is a non-core course that you know that you are interested in, take it in the first year. This is especially important as there are a number of courses that are not offered every year. At least 60% of the Core should be completed in the first year of study.

The BACS Core has 24 credits in the 3-year degree and 30 in the 4-year degree. COMS 1100 is taken in the first year. It is the pre-requisite for COMS 2101, COMS 2103 and COMS 2105. Those courses are prerequisite for the 3000 level courses which are prerequisite for the 4000 level courses. Students enrolled in the BACS will only take 6 credits of core in the first year, but they will also want to start building the foundation for the Academic and Career sections of their degree. That means taking first year courses in subjects that they intend later to take upper level courses in. Don't worry if you don't know for sure what you want to focus on. If you choose a course and end up deciding it is not for you, you can use the course in your electives.

Reading a time-table

You've been advised and now you've been handed a timetable template. Here's what you need to know in order to create your first schedule. Find each course that you have been advised to take in the timetable and note the number of sections available for each. Some will only have one section; they will have a zero or a double zero after the course number. For example, FOLK 1101:00 means there is only one section of this course available. Courses with multiple sections will sometimes start their count from 1 or they will begin with 10. Courses with section numbers between 71-79 are used to designate distance sections. The courses with multiple sections are easier to schedule, so begin your timetabling by putting in the courses with one section only. Then move to the ones with only two sections. Along with your course number, put in whether it is first or second term (look at the start dates on the timetable for each course) and the classroom number (also on the timetable). The timetable will also tell you who your professor is. Take the time to familiarize yourself with his or her name. You may have questions for your professor, and it is very hard to get directions to the office of a professor if the student does not know his or her name.

Balance your schedule: Because some courses are 3-credit and some are 6-credits, you need to make sure that you are taking a balanced program of study. Students can take no more than five courses a term. That means you have to pay attention to what starts in September and what starts in January, and to make sure that you note any course that starts in September but ends in April (6-credit course). For instance,

ENGL1104:14	READING & WRITING ABOUT INDUSTRY AND THE ECONOMY	3	Start Date: 2017/01/04	End Date: 2017/04/04
Tuesday	CE311	2:30P M	3:45P M	JULIE SUTHERLAND
Thursday	CE311	2:30P M	3:45P M	JULIE SUTHERLAND

in the above entry, I know that English 1104:14 is taught in January and ends in April, that classes are Tuesday and Thursday from 2:30-3:45 in Room CE 311. The instructor is Dr. Julie Sutherland.

Where to go when you need help academically

It's not enough just to pass -- why your average is important: Scholarship students know the importance of keeping their marks up, but sometimes students who are not in that category can be rather blasé about marks. But several in-course scholarships and bursaries have average requirements; eligibility for co-op courses is based upon an average requirement; and in order to graduate with a Major, a student must achieve a minimum of a 65% average in the final 60 credits of the program and a 65% overall in the Major category. As well, CBU offers automatic non-renewable in-course scholarships (to those not in

receipt of a renewable scholarship) to students with a minimum of 24 credits completed in the FW term: 80% average -- \$500.00; 88% average -- \$1000.00 and 90% average -- \$1,500. So get into the habit early of setting goals.

If you are struggling with your courses, or if your marks are not what you expected, you are not alone. University often requires an adjustment in study habits. You will find yourself reading unfamiliar material, learning unfamiliar terms and being asked to write essays of more depth than those you wrote in high school. Take advantage of the **Writing Center** and the **Academic Success coaches** at the outset. It is a good strategy to have conversations with staff that know the challenges first year students are likely to encounter. They are happy to see you before that first assignment or midterm. Discuss your study habits with an academic success coach or show your rough draft to the writing advisor. It will boost your confidence and may prevent some of the disappointments that some students experience when they get their first set of marks back. Students who learn from the outset to effectively manage their time and plan ahead to complete their assignments in due course are less stressed and more capable of balancing the work/social/academic dimensions of their lives. Make the **CBU Library** one of your favourite places to visit. Arrange to discuss your research project with a reference librarian. The librarians and library staff are happy to help you sift through the information to find peer-reviewed, legitimate academic sources. For students with special needs or learning disabilities, the **Jennifer Keeping Centre** is a very important resource. Drop in to learn about what they do and whether or not you qualify for their services.

Dropping and Adding: Sometimes students realize after one or two classes that they do not want to stay in a course. It is important to know the dates for the drop/add window. In the Fall and Winter term, you can drop a course for a full refund up to and including the second Friday after the start of classes. Please check the List of Important Dates to make sure you know when the final day to drop without financial penalty is, or you will end up being charged for a portion of the tuition. The window to add a course is the same time-line. If you miss the final day to add, you will need permission of the instructor and the dean in order to get into the course.

Sometimes, students will realize several weeks into the course that they are not going to do well. If you do not want to have a failing grade on your transcript, you need to drop the course before the final date to drop without academic penalty. Any drops after that date will be shown as withdraw/failure.

Don't assume that because you have not attended a course, you do not have to officially drop.

Students who do not attend class but continue to stay on the class list will be assigned an F at the end of term and will still be charged for the course. Only if there are extenuating circumstances will they be allowed to drop without academic or financial penalty. The reason for this is simple. Students registered in a full course but not attending have effectively prevented someone on the wait list from getting in. It is the responsibility of the student to attend or drop within the time-frames set out in the List of Important Dates.

Transfer students: Students who transfer from other institutions are technically first year students, but the process of advising and course choice is more complex, depending on the number of credits they transfer in from their previous institution. Because of this, they are advised to consult directly with faculty on first arriving. This can sometimes mean that they miss out on the student services orientation given to first year students, who are directed to the Learning Commons for both registration and orientation. If you are a transfer student, please take advantage of the student services orientation in the Learning Commons. You will learn about the various services available to you and become familiar with registration process. Read the description of your program in the Academic Calendar and familiarize yourself with the structure of the degree prior to your advising appointment with faculty. Also, if you have applied for a 3-year degree but there is a possibility that you may want to upgrade to a 4-year degree later on, let your faculty advisor know. S/he will help you make strategic course choices that contribute to both options.

Keys to Success

How to avoid the pitfalls: Consult, consult, consult. When you are having difficulties with your subjects, discuss the difficulties with your professors. Seek tutoring services, consult an academic success coach to assess the source of the problem, use the Writing Centre.

Show your commitment: Self-motivation and self-discipline are keys to success. Regular attendance, proficient note-taking, and proper scheduling of research time leading up to assignment due dates all contribute to academic achievement. If you are struggling with a course, despite your best effort, take the time to speak to a faculty member or academic success coach. If this is an area that you intend to major in, you need to think about its suitability for you. In university, you have a range of choices. Take the time to explore your options and evaluate your strengths and weaknesses.

Respect the demands of the subject: Each discipline works with particular methodologies when engaging in research. These represent the lens through which a discipline views the world, the approach it takes when studying issues or formulating theories. It is part of your responsibility to learn to work within these disciplinary expectations. It is this variety of perspectives that makes the Bachelor degree such a valuable credential. Students who graduate with a bachelor degree will always be able to view an issue or a problem from several different viewpoints, making them highly efficient at formulating policy and solving problem, whether for a small business or a professional organization.

Plan ahead: Time management is difficult for students in university, especially former high school students who are used to a more regimented class schedule and a less demanding assignment regimen. Research projects and essays take time. There is a great deal of reading that has to take place before and during the writing process. Essays need to go through more than one draft. In order to participate fully in the class discussion, reading must be done in advance. Frequent testing is rare in university, so students must review notes and give themselves sufficient time to study for midterms and exams. Those who master time management do significantly better than those who underestimate the time it will take to complete a project or study for an exam. Lack of planning will lead to the kind of poor decision-making that can result in the types of problems described in the last two chapters of this handbook.

Inform your professor of any issues that might jeopardize your academic success: In cases of bereavement, family or personal emergencies, or physical or mental health issues, professors will need to know that your work is suffering for reasons other than lack of effort. Sometimes a professor will ask you to go through the formal process of speaking to the associate dean or dean; at other times, they may simply discuss accommodation with you themselves. In some cases, they will ask for some kind of corroboration, especially if they are not familiar with your history and have not had much interaction with you in class.

Know your rights and your responsibilities: Academic policies are there for your benefit. When we penalize academic dishonesty, we protect the reputation of the degrees we offer. When we set regulations around scheduling tests before exam time, we are ensuring that all students have sufficient time to study. By recognizing extenuating circumstances as a reason to drop a course after the drop date, to reschedule an exam or to give a student additional time to complete assignments, we respect the fact that life happens, and we need to be supportive of those experiencing serious personal issues. We provide the academic support units because we recognize that students need time to transition into the demands of university, and sometimes they simply need assurance when facing the uncertainties of subject areas they have very little experience in.

However, the ultimate responsibility for your success or failure lies with you. Those who take the time to know the policies and learn about the support systems are better prepared to handle situations as they arise. Those who read the program requirements carefully or get academic advising prior to registering every year are much less likely to experience difficulties or delays at graduation. Own your degree, because ultimately it is your achievement that we celebrate every graduation. Our role is to provide the learning environment, the disciplinary (subject area) rigour, the testing ground by which you can measure your achievement, and the skills development to take what you learn and apply it in any and every field you find yourself in after graduation.

Balance Work and Play: All work and no play is not just a formula for dullness; it can be harmful to mental and physical health and can jeopardize the very academic success that a focus on work alone was supposed to facilitate. University education is about more than the classroom; it is about forming social and intellectual relationships, engaging in intellectually stimulating debates, pursuing interests through membership in societies and clubs, promoting social causes through volunteerism and advocacy, experiencing new things, supporting CBU varsity teams, and attending social events. Students who are balancing the demands of their courses and a part-time job or family obligations sometimes feel that they have a hard enough time without factoring in the social dimension, but it is essential that students consciously work at making time for the things that are important. The university experience is unique in that it is the one place where individuals choose to engage in-depth study in the discipline of their choice, with people who share similar interests, in ways that challenge each individual to come to a deeper understanding both of themselves and the world around them. It provides opportunities for learning and sharing inside and outside the classroom, but it is only as successful as the level of engagement a student chooses to make. A memorable university experience is one that resonates throughout all aspects of a person's life after graduation. To truly enjoy your experience, you need to discover what is out there to be experienced and shared. Take the time to find about the societies, join study groups or volunteer to tutor fellow students, take in plays and art shows, cheer on the team at the varsity games or play on one, run for student union – the opportunities are many and varied.

Second Year: All Systems Are go

Choosing a program of study – what if you're not ready? Many students will have already settled on what they are concentrating or majoring in. This is also a good time for students taking a 4-year degree to think about what they want to do for a minor, or if an area major or honours is right for them. However, students may need more time to make such decisions. The standard time-frame for declaring a major or concentration is at the end of the second year. If you already know what you want to major or concentrate in, then move to the next section. If not, don't worry. There will be room in your degree to explore. Here's why.

Experiential Learning and Co-op Options

Experiential Learning Opportunities are embedded in several BA and BACS programs. There are several varieties, some paid, some voluntary. Some disciplines have internship courses, usually at the 3000 or 4000 level. These may be classified in the course description as internship or independent study (not all directed or independent study will have an intern component – this must be worked out with the instructor). In the BACS program, students must do two placement courses which involve 100 hours of paid or volunteer service during the term. Students may also apply for a work study bursary, apply to be a research assistant for a professor or facilitate Communication labs (students are required to take a facilitation course before applying for this position).

Cape Breton University has also initiated a Co-op option (this is not yet a certified program but plans are being made to apply for certification). In the Co-op courses, students must do 15 weeks of full-time employment in a position related to their studies. The Placement Officer will advise students on applying for the positions that are available, or consult with students on employment opportunities the students have arranged. Students interested in a Co-op course are advised to contact the Placement Officer or Student Affairs Chair at the end of the first year. A student must have a 75% average in order to qualify. For BACS students wishing to do the Co-op option, the Co-op courses will count in the place of the BACS placement courses. There are two Co-op courses, each worth three credits and taken in different (not back-to-back) terms.

The Three year BA and BACS

A three year **BA** degree has 90 credits divided equally into three categories: the core (described above), a concentration, and 30 credits of electives. The **electives** are used to explore subject areas or to take upper level courses that will not fit into one of the other two categories. The **concentration** (sometimes called **specialization**) is 30 credits in one subject area or discipline. The concentration discipline can have no more than 9 credits at the 1000 level and must have 12 credits at the 3000-level (plus any departmental regulations that apply). In year two, if you know what your concentration will be, take upper level courses in the discipline as well as core courses you have not yet taken. You may also want to take an elective to create some variety but always be sure to leave some slots open in case you change your mind and want to move courses into the elective category.

A three year **BACS** degree also has 90 credits divided into four categories: 24 credits in the Core (described above), 24 credits in an **Academic** field (of which 6 credits need to be at the 3000-level and only 9 credits can be at the 1000-level), 24 credits in the **Career** field (the credits must be from two or three different disciplines, none of which can be the one used in the Academic field), and 18 credits in **electives** (of which a maximum of 6 credits only can be from the Academic or Career field). This restriction on the electives means that students have to be aware of how many they've taken in the Career or Academic categories. Otherwise, they may find themselves with more credits than they can use.

Academic advising: After completing a first year of study, students do not have to get academic advising, but there are many reasons for doing so voluntarily. Department chairs and faculty are aware of

the program regulations in their area and can help students make the right choices early in their university career. They will map out likely scenarios and advise students on the kinds of courses on offer in their discipline. They can also explain things like offsets and distribution requirements and show you how to fill out a template for your degree choice.

This is especially important at the start of the third year. Often students, for financial or career reasons, opt to take a 3-year degree but think that they might eventually want to upgrade to a 4-year credential. If this is something you might be thinking about, please let your academic advisor know in the second or third year of advising. It is not as simple as adding an additional 30 credits to a 90-credit degree. The three year degrees do not have as many distribution requirements and it has no equivalent to a Minor option. When advisors are aware of your long term goals, they can advise you into courses that will eventually fulfill the 4-year distribution requirements for the Major and help you to build towards a Minor by choosing your electives strategically in the second and/or third year of study (see the description of the 4-year Major options below).

Third Year: the Time for Decisions

In the third year, a student should be thinking about whether or not to do a three year degree or a four year, and if it is to be a four year, what type of 4-year. The basis for this decision depends on two very important factors: career goals and personal fulfillment. Many employers and some specialty programs simply require a degree, but many professional degrees and graduate programs will not accept a student unless he or she has a 4-year degree. When in doubt, drop into the student development centre and speak to one of the career advisers. Write to the institutions in which you plan to pursue further studies to find out what they require. Read the employment credentials required for jobs that you are interested in. And speak to faculty about professions that are associated with their discipline.

If the decision is to do a **3-year degree**, then you need to ensure that you complete your Core requirements, your 30 credit Concentration and your 30 credits in the electives category. Some three year degrees (for example, French, History and English) have distribution requirements; this means that you will have to take courses in specific categories. And all require a minimum of 12 credits or higher at the 3000-level. If you have not already taken the required courses, take them this year.

The Four Year Degree BA and BACS

If the decision is to continue in a 4-year degree, you will have declared your major at the end of the second year. You have several choices:

Major/Minor – for this program, besides the 30 credit Core and 18 credits in electives, you will need 48 credits in subject A and 24 in subject B. Moreover, each program has a set of **distribution requirements**. These are of two kinds: subject area and course level. For instance, in Political Science, you must take a course in each of the following: international politics, public administration, Canadian politics, research methods and political theory. You will have several choices within each area and choices beyond these areas, but if the distribution requirements are not met, you will not be able to graduate, so you need to keep a checklist of what you've taken and what you still need to take. You will also have a minimum number of 4000-level courses that you will need to complete. The general requirements for the Major category are a maximum of 9 credits at the 1000 level and a minimum of 24 credits at the 3000-level and above, of which 9-credits need to be at the 4000-level. However, some disciplines will require a larger number of 4000-level credits, so remember to check departmental regulations or consult with a faculty member from your subject area. Over the next two years, careful planning and consultation will smooth the way for graduation. Remember that courses occur in rotation, so choices available one year may not be available the next. However, all departments schedule with these requirements in mind, so each category is represented every year. Your Minor, unless specifically named (for example, Gender and Women's Studies), has only one requirement: 24 credits of which only 9 can be at the first year level and a minimum of 6 credits has to be at the 3000 level.

We do not offer Majors or Honours in all subject areas, so when you do decide upon the subject area(s) that you wish to focus on, meet with a faculty advisor to review your options.

Double Major – Some students cannot choose between disciplines. They may want to go on to take a multi-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary degree after graduation or they may want two solid areas related to a particular career choice. A double major is the solution. In a double major, while there are distribution requirements for each discipline, they are not as numerous. A student takes 36 credits in each discipline, of which no more than 9 credits can be at the 1000-level and there must be at least 18 credits at the 3000-level or above, of which 6 credits must be at the 4000-level (remember that departmental regulations may have additional requirements). In a double major there is no Minor so the breakdown is Core, Subject A (36 credits), Subject B (36 credits) and electives (18 credits).

Area Major – Some students envision a particular career path, but find that the typical major does not meet all of their needs. In this case, you should consider an area major. This is a major of 72 credits spread over 3 disciplines with a minimum of 18 credits in any single discipline. There is a significant consultation involved in mapping out an area major. Each of the three subject area liaisons is involved in advising the students on the courses that fit their career goals. The major is usually focussed around a particular concept or focus. For instance, someone interested in working on policy decisions around environmental remediation could take courses in Environmental Studies (ENVI), Political Science (POLS) and Accounting (ACCT). The number of courses and the levels required is worked out by the student and subject area liaisons in consultation with the dean or associate dean. There are as many combinations as there are career trajectories. Students apply for an Area Major by the end of year 2. Within the 72 credits, no more than 6 credits of 1000 level in each discipline will count in the Major. As well, there must be a total of 24 credits at the 3000-level or above, of which 9 credits must be at the 4000-level. This might mean doing 3-credits of 4000-level in each discipline, 6 credits in one and 3 in a second or all 9 in one of the disciplines. What you choose to do will depend very much on the focus and balance you wish to achieve between the three disciplines. There is no Minor with an Area Major; students do the Core, the 72 credits of the Major and 18 electives.

Honours – For students who plan to go on to graduate studies or whose proficiency and interest in a topic is such that they want a strong specialization in the area, we have honours programs in several of our subject areas. For an Honours degree, you will earn 120 credits, 66 credits will be in a single subject area. Of those 66, no more than 9 credits can be 1000-level and 36 of the Honours courses must be at the 3000-level or above, of which 15 credits must be at the 4000 level. The Honours thesis can be counted in the 15 credits. The overall minimum average and the average for the courses in the honours subject area is 75%. The overall yearly average is calculated on the final two years (60 credits) of your program. An 85% average or higher allows you to graduate with distinction. **Each department has specific distribution requirements for its honours program, so prior to declaring your intention to do an Honours degree, speak with a faculty advisor about level and category distribution requirements.** There is no minor in an honours program; students must do the Core, 66 credits of the Honours subject and 24 credits of electives.

Academic Advising for the Third Year

By now, you will have decided upon the subject area that will make up your concentration (in some programs this is referred to as a specialization). You will need 30 credits of courses in a single discipline while meeting the distribution requirements of the discipline in question. Please note that some disciplines (also called subject areas) have requirements over and above the minimum requirements. For example, in English, you require a 4000 level course and you need to cover three of the five groups in your course choices. It is always a good idea to meet with a faculty advisor prior to registration in your final year.

If you've decided on a four year degree, and your decision differs from what you applied for when you first entered university, now is the time to fill out the program change form. There is no fee for submitting a change of program request form, and it is important that our data system have accurate information on your program of study, both for advising and graduation purposes.

Be aware of the regulations that you are under. Regulations change as new program requirements or changes to programs are put in place. Students under old regulations are grandfathered (meaning that they can meet the old regulations in order to graduate). Or they can opt for the new regulations. However, they cannot mix and match. It is important then, when talking to an advisor, to identify the year that you registered and indicate whether you wish to follow the old or new regulations for a given program.

Fourth Year – You’ve Made It

Academic Advising – Know the program distribution requirements. For some students, this simply means consulting the calendar and checking off the necessary requirements against their academic transcript. For others, it will mean sitting with a faculty advisor to find out what they still need to take. The important piece is that you go into the last year of study knowing what you need to take in order to graduate. This sometimes means checking twice or having someone check for you.

Graduation: the final countdown

You are required to apply for graduation by November 1st for Spring graduation and May 1st for Fall graduation. It is very important to do this at or before the deadline so that if you have missed any of your degree requirements, you can be informed in time to register in the necessary courses. Once your application is received, a student services officer will do an audit of your degree to make sure all of your requirements have been or are being met. It is important that you check off the correct information on the form and that the program information on the form does not contradict what is in TheSIS (the student information system). If in doubt, speak to an advisor.

What To Do When The Unexpected Happens

Life happens, and sometimes it goes in a direction that a student is totally unprepared for. This falls under the category of extenuating circumstances. When medical or family issues create a disruption in your studies, the stress can be compounded if you are not aware of the options available to you.

Requesting accommodation: If it is a sudden death or a medical or other emergency that prevents you from writing an exam or making a due date, contact the dean's or associate dean's office. He or she will contact professors to let them know that accommodation will be needed. Accommodation means that the professor may need to give you an extension on an assignment, make up a missed test or re-schedule an exam. Note, however, that you will often need to provide some documentation to show that the situation warrants accommodation. When you contact the Dean or Associate Dean, he or she will advise you on the type of documentation required and ask you to describe the types of accommodation that you will need.

Sudden withdrawal: At times, the situation is much more serious and cannot be met with an accommodation. A student may have to leave the program due to medical or family issues. In that case, the student may request withdrawal without penalty. In a case of that nature, it is important that you or someone you designate contact the dean to inform him or her of the situation. The dean will ask to meet with you or someone you have designated in order to assess the situation, recognizing that such a meeting may need to be deferred to a less stressful time-frame. It is important to have any documentation that is required. While it may be very difficult to address academic matters during stressful circumstances, the simple act of informing the dean's office paves the way for whatever accommodation or withdrawal requests come later. All information given to the Dean's office is considered confidential.

Recognizing anxiety: Very often, students find themselves feeling very stressed as deadlines approach faster than expected. Recognizing that you are stressed is the first step in getting help. Talk to a faculty member or make an appointment to see a Student Development officer. If the stress is related to academics, an academic success coach can help with time-management and stress reduction skills. If, however, it goes beyond academics, you might want to consider asking to see the student counsellor. He or she will help you assess the situation and develop coping strategies to get you through the difficult times. A counsellor can also contact professors if the problems require some form of accommodation. Just know that the student development officers, student service staff, and faculty are all able to advise you on where to go for help.

Financial questions: For many students, the costs of university are both intimidating and confusing. They need not be, however. The staff in Student Financial Services (in the Registrar's Office) will answer your student loan questions and advise you on available bursaries. If your student loan has not arrived by the time of the first class, they will work with you to fill out the necessary promissory note. What is important is that you work with staff in the Finance Office and Student Financial Services to address problems when they arise. Do not wait until you receive a notice that you are in arrears.

Academic Performance Issues and Appeals

Grade Appeals: Sometimes a student gets a grade in the course that comes nowhere near his or her expectation. If a student feels this grade is not a fair assessment of his or her performance, the student can appeal. An appeal must be initiated within 30 days of the student receiving the grade. If in exceptional circumstances this was not possible and the request is made after the date, then the appeals committee must rule on whether the student has a legitimate reason for appealing after the deadline. A student cannot appeal the grade on a single assignment, except in the case where a student is challenging an accusation of plagiarism; the assessment of the final grade is made on all of the written material produced for a grade.

There are three steps to a grade appeal. The first is to ask the professor to reassess the material in question. This should be done by the student, but if there has been friction between the two parties, a student can ask the student affairs chair to make the request. However, you will need to be clear about what the issue is if you want the chair to intervene. Sometimes a reassessment will find an error in the addition or warrant a reconsideration of the mark. When it does not, the professor will provide the student with the rationale for the evaluation and point out the problems that led to the low grade.

If a student does not agree with the assessment, he or she will then contact the student affairs chair and request an appeal. For this step, a fee must be paid to the registrar's office. The chair will set up a panel of two, one chosen by the student from the discipline in question, and one chosen by the faculty member. It is important to remember that these choices do not represent the parties; rather, they are individuals trusted by the parties to make a fair assessment of the case. For that reason, it is very important that the student indicate clearly in what way the mark was inaccurate or unfair. It is not enough to say it is, or to ascribe personal bias. The student must show how the evaluation does not represent the quality of the material submitted or does not follow the criteria for evaluation set out by the professor.

The panel has three options, award a higher or a lower grade or agree with the professor's assessment. If in the course of their assessment, they find a case of plagiarism not formerly noticed by the professor, they are required under the rules of academic ethical standards to report this plagiarism to the dean's office. At that point, material will be assessed under the rules of the Plagiarism policy.

If the student does not agree with the mark awarded by the panel, he or she may request that the Appeals Committee hear the case. This is the final stage for a grade appeal and the committee's decision is final. A student must contact the dean to move to this stage of the appeal. All materials collected for the appeal to this point are forwarded to the Committee chair. If the Chair has questions or requires further information, he/she will contact the student and professor to request the additional material.

Academic Warning and Discontinuation: Sometimes students are not able to achieve good academic standing because they've had difficulty with one or more of their courses. When this happens, students are placed in one of three categories, each with implications for further study.

1. Alert: The calendar states, "At the end of April, students previously in good academic standing will be placed on academic alert if they have an average of less than 50% but have passed more than 50% of courses in the period under review." Students on alert will receive a letter from the dean's office stating that they must get academic advising and see an academic success coach before they will be permitted to register for the next term. We do this to ensure that students are provided with the necessary information and advice to make sound choices in the upcoming year. Students are often surprised that their failing grades are sometimes more to do with bad study habits than a failure to understand the material. Success coaching and sound academic advice will provide them with the information they need to move back into good standing.

2. Academic Warning: “At the end of April, students previously in good academic standing will be placed on academic warning standing if they have an average of less than 50% and have failed more than 50% of courses in the period under review” (Academic Calendar). The Performance Review Committee of each school meets in May to assess the records of the students on warning and assign a maximum number of credits that students will be permitted to take in the following term (including spring and summer). The assessment is based upon the number and level of failing grades they have on their transcript. This information is then sent out in a letter to the student. Students on warning cannot register until they receive academic advising and meet with an academic success coach. Nor will they be permitted to take more than the number of credits allowed except in the case of a successful appeal (see below).

3. Discontinuation: “At the end of April, students previously on academic warning will be placed on academic discontinuance for 12 months beginning May 1, if they have an average less than 50% in the period under review. They may register for only one 6-credit course at CBU during that period. They have the right to appeal their academic discontinuance to the dean of their program of study. The student’s academic standing will return to good academic standing following the period of discontinuance”. The student will receive a letter once the committee has assessed whether or not this is the appropriate category, outlining the limitations on the student as a result of this classification.

Appeals: Students can appeal the penalty assessed in category 2 or 3 to the chair of the Performance Review Committee, who in most cases will be Associate Dean or Dean of the program. To do this, they must provide an explanation of why their performance did not make the grade. If there are extenuating circumstances that have since been mitigated, the dean may choose to request that the student be permitted to take more than the allotted number of courses. In some cases, the dean will agree to request a change in the limitation on registration for the second term if the student passes all of his or her courses in the first term.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is at the core of all scholarly activity at the university, from the publication of a book by a faculty member to the production of an essay or writing of attest by a student. The university's reputation along with the reputation of our degrees rests on our commitment to ensuring the academic integrity of all of those who work in the university. While faculty are keenly aware of this fact, students often do not realize that our insistence on standards of academic honesty are part of the effort to ensure that their degree represents high standards and best practice. For that reason, we take cases of academic dishonesty seriously, and when faculty report cases of plagiarism and cheating, they are not only fulfilling their obligation to practice academic integrity; they are also protecting the reputation of the students in their courses who produce original material. Our policy balances the obligation to educate with the obligation to penalize students when a case of academic dishonesty is brought to our attention.

There are three types of academic dishonesty, each treated differently in terms of penalty.

Cheating: Cheating is using someone else's answers or work as your own. It typically occurs in test situations when a student smuggles course material or technology into the classroom or copies another student's work during the test/exam. It also occurs when a student copies a classmate's essay and submits it as his or her own. Cheating is treated as a very serious offense. When two students are complicit in the event, both the copier and the one permitting the work to be copied are judged equally complicit. Usually, students are assigned a 0 on the course and may face discontinuation, depending on the seriousness of the infraction.

Fraud: Fraud is representing oneself in a classroom, on-line course or test/exam as someone else. This offense is very serious both for the person committing the fraud and the one permitting it. Both parties in this type of offense will be discontinued.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the act of representing someone else's words, work, thesis or data as one's own. Students tend to see plagiarism as simply copying someone else's material into their assignment without proper citation but it is much more complicated than that. Close paraphrase, even when cited, is plagiarism of sentence form and structure. Copying graphs and illustrations without identifying the source is plagiarism. Summarizing an author's argument without acknowledging the author is plagiarism. Purchasing an assignment (even when the writers claim it is just for research purposes) and putting one's name to it is plagiarism. Because plagiarism is complex, CBU recognizes that students may struggle in the early stages of their university career with proper citation. Professors will take the time to discuss plagiarism in class, especially in the stages leading up to the first assignment. The policy and the definition of plagiarism is also clearly stated in course outlines. It is important to know that anytime a professor suspects plagiarism, he or she is required both to report it and to assess the nature of the plagiarism. In cases where the source is not easily identified, the professor will test the student on his or her knowledge of the content in the assignment.

The university has also created a 3-stage system of penalties:

First report of plagiarism: The penalty for the first report, once the professor has discussed the issue with the student, is up to the faculty member. Faculty can require the student to rewrite the essay, either to be evaluated or not, or the faculty can simply assign a 0 for the assignment. If the case is considered egregious (for instance, in the case of a proven purchase of an essay, the dean may require a second stage penalty.

Second report: The penalty for the second incident of plagiarism, even it occurs in the same term or in the same course, is a 0 in the course. As in the previous report, if the case is considered egregious (for instance, stealing an essay and submitting it as one's own), the dean can move to discontinuation.

Third report: With the third report, the student is discontinued. For 12 months, the student cannot take courses at CBU and should he or she take courses from another institution during that time, those courses will not be accepted for transfer credit, which means that they will not count towards the student's program should he or she return to CBU.

Appealing academic dishonesty charges: Students accused of any type of academic dishonesty may appeal both the charge and the penalty. If they appeal the charge, they must show that their material is not a case of academic dishonesty. This means that they must present evidence to show the work was theirs. If the appeal is against the penalty, they must show what extenuating circumstances led to the decision to commit an act of academic dishonesty. Usually such a defense requires documentation corroborating their claims. Such circumstances must be serious in nature and related to the kind of stress that would lead to the poor judgement involved. The committee will assess the evidence and either uphold the dean's decision or modify the penalty in some way. The committee's decision is final.