

## Choosing courses

### **How do I choose which courses to take?**

There are many courses from which you can choose, at three different levels (600-level, 700-level, and 800-level, depending on the first digit in the course number). You are encouraged to make course selections based on your interests, provided that you satisfy the [course requirements for the program](#).

On the [graduate courses page](#), you can find a listing of all the courses as well as what is being offered in upcoming terms. Not all courses listed in the calendar are offered on a regular basis, so planning to wait until a particular course appears in the list of offerings may delay your completion date. The list of tentative courses will be posted when scheduling occurs, but last-minute changes are still possible.

You may find it easier to manage your workload by taking courses that have different types of requirements, such as a mixture of courses at different levels. In addition, the type of work required for different disciplines differs. For example, CS 666 typically has no programming work, whereas CS 688 typically has a large project.

### **How many courses should I take each term?**

Graduate students typically take two to three courses in a term, depending on other activities in which they are involved. The optimal number of courses to take each term will depend a number of factors, including course availability, prerequisite chains, types of courses, and levels of courses.

If after the first week of classes you discover that a particular course is not what you expected, you can change to another course, provided that there is enough space.

### **Should I take 600-level courses before 800-level courses?**

Taking 600-level courses early is advantageous if they serve as prerequisites for other courses you wish to take. On the other hand, mixing

courses of different levels may help with scheduling and with your workload.

Because many of the 600-level courses are offered in conjunction with advanced undergraduate courses, which are offered on a regular schedule, you can consult the [schedule](#) to determine future terms in which they are offered. The course offerings of 700- and 800-level courses are often less predictable. Moreover, there are often fewer 700- and 800-level courses offered in the spring term, so taking a 600-level course in that term could make scheduling easier.

For the sake of your workload, having a mix of different styles of courses may be preferable to taking all 600-level courses at once. Many 600-level courses are structured as advanced undergraduate courses, with assignments, projects, exams, and the like. In contrast, many 800-level courses are taught in a seminar style, with presentations by students but fewer assignments.

### **May I take courses offered by other departments?**

As detailed in the section “Enrolling in Non-CS Graduate Courses” on the [graduate courses page](#), you are permitted to count up to two non-CS courses towards your degree, provided that they either appear on the pre-approved courses list or are approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

You can use the [schedule of classes](#) to find all graduate courses offered in a particular term in a particular subject; such a list can be generated by leaving the course number field blank.

### **How do I know whether I have the prerequisites for a particular course?**

In general, graduate courses do not have specific prerequisites. The instructor will tell students what background is expected for a particular course, either on the course website or in an announcement in class; you can use that information to determine whether or not you are ready for that course (or whether you can pick up the necessary background quickly on your own). In some situations, instructor permission might be required for a course. If in doubt, talking to the instructor is a good idea.

## **Should I take CS 697, the graduate skills seminar, even though I am not doing research?**

Most of the skills taught in the seminar are general ones that will be applicable not only in the classroom but also in the workplace. Upper-level graduate courses often have research-related components, such as projects and papers, for which the seminar will be useful. Taking CS 697 is recommended, but not required.

## **I have a tentative schedule of courses. Can I get advice on my choices?**

Yes! Contact the coursework advisor for advice.

## **Enrolling in courses**

### **How do I enroll in a CS graduate course?**

The section “Enrolling in Computer Science Graduate Courses” on the [graduate courses page](#) explains how to use Quest to enroll in a course.

### **How do I enroll in a course that requires the instructor’s consent?**

If you are interested in the course, go to the first lecture and inform the instructor that you would like to enroll. Be aware that due to class size limits, there is no guarantee that you will be able to take the course, so it is a good idea to have a backup plan in mind.

### **How do I enroll in a remedial course?**

To register for an undergraduate remedial course, download a [Drop/Add form](#), fill it out, and take it to one of the undergraduate advisors to be stamped and signed (instructors are asked not to sign these forms). It can then be submitted to the CS Graduate Office.

### **How do I enroll in a non-CS course?**

As mentioned in the section “Enrolling in Non-CS Graduate Courses” on the [graduate courses page](#), you need to register using a [Drop/Add form](#).

Once filled in and signed by the instructor of the course, your form should be submitted to the CS Graduate Office.

## **Waiving or taking remedial courses**

### **How do I have a remedial course waived?**

The coursework advisor makes this decision. You then need to provide a written request to [Denise Shantz](#), with the advisor's reason for waiving the remedial requirement attached or sent by e-mail.

### **May I take extra remedial courses?**

You may wish to obtain additional undergraduate background to prepare for graduate courses or to broaden your knowledge. There are no restrictions on the number of such courses a student is allowed to take, though you should make sure you are making adequate progress towards the completion of your degree (and not just taking remedial courses).

## **Obtaining signatures for forms**

### **How do I obtain the necessary signatures on my course Drop/Add form, change of status form, or program completion form?**

Bring your form to the CS Graduate Office; we'll handle the logistics of having the form signed. If you need the signature of the instructor of a course, obtain that signature before handing it in.

## **Working as a teaching assistant**

### **Am I eligible to work as a teaching assistant?**

You may apply for a teaching assistantship, with the understanding that there is no guarantee that you will be offered a position. Students enrolled in the PhD program and the MMath thesis option have priority. If there are any remaining positions available, they will be offered to coursework students. Please note that upper year coursework students are those most

likely to be offered positions, and that you are not eligible for a TA during your first term in the program.

### **How do I apply to be a teaching assistant?**

Each term, e-mail is sent out to all graduate students, providing instructions and a link to a TA/IA preference form. The preference form allows you to fill in information about your past TA experience, the courses you have taken at UW and elsewhere, and what programming languages you know, and is used to match TAs to courses. Because you are not guaranteed a TA position, filling out the form does not mean that you will necessarily be assigned a position. If you have been assigned a position, you will be notified.

## **Choosing a co-op work term or an internship**

### **What is required for the Co-op Option?**

You may apply to take a term as a co-op term provided that you arrange the placement yourself, have completed at least half of the program requirements prior to the co-op term, complete the [program change form](#), attend mandatory Co-op Information Sessions, and register for at least one term of full-time studies after the completion of the co-op term. To obtain the co-op designation, you need to have completed eight months of work (typically as an eight-month work term) and to write a work report.

After your placement has been confirmed, complete the [co-op term information sheet](#) and submit it to the CS Graduate Office. Just before going on a work term, submit a [change of enrolment status form](#) by checking off the co-op box for two terms. To change your status and obtain further information, please see [Denise Shantz](#) in the CS Graduate Office.

You may wish to take the course [COOP 601: Career Success Strategies](#), as it teaches the basics of how the University of Waterloo co-op process works.

### **What is the difference between a co-op work term and an internship?**

When you transfer to the Co-op Option by changing your status to “co-op”, you have committed to satisfy specific requirements in order to complete your degree. When you have done so, your degree will state that you have completed the option.

In contrast, an internship is not part of a degree, and hence has fewer requirements. No work report is required, and an internship of four months instead of eight is acceptable. To take time for an internship, you need to change your status to “inactive”.

If you are an international student, make sure that you understand the implications with respect to immigration rules; you can find out more on the Student Success Office’s page on [International Student Resources](#).

### **How do I find a co-op placement or internship?**

You are responsible for finding your own position by applying directly to an employer. Typically, you will be able to find information about co-op placements and internships on company websites. When arranging a position, make it clear to the employer whether you are seeking a co-op placement or an internship.

Please note that the process differs from the undergraduate co-op program, for which the hiring process is facilitated by [Cooperative Education and Career Action](#) (CECA). Although you cannot use CECA to apply for jobs or on-campus interviews, you can use CECA to get help with resumes and cover letters.

### **How many work reports do I need to write?**

You need to write only one work report. Be sure to follow the [work report guidelines](#), and follow the directions on the [job information form](#). Your completed work report and form should be handed into the CS Graduate Office.

### **How do I obtain a verification of my status for my employer?**

Please send all such requests to the CS Graduate Office.

## **Changing Status**

### **May I take time off during the program?**

For a single term, you can change your status to “inactive”, but for a longer time you may need to apply for readmission. If you are an international student, there may be other factors you should consider; see the Student Success Office’s page on [International Student Resources](#) for more information.

### **May I switch to part-time status?**

It will depend on your situation; please see the staff in the CS Graduate Office in order to make a request. You need to keep in mind that if you enter the program as a full-time student, even if you later switch to part-time status, the maximum number of terms for program completion (without applying for extensions) is six terms.

### **How can I check whether or not I have completed the degree requirements?**

Please bring an unofficial copy of your transcript along with an Intention to Graduate/ Program Completion form to the CS Graduate Office.

### **How do I obtain transfer credits for courses already taken?**

If you have taken relevant graduate courses elsewhere that have not already been used to obtain another degree, you can apply for transfer credit. The maximum number of transfer credits is half of your total course requirement; the actual number will depend on how many of the courses meet with our approval in terms of level and area requirements.

## **Understanding status recorded on Quest**

### **What does it mean when Quest lists my admission status as “Intention to Matriculate”?**

It could mean that you have not yet met the conditions of the offer (e.g., you have not yet provided a final transcript) or that the university’s Graduate Office (GSO) is waiting to process a batch of students at once. It

is usually cleared up well before the term of admission. If you are concerned, you can contact the staff in the CS Graduate Office.

**What I see recorded in Quest does not match my understanding of my status. Whom should I contact?**

Please see the staff in the CS Graduate Office to find out the cause of the discrepancy.

**Finding information for international students**

**How do I get the proper visa?**

The best source of information for international students is the Student Success Office's page on [International Student Resources](#).