Applying to Computer Science Degree Programs
September 14, 2016

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Undergraduate Program Director
Outline

- People
- Criteria
- Deadlines
- Application
- Review
- Decisions

- Notification
- Advising
- Registration/Overrides
- Re-Application
- Frequently Asked Questions
People You Should Know

Darlene Fahey
Undergraduate Program Manager

Tara LaFlamme
Undergraduate Program Assistant

Greg Boisseau
CICS Exploratory Track Advisor

Bill Verts
Peer Advising (ACE) Manager

https://www.cics.umass.edu/ugrad-education/ace-cs-ug-advising-center
Computer Science Community

Our entire undergraduate community is 970 majors, applicants on contract, and minors.

We have 919 CS majors
- 898 BS
- 21 BA

We have 47 CS minors

We have about 250 applications per year to the major.

And about 60 faculty.
Undergraduate Programs

Computer Science Undergraduate Programs

- Bachelor of Science in CS
- Bachelor of Arts in CS
- Minor in Computer Science

Informatics Major

- Started in BDIC (2014)
- Talk to Michelle Trim
  mtrim@cs.umass.edu
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science (BS)

Comprehensive training in Computer Science

Goals

● Graduate Study in CS
● Most Technical Entry-Level Positions in Industry

Course Requirements

● 14 Computer Science
● 4 Math
● 2 Majors-Level Lab Science
Math and Science Details

Math

● Two semesters of engineering-level calculus (M131, M132)
● Linear algebra (M325)
● Multivariate calculus (M233) or calculus based statistics (STAT515)

Science

● Two majors level lab science
● CHEM 111 (or 121), CHEM 112 (or 122)
● PHYSICS 151 (or 181), PHYSICS 152 (or 182)
● GEOLOGY 101/lab (or 103/131, 105/131)
Bachelor of Arts in Computer Science (BA)

Computing Focused Degree in Computer Science

Goals

- To apply sophisticated computing techniques to a second discipline.

Course Requirements

- 10 Computer Science
- 3 Math
- Foreign Language
- 4-course Concentration
Other Requirements

Writing

● Junior Year Writing (COMPSCI 305)

Foreign Language

● BA Only

General Education

● UMass Requirements
● Integrative Experience (COMPSCI 320 or 326)
Minor in Computer Science

Goals

● Add CS background to your primary discipline.

Course Requirements

● 2 entry-level computer science (COMPSCI 121, 187)
● 2 200-level computer science (COMPSCI 220, 230, 240, 250)
● 1 200-level or above computer science
Applying to the Computer Science Major

Two Paths into the Major

- Admissions Office
- By Application

About 25% of CS majors join us through our application process.

You can find out much of this information here:
https://www.cics.umass.edu/ugrad-education/major-change-cs
Submitting an Application

You must submit an application to be considered!

Where is the application and when do I apply?

- https://www.cics.umass.edu/ugrad-education/major-change-cs
  
  After Fall add/drop ends (~ Sep 19 - Oct 1)
  
  After Spring add/drop ends (~ Feb 6 - Mar 1)

What is on the application?

- General information (name, email, GPA, spire id, grad date, major)
- Which major program you applying to (BS, BA)
- Which CS courses you have completed already
  - CS Predictor courses, CS upper-level, Other courses (e.g., MATH, SCIENCE)
Admittance to CS / Receiving a Contract

After submitting an application there are 3 possibilities

(1) You are admitted directly into the major
   ● You have satisfied CS predictor courses and did well.
   ● Typically requires contract on upper-level courses.

(2) You receive a contract
   ● You receive a contract indicating courses and grades you must achieve.
   ● You are considered an Applicant on Contract (AOC)
   ● You are given priority into CS courses to satisfy the contract

(3) You are denied.
Application Process

When should I apply?

● You must be enrolled in at least CS 187 and MATH 131
● You must apply before becoming a senior
  ○ Determined by total credit hours

Application Deadlines:

● October 1, 2016 (for Spring 2017)
● March 1, 2017 (for Fall 2017)
Application Process Communication

Where do I send my application?

- EMAIL PDF to CSApply@cs.umass.edu (11:59pm deadline)
- PAPER FORM to CS Main Office (5:00pm deadline)

Email will be sent within 1 week to confirm receipt of application.

Contact CSApply@cs.umass.edu if confirmation is not received.
Application Repeats

What happens if I do not satisfy my contract?

You must reapply

- Up to 3 consecutive applications are allowed

If you are on contract #2 or #3, have a plan B!

You need to do all you can to make your best case in your first attempt at the CS predictor courses:

CS 121, 187 & MATH 131, 132
Making Your Case

Demonstrate Proficiency in Predictor Courses

- >= B+ in MATH 131/132
- >= B+ in COMPSCI 121/187
- >= B+ in upper-level CS course (if necessary)

Good Overall Performance

- >= C in all other courses
- Must be at UMass - total of at least 12 credits
- No P/F on predictor courses, major requirements, or course counted in the 12 contract credits.
- Overall GPA >= 3.0
Applicant Contracts

Plan to Make Your Case

● A contract may take more than one semester!
● Apply, register, and request overrides as soon as possible!

If Your Situation Changes

● Unable to take contract courses?
● Contact upd@cs.umass.edu immediately!

Failure to do so may violate your contract and use up an application!
Tips, Advice, and Strategies

CS Application != CS Major

- It gives you priority to contract courses only.
- Be prompt with registration

More CS Courses != BETTER

- Focus on contract courses
- Do not overload with extra courses
- Even if you are behind in CS!

Do NOT go too far into CS as applicant

- This is risky if you do not meet your contract!
- We consider your entire cumulative transcript
FAQ: Who isn't admitted when they apply? Admission is held up only when a student struggles in beginning courses, making success in the major unlikely. Students who are not admitted because of failure to meet the conditions set for admission, are welcome to re-apply, according to the re-application eligibility rules.
FAQ: What if I need to make changes or have made changes to my schedule during Add/Drop that affect my contract? Contact UPD immediately, preferably before making a change. Changes may/may not impact a contract, but each application will be considered case by case. Do not assume that changes to your schedule will automatically mean an adjustment to your contract. The UPD will determine whether to adjust your contract or require a re-application.
FAQ: What if I know that I won't make my contract? If circumstance beyond your control keep you from meeting your contract, contact the UPD immediately. Failure to meet contract within three consecutive contracts means you will not be a Computer Science major (see Re-Application).
Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ: What if I meet prereq (C or better), but I don't get the contract grade, i.e., I got a C+ in 187 but I needed a B+? University Policy only allows a repeat of C- or lower (see Academic Regulations). If you received a grade of C or above in the contract course, you are not eligible to repeat that course according to University Policy. The C+ in 187 meets the prereq for the 200-level core, so you would request an override(s) for core course(s) and re-apply if you are eligible.
Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ: Can I take a course P/F during my contract term(s)? See R.O. Academic Regulations for P/F Option rules. The Undergraduate Program follows these guidelines in a contract term: Opting to take a course P/F is permitted except on specified contract courses, CS major requirements, or on courses counting toward the 12 total term credits in a contract term.
Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ: What about mandatory P/F (MPF) courses during my contract term(s)? At least 12 total term credits must be letter graded. The one exception is First Year Seminars that are MPF. These classes can count toward the 12 contract credits required on applications.
FAQ: Can I withdraw from a course during my contract term(s)? For a contract to remain valid, withdrawals (W) are permitted except for specific contract courses, provided these do not violate the total term credits stated on the contract. If total term credits drop below contract total, your applicant status is no longer valid. A consecutive re-application by the next deadline is required.
Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ: What is an override? An override is special permission to enroll in a course when you can't enroll yourself on SPIRE. We do not provide permission numbers. Override requests are submitted by students via the online form and we handle waitlists manually in the CS Main Office.
Good Luck!