

School of Computer Science  
Human-Computer Interaction

Master's Student Handbook



Degree Programs Covered by This Handbook:

MHCI: Master of Human-Computer Interaction

AMHCI: Accelerated Master of Human-Computer Interaction

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# SECTION 1: Welcome & Introduction

## Welcome to the HCII at Carnegie Mellon University.

**Welcome** to the Master of HCI program, the HCI Institute, Carnegie Mellon University and the city of Pittsburgh! We are all very excited to have you join us as part of our 30th entering class of MHCI students. You are joining a vibrant, collaborative and multidisciplinary community with over 400 faculty, staff, students, post-doctoral fellows and visitors whose focus is HCI. The HCI Institute was founded in 1993 and graduated its first class of master's students in the spring of 1994. Since then, the program has graduated over 1300 students who have gone on to wonderful careers in industry and academia, at places both large and boutique, and everything in between.

The MHCI program is a vital piece of the HCII's educational mandate and has helped the HCII become the center of HCI education and research worldwide with its unique interdisciplinary culture, the rigorous capstone project, and an enriching combination of both theory and practice. Our students work very hard in leveraging all these strengths during their time here and leave with the skills to design, develop, study, and manage the use of novel systems and interfaces that we will all be using in the years to come. We are thrilled to welcome you into our family and are excited to get to know you!

*~Brad A. Myers, Charles M. Geschke Director and Professor, Human-Computer Interaction Institute*

While this handbook is specific to your academic experience in the department, it is just one element of the Graduate Student Handbook Suite. There are several other resources within the suite that you should consult when needed:

- University-Wide Graduate Student Handbook (Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs)
- The Word Student Handbook

If the handbook is needed in a different format to address accessibility needs, the student should contact the MHCI Director of Student Affairs.

# SECTION 2: Program Vision, Mission, and Values

## 2.1: Vision

### Our Vision

At the HCI Institute, we are dedicated to connecting thought leaders in computer science, design, behavioral and social sciences in order to develop human-centered software, services and systems that improve people's lives through technology.

Our collaborative and interdisciplinary nature connects us with faculty and students in the [School of Computer Science](#), [Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences](#), [Tepper School of Business](#), [College of Fine Arts](#), [College of Engineering](#) and the [Software Engineering Institute](#).

## 2.2: Mission

### Introduction to the HCII Mission

#### Our Mission

- To apply rigor and creativity consistently and pervasively
- To infuse HCI methods appropriately across CMU and beyond
- To push the boundaries of problems HCI addresses
- To expand the tools and methods we use to address those problems
- To deliver artifacts, services, and systems that improve people's lives
- To always remember that people are at the heart of our work

## 2.3: Values

There is more to computer science than just the machines, which is why **we put the humans first.**

## SECTION 3: Degrees Offered

Our **Master's in HCI program** was the first in the world dedicated to preparing professionals for careers in user-centered research and UX design. We are proud to have graduated more than 1,300 alumni who have gone on to make an impact in education and industry.

Today, we offer **undergraduate, master's** and **Ph.D.** programs in HCI that span a full cycle of knowledge creation.

Students in the MHCI and AMHCI program will receive a degree that is titled "Master of Human-Computer Interaction" upon completion of the program.

## SECTION 4: MHCI and HCII Personnel

Skip Shelly, Director, MHCI, [sshelly@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:sshelly@andrew.cmu.edu)  
Room 201 @ 3SC

Nicole Willis, Director of MHCI Student Affairs, [nmwillis@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:nmwillis@andrew.cmu.edu)  
Room 209 @ 3SC  
phone: 412.268.7971

Jennifer McPherson, MHCI Operations Manager, [jmcperson@cs.cmu.edu](mailto:jmcperson@cs.cmu.edu)  
Room 206 @ 3SC  
Phone: 412.268.5903

Cameil Ruffing, Administrative Coordinator II, [cruffing@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:cruffing@andrew.cmu.edu)  
Room 206 @ 3SC  
phone: 412.268.2906

Jessica Vogt, Engagement Manager, [vogtj@cmu.edu](mailto:vogtj@cmu.edu)  
Room 201 @ 3SC

### HCII Director's Office Contacts

Brad Myers, Charles M. Geschke Director and Professor, HCII, [bam@cs.cmu.edu](mailto:bam@cs.cmu.edu)  
Carolyn Buzzelli-Stumpf, Assistant to Director, HCII, [cbstumpf@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:cbstumpf@andrew.cmu.edu)

HCII Faculty: See complete listing at <http://hcie.cmu.edu/people/faculty>

# SECTION 5: Departmental Resources

**Bulletin Boards:** shared bb space in the MHCI area. See Jenn/Cameil about posting.

**Mailboxes:** MHCI/AMHCI students are assigned shared mailbox space at 300 S. Craig Street in the MHCI space on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor.

**Printer/Copy Machine Availability:** 300 S. Craig Street, MHCI 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor space. Accessible with MHCI access and CMU ID card for SCS printing/copying purposes. Please add paper from the communal paper storage area as needed. During business hours, contact Jenn or Cameil with issues or problems with the printer. After hours, please follow posted instructions next to printer.

**MHCI Lab/Office Space:** a random assignment is made in the fall for shared office space, spring/summer offices are assigned based on capstone team assignment. MHCI/AMHCI students have 24/7 access to the space and their assigned office location.

**Key/Access Card Distribution:** All students assigned to office space receive a key. There is a \$50 lost key fee if you lose your key. Keys are exchanged for new keys in January when capstone team assignments are announced. Access card management is handled by Jenn McPherson and Cameil Ruffing. If you have any issues, please email them directly for assistance.

**Purchasing and Reimbursement Procedures and Policies:** Please see here for details on [MHCI Conference & Professional Development Information for MHCI 2025](#)

Details for MHCI Capstone purchasing and reimbursement procedures and policies will be provided at the start of the spring term.

**Department Office/Building Security, Repairs and Services:** Please contact MHCI Operations Manager, Jennifer McPherson and MHCI Administrative Assistant, Cameil Ruffing for any issues.

Departmental/College Graduate Student Organizations/Advisory Committee/Graduate Representatives:

- MHCI has two Graduate Student Assembly seats annually. These are decided during MHCI Orientation in August.

**Department Approach to Press and Media Relations:** If you are invited for an interview by a media representative and would like to consult with our in-house team, contact Aaron Aupperlee, CMU School of Computer Science Senior Director of Media Relations ([aaupperlee@cmu.edu](mailto:aaupperlee@cmu.edu); 412-268-9068). For HCII media tracking purposes, please notify Karen Harlan, HCII Communications Specialist ([kharlan@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:kharlan@andrew.cmu.edu)) of any pieces that mention you and your work.

**Department/College/University Brands and Logos:** For guidelines on the use of department, college, or university brands and logos, please contact Karen Harlan, HCII Communications Specialist ([kharlan@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:kharlan@andrew.cmu.edu)).

## SECTION 6: Advising

### 6.1: Role of an Advisor and Advisor Assignments

- The MHCI Director of Student Affairs serves as the Academic Advisor for the MHCI and AMHCI students.
- Advising appointments may be scheduled via <https://nicolewillismhci.youcanbook.me>
- Midterm semester grades are reviewed each semester for progress check and QPA check. Notifications will be sent via email the week following mid-semester grades posting if there is inadequate progress toward degree.
- Final semester grades are reviewed for progress check and QPA check. Notifications will be sent prior to the next semester start date if there is inadequate progress toward degree or if there is academic probation action being taken.

### 6.2: Advisor/Advisee Collaboration

#### **The changing role of an advisor over the lifetime cycle of the graduate student**

- Advising on classes, elective selection, professional development matter, job searching process, networking, and alumni opportunities.

#### **Attending conferences and meetings**

**[Details on Conference & Professional Development Information for MHCI 2025:](#)**

#### **Respect and confidentiality**

- Maintaining confidentiality of research projects and publications, respect of confidentiality among and between group members.

#### **Communication**

- Maintain open lines of communication, respond to one another in a timely fashion, address conflicts respectfully and seek guidance when needed, clearly define timelines and expectations.



## 6.3: Review/Redress of Academic Conflicts

MHCI Path of Escalation *for appeals, issues, and/or conflicts*

This is provided for further clarity on how to move through difficult situations during your time here at the MHCI. These examples are for illustrative purposes and are not to be taken as the only possible situations that the escalations apply in. In any of these cases you are welcome to reach out to the MHCI Director of Student Affairs, Nicole Willis, to consult on a course of action or who to go to for further assistance.

### **Personal Issue:**

*Student → Director of MHCI Student Affairs → with referral to other appropriate resources*

Examples:

A student has a death in the family or a family member who is ill and will be absent.

A student has a physical or mental health issue that may impact their attendance/participation in a class and/or the program.

### **Grade/Faculty/Course Issue:**

*Student → Faculty → MHCI Director/MHCI Student Affairs Director → Department Head → Dean*

Examples:

A student has an issue with the grade or assignment in a course they are enrolled in.

A student has an issue with a team in a course assignment.

### **Team or Peer Issue/Conflict:**

*Student/Team → MHCI Director/MHCI Student Affairs Director → Student Affairs Liaison → Grad Ed Office*

Examples:

A student feels that team member(s) aren't fulfilling their responsibilities and are "slacking."

A student feels that s/he is being discriminated against or harassed by another student(s)

Students can also refer to the Summary of [Graduate Student Appeal and Grievance Procedures](#) for connection to University policy and procedures.

## SECTION 7: Master's Degree Requirements

### 7.1: Residency Requirements

MHCI and AMHCI requirements for degree completion are as follows:

All course work completed toward the master's degree are completed at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA.

MHCI and AMHCI do not accept transfer course work for the master's degree.

U.S. government regulations require F-1 and J-1 international students to be enrolled in an in-person degree program, with in-person expectation coursework. Even though this immigration requirement is specifically for international students, residency requirements in a degree program must be consistent for both international and domestic students.

### 7.2: Registration Process

Registration is handled through Student Information Online (SIO). Students are responsible for enrolling themselves in required courses and electives.

<http://www.cmu.edu/hub/sio>.

Students should review the appropriate MHCI curriculum in this handbook and on the HCII webpages. For electives in the semester for which the student wishes to register, they must confer with the Director of MHCI Student Affairs to determine an appropriate course. The Director of MHCI Student Affairs consider exceptions to the curriculum only after consultation.

Once students have decided on a course schedule, they can then access SIO, using any computer, by visiting the website at: <http://www.cmu.edu/hub/registration/graduates/>

MHCI students may consult with the MHCI Director of Student Affairs to discuss planning for each semester's course selection. Students may make an appointment via <https://nicolewillismhci.youcanbook.me> or by stopping by Room 209 at 300 S. Craig for open office hours.

## 7.3: Required Units for Degree Attainment

MHCI Standard Curriculum: 156 -168

Accelerated master's Program: 90 – 102

## 7.4: Core Courses

All students are required to take the following core courses and pass with a B or better:

05-600 MHCI Professional Seminar

05-610 User-Centered Research & Evaluation

05-630 Programming Usable Interfaces or 05-631 Software Structures for User Interfaces

05-660 Interaction Design Fundamentals\*

05-661 Advanced Interaction Design\*\*

05-671 MHCI Capstone 1

05-672 MHCI Capstone 2

More details can be reviewed here: <https://hcie.cmu.edu/academics/mhci/curriculum>

**\*May be placed out of, and another course substituted for requirement.**

**\*\*Depending on placement this or another course may be used for the 2<sup>nd</sup> design course requirement.**

## 7.5: Electives

More details can be reviewed here: <https://hcie.cmu.edu/academics/mhci/electives>

MHCI and AMHCI students are required to take 4 electives for a total of 36 – 48 units.

Electives can be approved by the MHCI Director of Student Affairs each semester per student request via email.

Elective Grades: A failing grade for an elective is C- or lower. If a grade of C- or lower is earned, that course cannot be counted towards the degree and the student must

either retake the course and earn a C or better or take another course in its place. For a course to count toward the degree it must be taken for a letter grade.

## 7.6: Department Policy on Double Counting Courses

Double counting is not accepted in the MHCI.

## 7.7: Department Policy for Courses Outside the Department/College

Electives can be approved by the MHCI Director of Student Affairs each semester per student request via email.

## 7.8: Course Exemptions

The HCII offers a placement process for the design course sequence. Details are shared at the time of admission of the specific process and requirements. Students are still required to complete the same number of course and units even if placed out of a course.

## 7.9: Protocol for Evaluation of Transfer Credit

MHCI does not accept transfer credit.

AMHCI may have transfer courses accepted on their undergraduate degrees as long as they are not core HCI course requirements.

## 7.10: Teaching Requirements/Opportunities

MHCI does have a teaching requirement. TA opportunities are generally not available to MHCI students.

## 7.11: Research Requirements/Opportunities

MHCI does not require research. For students interested in a research option they may choose to take an Independent Study for an approved elective.

## 7.12: Internship/Co-op Requirements and Opportunities

MHCI does not offer or have an internship or co-op requirement or opportunity.

## 7.13: Thesis Requirement

MHCI does not offer a thesis requirement.

## 7.14: Requirements for Application/Consideration for Entry into PhD Program

The MHCI is not a lead into the PhD Program in HCI.

To learn more about the PhD program in HCII, please visit

<https://hcii.cmu.edu/academics/phd-hci/admissions> .

## 7.15: Requirements for the Accelerated Master of Human-Computer Interaction Program

In order to be eligible for consideration for the Accelerated Master of Human-Computer Interaction Program, students must:

be CMU undergraduates in the BS in HCI major or HCI additional major (*HCI minors and HCI concentrations are not eligible*)

have completed the following appropriate courses

- three HCI Core courses (05-410: UCRE; 05-651: IXDS 1\*; and 05-430: PUI)\*\*
- an elective in the 400 level or above
- have completed the online application by the fall deadline of their senior year.
- \*05-360 IxDF replacing 05-651 IXDS1 as of Fall 2023
- \*\*05-431 SSUI or 05-380 PAX are accepted in place of 05-430 PUI

Note: This academic regulation will be in effect for first- and second-year students starting in the 2022-23 Academic Year and can offer helpful guidance and insights for third- and fourth-year students, as well as fifth-year architecture students.

The integration of bachelor's and master's degree programs ("IBM" programs) benefits CMU students who elect to maximize their use of time and academic energy to blend their

undergraduate studies with master's-level study in close combination, in an integrated program of study at CMU. Some CMU departments and programs have developed integrated options for students in response to student desires for such opportunities and to enliven their graduate programs with students who are well-acclimated to the rigor and demands of the CMU educational experience.

### **General Information for AMHCI**

Carnegie Mellon students in integrated bachelor-master's programs are expected to complete their degree requirements within a standard length of time for their full-time program of study as outlined in the Undergraduate Catalog and relevant Graduate Student Handbook. This document describes several standard models for the CMU integrated bachelor-master's degree programs, some of which involve acceleration of either the undergraduate or the graduate degree component (or both) within the integrated program designs. Each CMU integrated program offers specific, pre-determined model(s) of integrated study reflecting one of the following:

- 4+0 meaning that a student will complete both undergraduate and master's degree coursework in eight semesters (four years) of full-time study. This model generally applies when the undergraduate and graduate field of study are the same, such as an undergraduate and master's degree in chemistry or mathematics.
- 3-1-1 meaning three years of full-time undergraduate coursework, followed by one year of integrated undergraduate and graduate study, and one year of exclusively master's level coursework for a total of five years of full-time study. An example would be undergraduate degrees integrated with Heinz College or Tepper graduate degree programs. The undergraduate degree generally is completed in eight semesters of full-time study (or less.)
- 4+1 semester meaning eight semesters (four years) of full-time undergraduate coursework including integration of some master's level courses, followed by one semester of exclusively master's level coursework for a total of four and a half years. The undergraduate degree generally is completed in eight semesters of full-time study (or less.)
- 4+2 semesters meaning eight semesters (four years) of full-time undergraduate coursework including integration of some master's level courses, followed by two semesters of exclusively master's level coursework for a total of five academic years. The undergraduate degree is completed in eight semesters of full-time study (or less.)

- 4+3 semesters meaning eight semesters (four years) of full-time undergraduate coursework including integration of some master's level courses, followed by three semesters of exclusively master's level coursework for a total of five and a half academic years. The undergraduate degree is completed in eight semesters of full-time study.
- 5+1 for architecture meaning five years of Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch.) undergraduate coursework followed by two semesters of full-time master's level coursework for a total of six academic years. The B.Arch. undergraduate degree generally is completed in 10 semesters.

The standard undergraduate program of study is grounded in a primary degree and its requirements and may be complemented by an additional major(s) or minor(s) as part of the academic plan. Some students decide to apply for one of CMU's several integrated degree programs to complement their undergraduate degree with an integrated or accelerated master's degree. Depending on the model of the integrated program, when an undergraduate student applies to an IBM program, they recognize that the standard for undergraduate study will be eight semesters (or 10 for B.Arch.), plus one, two, three or four additional semesters of full-time graduate-level study (except for the 4+0 model, above) to complete the master's degree.

CMU students in most IBM programs are considered to be undergraduates until they have completed the requirements for their bachelor's degree at which point, they are certified by their undergraduate academic program; this typically occurs at the time determined to be the standard for their integrated program following a successful seven or eight semesters (or 10 for B.Arch.) of full-time enrollment, depending on the design of their integrated program. However, in one rare model, the integrated program design holds the bachelor's degree certification to be given concurrently with the master's degree in the ninth or tenth semester of full-time enrollment.

**Early completion of undergraduate degree.** An IBM student who has completed all undergraduate degree requirements in fewer than the standard number of semesters for their program may request an early undergraduate degree certification from their undergraduate program, in close consultation with their academic advisor(s). This situation, while possible, is not common due to the necessity of staying on track for both undergraduate and master's degree programs in an integrated manner.

Movement from undergraduate to graduate student classification. Students in an IBM program who are certified as having completed their undergraduate degree – typically in

the number of semesters that is the standard for their integrated program – then will be classified as a graduate student at CMU and are expected to complete their graduate degree requirements within the standard length of time for their integrated program of study. Students should be aware of and plan for financial implications, including financial aid, and/or F-1/J-1 non-immigrant implications due to the change of level when moving from undergraduate student status to graduate student status at CMU. (See details below.) The standard for the graduate component of the IBM student/program. Upon completion of the graduate program degree requirements in the standard period of study, the graduate degree will be certified in the semester in which the student completes the requirements by the student's graduate program.

**Early completion of the graduate degree requirements.** \* Graduate students who consider the completion of all degree requirements in less than the standard length of time for their program of study must consult with their degree-granting program or department to determine if early degree certification is allowed academically and under what circumstances. ***\*Not a common allowance in MHCI.***

**Incomplete graduate degree requirements.** In some cases, students in an IBM program may withdraw from the graduate component of the program of study and, therefore, will not be certified or awarded the graduate degree. Any such withdrawal decision also may require close consultation with the undergraduate advisor to determine eligibility for undergraduate degree completion and certification if the undergraduate degree is not already certified.

**Extended or longer-than-standard graduate degree completion.** Longer-than-standard degree completion may occur due to academic interruptions in making progress toward the degree as defined by the academic program, interruptions of full-time study or progress toward the degree due to serious, documented medical issues, or other unusual or unforeseen circumstances.

IBM students who require longer than the standard time to complete their graduate degree requirements are expected to remain in close contact with their graduate program and will be certified at the end of the semester in which they have completed their degree requirements. Students shall reference CMU Policy on master's Student Statute of Limitations ([www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/masters-students-statute-of-limitations.html](http://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/masters-students-statute-of-limitations.html)) regarding guidelines and restrictions which place an upper limit on the maximum length of time allowable for master's degree completion and certification.



**Additional Guidance for Students Program of study.** Students seeking guidance about their program of study and degree requirements should consult with their academic advisor and/or appropriate associate dean.

**Financial aid and student account.** Students are expected to make normal progress toward their degree to graduate within the standard timeframe for their program of study. Under U.S. Federal Title IV regulations, student eligibility for federal financial aid is contingent upon enrollment in and successful completion of courses that are counted as credit toward their current degree program. To receive the maximum amount of federal and state financial aid for which they may be eligible, students must enroll each semester in at least 36 units that count toward their current degree level. CMU institutional undergraduate grants support undergraduate degree completion and on-time graduation; institutional undergraduate grants for students in undergraduate programs and in IBM programs are renewable for eight semesters (and 10 for B.Arch.).

Students should consult with their designated college liaison in The HUB regarding billing and financial aid, particularly for early completion, longer-than-standard completion, or integrated bachelor's and master's degree programs.

**International students.** Immigration status for students in F-1 and J-1 non-immigrant status is tied to making normal progress toward completing degree requirements. Therefore, F-1 and J-1 students who are considering completing their degree requirements early, anticipating longer-than-standard completion, or moving from an undergraduate to a graduate student classification (integrated undergraduate-graduate study), should consult with their designated advisor in the Office of International Education (OIE) to ensure compliance with immigration regulations.

## SECTION 8: Department Policies & Protocols

### 8.1: Petition Procedures

Auditing: Not permitted in the MHCI program.

### 8.2: Department Policy for Withdrawing from a Course

Students taking undergraduate and Master's level courses must follow the procedures and deadlines for adding, dropping, or withdrawing from courses as identified on the academic calendar. Information can be found at <https://www.cmu.edu/hub/registrar/course-changes/index.html>

### 8.3: Requirements for Those Without a bachelor's degree in Discipline

MHCI requires that a student hold an accredited bachelor's degree to be admitted to the program. There is no required discipline for the degree though.

### 8.4: New Policies / "Grandfather" Policy

#### **Commencement at CMU**

CMU offers one commencement ceremony annually. MHCI students "walk" in the ceremony in the May of the year of attendance as long as the student is on track for an August graduation. Meaning, student "walk" a semester before their degree is complete.

AMHCI attend commencement in the May following their December degree completion of the MHCI degree. They do not "walk" before they become graduate students.

#### Graduation Requirements

It is ultimately the responsibility of the students to ensure that all courses necessary for graduation have been successfully completed. Faculty and staff are available to assist students, and the Program Directors will attempt to advise students individually each semester, but only students can be held responsible for their failure to complete graduation requirements.

Failure to meet the requirements of each semester will result in a student being placed on academic probation. Failure to meet the degree requirements prevents a student from receiving their diploma and may prevent a student from graduating at all.

While the MHCI curriculum is subject to change, the curriculum in effect at the time of a student's matriculation will be the one that dictates their graduation requirements. Exception to this policy will be at the discretion of the Program Directors.

#### Graduate Students

Carnegie Mellon graduate students are expected to complete their degree requirements within the standard length of time for their program of study as outlined in the relevant Graduate Student Handbook. Standard program lengths for graduate students vary significantly – ranging from two semesters for some full-time master’s programs to several or more years for doctoral programs. Upon completion of the graduate program degree requirements, the degree will be certified by the student’s academic program in the semester in which the student completes the requirements.

### **Early Completion**

Graduate students who consider the completion of all degree requirements in less than the standard length of time for their program of study may consult with their degree-granting program or department to determine if early degree certification is allowed and under what circumstances.

### **Extended or Longer-than-Standard Completion**

Longer-than-standard degree completion may occur due to academic interruptions in making progress toward the degree as defined by the academic program, interruptions of full-time study or progress towards the degree due to serious, documented medical issues, or other unusual or unforeseen circumstances.

Master’s students who require longer than the standard time to complete their degree requirements are expected to remain in close contact with their graduate program and will be certified at the end of the semester in which they have completed their degree requirements. Students shall reference CMU Policy on master’s Student Statute of Limitations ([www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/masters-students-statute-of-limitations.html](http://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/masters-students-statute-of-limitations.html)) regarding guidelines and restrictions which place an upper limit on the maximum length of time allowable for master’s degree completion and certification.

## **8.5: Time Away from Academic Responsibilities**

### **Absences and Tardiness**

The HCII views attendance as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend classes, task and team meetings, presentations, seminars, and so forth. For meetings where the student’s absence could hinder the performance of the group, such as task meetings, team meetings and group presentations, it is the student’s responsibility to

provide satisfactory evidence to faculty of the course, and the Director of MHCI Student Affairs and/or the Program Director to substantiate the reason for the absence. Among the reason's absences are considered excused by the program are the following:

- Death or major illness in a student's immediate family. Immediate family refers to: mother, father, sister, brother, grandparents, spouse, child. If unclear, check with the Director of MHCI Student Affairs in advance of your absence.
- Illness of a dependent family member.
- Illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend (to be determined by Health Center or off-campus physician).
- Approved conference attendance.
- Students in HCI Project I & II should not make any travel plans of getting absences approved by faculty mentors and program directors.

*For other classes, arrangements should also be made in advance of absence and communicated with the instructor. Individual courses have specific attendance policies on course syllabi, please check with faculty/course syllabi for specifics.*

#### Time Off

MHCI students are expected to attend all classes and participate in all program activities throughout the program. This excludes any defined academic break periods, and the official University holidays as listed below. For the most up-to-date University calendar, please refer to the HUB at <https://www.cmu.edu/hub/calendar/index.html>

Official University Holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day After Thanksgiving
- Day Before Christmas
- Christmas Day
- Day Before New Year's Day

## **Leaves of Absence**

Students who wish to leave their program temporarily may request a leave of absence by submitting a request to the Director of MHCI Student Affairs. If granted, leaves are initially extended for a period of no more than one year. However, an extension of up to one additional year may be granted under exceptional circumstances. When an extension is granted, the conditions for return must be negotiated with the Director of MHCI Student Affairs and approved by the program directors prior to returning to the program. Students should be in good standing to be granted a leave of absence.

Students on leave of absence must contact the Director of MHCI Student Affairs two months prior to the end of the leave to indicate their plans to return. While a leave can, in principle, start at any time, university regulations allow students to return only at the beginning of a semester (usually late August or January).

Withdrawal or voluntary leave of absence requires that a student file a Withdrawal/Leave of Absence form with the HUB, after securing the appropriate signature approvals. Return from withdrawal or voluntary leave of absence requires department or College approval through a Request for Return from Leave of Absence form.

## **SECTION 9: Grading & Evaluation**

### **9.1: Grading Scale/System**

All courses offered by the MHCI program are graded on the 4.3 Graduate Student Grading Standard described in full at <https://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/grading.html>. Undergraduate courses taken as electives or place out courses will be graded on the Undergraduate Grading policy as described on the same web site.

Graduate courses are subject to the +/- grades, while undergraduate courses receive only a letter grade, and all grades will be factored into the student's QPA accordingly.

### **9.2: Department Policy on Grades for Retaking a Course**

Generally not applicable to the program. See MHCI Director of Student Affairs.

### 9.3: Department Policy on Pass/Fail, Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

Except for 05-600 HCI Professional Seminar, all other courses are required to be taken for a letter grade only. Pass/Fail, Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grades are permitted.

### 9.4: Department Policy for Incompletes

Incomplete grades may be issued at the discretion of the faculty. Receiving an incomplete in a core course could put you in jeopardy of not moving forward in a course sequence. Please meet with the MHCI Director of Student Affairs to discuss your situation.

### 9.5: Independent Study/Small Group Study: MHCI & AMHCI

Independent study course is when one student enters into an agreement with an HCII faculty to work on a specific project. Small group study is a course where a group of students enter into an agreement with an HCII faculty to work on a specific project.

- Applications are found here: <https://hcii.cmu.edu/academics/independent-study>
- Students will work with HCII Faculty for the 05-689 or 05-688 courses.
- An application with faculty signature and supporting documentation of project description and detailed timeline, including deliverables and milestones must be turned in before the end of registration period at the beginning of the semester. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the MHCI Director of Student Affairs.
- Working in an Independent Study or Small Group Study is available during the Fall, Spring and the first part of Summer.
- No more than two (2) Independent Study courses may be approved/used as electives.
- To count towards the degree, the study course must be taken for a letter grade.

### 9.6: GPA Requirements and QPA Requirements for Graduation

The minimum passing grade for core courses (including HCI Project I & II) is a B; the minimum passing grade for electives is a C. If a grade of B- or lower is earned in a core course, the student must retake the course and achieve a B or better. You will not be permitted to continue into HCI Project I if you do not pass Fall Core Courses. If a grade of C- or lower is earned in an elective course, the course cannot be counted toward the 5 electives; the student must either retake the course and earn a C or better, or take another approved elective.

Additionally, all students must maintain a QPA of 3.0 or above to remain in good standing in the program.

Additionally, courses in a sequence (e.g., HCI Project I & II) must have a B in HCI Project I to continue to HCI Project II.

### 9.7: Satisfactory Academic Standing

#### Good Standing:

A student is in good standing if they have made a B, 3.0, or higher on their core courses, they maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher, and they are making good progress towards their degree as evidenced by meeting the academic and community expectations of the program.

#### Not in Good Standing:

A student is not in good standing if they receive a B- or lower on any of their core courses, or if their overall QPA is below a 3.0. Students not on good standing are placed on Academic Probation for the following semester.

Any students on Academic Probation must maintain a B or above in *all* their courses, must have an overall QPA of 3.0 or above. Students who maintain the minimum grades are released from probation. Students on Academic Probation who don't maintain these minimum grades will be dropped from the program.

Students on Academic Probation in their final semester of study in the program can only graduate if they meet the graduation requirements of having a QPA of at least 3.0.

Students not getting off probation may be asked to leave the program due to not making appropriate academic progress.

Students may review the Summary of Graduate Student Appeal and Grievance Procedures to learn more about the appeal process.

## 9.8: Regular Reviews and Evaluations by Department

Student records are reviewed at the midterm and final grade submission points each semester by the MHCI Director of Student Affairs.

Records are reviewed for course grades, and QPA details.

Detail the student's participation and/or preparation in each review or evaluation

Students will receive an email with 10 days following grade submission dates.

Inadequate progress toward degree is when a student is no longer on track to completing the degree in the established timeline. More details:

Not completing agreed upon course or failing courses.

Student will be notified in writing via email.

Student can meet with program to revisit plan and decide next steps.

## SECTION 10: Funding & Financial Support

### 10.1: Statement of Department Financial Support

MHCI does not provide funding.

### 10.2: Stipend

MHCI does not provide funding.

### 10.3: Department Fees

MHCI does not have additional fees for students.

### 10.4: Travel/Conference and Research Funding

MHCI Professional Development Support details available here:

- [MHCI Professional Development Support](#)
- Department support provided through reimbursement.
- Support from the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs available here:



- <https://www.cmu.edu/graduate/funding/index.html>

## 10.5: Funding Payment Schedule

MHCI and HCII do not provide funding.

## 10.6: Additional Sources of Internal & External Financial Support

MHCI and AMCHI students may find external financial support for their program.

## 10.7: Availability of Summer Employment

Summer work is generally not able to be done with the time commitment of the MHCI capstone work. If you have an exception you can speak with the MHCI Director of Student Affairs before summer employment is entered into for the summer.

## 10.8: Department Policy on Outside Employment

MHCI and AMHCI are not designed to be completed while working. It is not common for this to be allowed.

Exceptions to this should be discussed with the MHCI Director of Student Affairs. International students must contact the Office of International Education (OIE) regarding their ability to hold employment and with the MHCI Director of Student Affairs.