

**Converse University**

**Graduate Handbook for Faculty and Students**

**Effective 2023-2024**



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# Overview

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The Graduate Handbook is designed to provide faculty and students with information, awareness and understanding of the policies, guidelines and resources available to graduate students. Our high standards ensure that graduates with degrees from Converse University are highly regarded and well prepared to meet the challenges and demands of their careers. Professional degree programs are offered in education (MAT, MEd, EdS, and EdD); Marriage and Family Therapy (MMFT); Music (MM); History, English, and Political Science (MLA), Master in Management-Professional Leadership (MIM-PL) and Fine Arts in Creative Writing (MFA). These degree programs are available to students who meet specific program admission requirements. Details on admission and other information pertaining to the Graduate School can be found in the *Converse University Graduate Catalog* at the Converse University website at [www.converse.edu](http://www.converse.edu).

This handbook serves only as a guide to rules, policies and services of the Converse University Graduate School. Therefore, the University reserved the right to amend, modify or change regulatory policies and financial charges stated in this handbook during the school year. The University will make attempts to announce, in a timely manner, any changes in policies and regulations. Questions regarding information in this handbook should be directed to the Dean of the Graduate School. The handbook does not constitute the whole of University policy concerning students. The Graduate Catalog and other official University publications are important references.

Converse University does not discriminate in admissions or employment on the basis of race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, religion or disability.

## Mission of the University and Graduate Programs

### **OUR MISSION**

Converse empowers students to become transformative leaders who see clearly, decide wisely, and act justly.

### **OUR VISION**

Converse advances a culture of belonging and collaboration that ignites creativity, innovation, and transformation.

### **OUR HISTORY**

Converse was founded in 1889 by Dexter Edgar Converse to provide the liberal education of undergraduate women in a residential setting. Since our founding, Converse has been a community of scholars, where students and faculty pursue scholarly excellence and collaborate in the search for truth while developing in students personal honor, confidence, and the curiosity and skills to be life-long learners. The college draws much of its character from its Christian heritage and welcomes students of all faiths. Converse remains committed to building and strengthening our academic programs to be responsive for the future. In 1964 our co-educational graduate programs launched, providing innovative programs for adult and professional study. In the Fall of 2020 we expanded our mission by offering our distinctive undergraduate education to women and men. Converse's undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs advance a culture of belonging and collaboration that ignites creativity, innovation, and transformation. Our graduates thrive in roles of leadership, service, and citizenship in their personal lives, community and beyond.

# Degree Programs

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# Education Degree Programs

## The Education Unit Mission

The Converse Teacher Education Unit has the mission “to identify, prepare, evaluate, and recommend highly-qualified educators who are well grounded in liberal learning, pedagogy, and clinical experiences so that they can contribute to the educational mission of K-12 public schools in their communities.” Individual graduate programs have a more specific set of goals and objectives outlined in the graduate catalog, which can be found at: [www.converse.edu](http://www.converse.edu)

## Education Degree Programs

### 1. Master of Arts in Teaching

The MAT program is available for those holding a baccalaureate degree in a field other than education. The purpose of the initial certification program is to prepare graduate students to become well-qualified teachers by their completion of one of our state-approved education programs. Students may elect one of the following initial certification programs: Early Childhood, Elementary, Art Education, Middle Level, Intellectual Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, or Secondary Education. See the Converse website [www.converse.edu](http://www.converse.edu) for important MAT program requirements and benchmarks, and the current program worksheets.

### 2. Master of Education

Converse offers the M.Ed. degree for teachers who are already certified. This program offers six broad areas or tracks: art education (online/low residency), elementary education, gifted education (online), advanced studies (online), special education, administration and supervision. Art education (online/low residency) addresses teacher preparation from kindergarten through high school. Each M.Ed. program requires a minimum of 30 semester hours. See the Converse website [www.converse.edu](http://www.converse.edu) for important M.Ed. program requirements and benchmarks, and the current program worksheets.

### 3. Educational Specialist in Administration and Supervision

The Converse Educational Specialist Degree in Administration & Supervision program requires a total of 30 semester hours in education. The program focuses on the preparation of administrators/supervisors at the elementary or secondary level. See the Converse website [www.converse.edu](http://www.converse.edu) for important Ed.S. program requirements and benchmarks, and the current program worksheets.

### 4. Educational Specialist in Literacy

The Educational Specialist degree in Literacy is for literacy coaches and classroom teachers who recognize a need to expand their knowledge of the theories, methods, and materials of reading, reading instruction, language, language instruction, reading assessment and diagnosis, and remediation of reading difficulties. By emphasizing scholarship, practice, and school-based collaborations, the Educational Specialist in Literacy degree prepares exemplary professionals to provide leadership in reading at local and state levels. See the Converse website [www.converse.edu](http://www.converse.edu) for important Ed.S. program requirements and benchmarks, and the current program worksheets.

### 5. Doctorate in Professional Leadership

The Ed.D. in Professional Leadership is a 60-hour program designed to allow individuals from a variety of professional backgrounds to enhance their preparation for leadership roles in a wide range of contexts. The focus is a background in theory and application to the professional context of the candidate's choosing. A unique characteristic of the program includes the embedding of the traditional 5-chapter dissertation within the course work. See the Converse website [www.converse.edu](http://www.converse.edu) for important Ed.D. program requirements and benchmarks, and the current program worksheets.

## Other Graduate Degree Programs

### 1. **Master of Liberal Arts**

The Master of Liberal Arts Program provides an opportunity for baccalaureate degree holders to pursue studies in the liberal arts for both personal and professional growth. The program requires a total of 30 graduate hours with 18–27 hours of concentration in English, history, or political science. In addition to a liberal arts concentration, a student must also take 6–15 hours of electives. Once a concentration choice has been made, the elective choices may come from the other areas of concentration or art history, music history, psychology, sociology, religion, and philosophy. While providing for individual development, the program extends the professional qualifications of those high school teachers who want more content courses in their particular discipline.

### 2. **Master in Management – Professional Leadership**

The Master's in Professional Leadership (MIM) at Converse is a 30-hour master's program which provides a comprehensive grounding in professional leadership development with potential for graduates to advance to the EdD in Professional Leadership program. This degree will focus on the application of leadership in a variety of contexts, and is appropriated for individuals in a broad range of professional roles.

### 3. **Master of Marriage and Family Therapy**

The Master of Marriage and Family Therapy is designed to meet the academic and clinical practicum requirements for Clinical Member with the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in South Carolina. This degree involves 48 graduate semester hours of academic coursework and 15 graduate semester hours of clinical practicum. It is fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education.

This master degree program involves a partnership between Converse University and EMERGE Family Therapy Teaching Clinic. Converse University provides the academic coursework and EMERGE provides the clinical practicum.

### 4. **Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Low-Residency**

The MFA in Creative Writing is a two-year co-educational low residency program designed for serious, independent writers seeking advanced instruction in fiction, young adult fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry, and environmental writing through a non-traditional course of graduate study. The program's emphasis on the mastery and understanding of writing skills and contemporary literature and craft through the master-writer and apprentice mentoring relationship, offers students a stimulating and individually tailored curriculum of courses and projects.

The degree requires 48 hours of graduate credit completed during four 9-day residencies at Converse University, offered twice annually (summer and in January), four mentoring semesters, a fifth graduating residency, the completion of a substantive analytical project on literature or craft, and a book-length creative thesis and oral defense. For more information please go to [www.converse.edu/mfa](http://www.converse.edu/mfa).

### 5. **Master of Music**

The Petrie School of Music offers a broad curriculum of studies for graduate music students. The graduate program in Music Education offers both a traditional Master of Music degree for the certified teacher and a Master of Music with an Initial Certification option for those who hold undergraduate degrees in other areas of music and seeking certification. The Master of Music in Performance program offers an elite educational experience to graduate music students in their specialty areas of performance.

# Policies and Procedures - Academic

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## Introduction to Academic Policies

Converse University reserves without limitation the right to deliver any academic course or part of any academic course in one or more formats or modalities, or to alter the format or modality of any academic course or part of a course, including moving instruction to an online format or modality, at any point in an instructional term. While Converse will make every effort to provide advance notification to students and faculty regarding any such change, emergency situations may require format or modality changes without extensive advance notice.

## 1. Academic Policies on Disabilities

Converse University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the non-discrimination requirements of Section 35.107 of the Department of Justice regulations. Converse does not discriminate with regard to race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, religion or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. As a recipient of federal funds Converse recognizes its responsibility to provide equal access to academically qualified students with documented disabilities while maintaining standards that are essential to the academic program. A student with a disability is someone with either a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Temporary impairments of short duration without permanent impact usually do not qualify as disabilities under the ADA. Students are responsible for notifying the university of their need for accommodations, obtaining and submitting a Request for Accommodations Form to the Case Manager for Student Accessibility Services, providing supporting documentation in a timely manner, and actively participating in developing and implementing an accommodation plan for each term. As legal adults, students must self-advocate, and parents can be included in the process only with the student's permission.

Converse will make reasonable accommodations within its academic programs for “otherwise qualified” graduate students with documented disabilities. However, students should understand that accommodations provided in elementary and secondary schools under P.L. 94.142 (IDEA) are not necessarily required by law under the ADA or Section 504 or provided by Converse. Many of the practices and procedures of special education (goal-setting, progress reports, team meetings, program and exam modifications, related services, and annual reviews) have no parallels in higher education. Behavior standards are the same for all students. Converse does not provide transportation for students. Personal care attendants, orientation/mobility training and tutors are considered personal services in higher education and are the student's responsibility. Although Converse offers no specialized services for students with disabilities, equal access to services is offered to all students. Requests for course substitutions are evaluated individually, on the basis of documentation provided, but the university is not required to fundamentally alter essential course/program requirements. Testing to determine the need for accommodations is the student's responsibility and is not provided by Converse. IEPs or 504 plans do not automatically meet the documentation requirements for receiving accommodations in higher education. Documentation from an appropriate, licensed professional or agency is required in order to determine reasonable accommodations necessary to serve a student with a disability. Diagnostic evaluations or reports should be current, in most cases within three years, and should be sent directly from the qualified professional to the Case Manager of Student Accessibility Services. The documentation should indicate diagnosis, describe the manifestations of and the extent of the disability, and make recommendations for reasonable accommodations the professional deems necessary to assist the student with a disability in the university setting. A current comprehensive psycho-educational evaluation is required for learning disabilities and is strongly recommended for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Students should submit a completed Request for Accommodations Form with supporting documentation to the Case Manager of Student Accessibility Services at least thirty days working days prior to the first day of class in order to allow time for review and consultation, as needed, with the

student, professors, counselors, psychological consultants, and the Director of Health Services, to prepare an appropriate accommodation plan, and to secure available support services and/or equipment. This deadline is for administrative purposes only and does not preclude admission to programs or services. In addition, the student is responsible for providing the Case Manager of Student Accessibility Services with a class schedule each term, so a new accommodation plan can be generated. All information and records regarding students with disabilities, including accommodations for them, are strictly confidential, and the Student Accessibility Services complies with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Records are stored in a secure location and reviewed only by authorized personnel.

Although the student's adviser and professors will receive a copy of the accommodation plan, it is the student's responsibility to discuss accommodations with each professor at the beginning of each term. If a student has concerns about or encounters problems with accommodations during the term, the student should contact the Case Manager of Student Accessibility Services, so accommodations may be appropriately adjusted. A student who is not satisfied with accommodations may contact either the ADA or Section 504 Compliance Officer indicated below and initiate the student grievance procedure as outlined in this handbook.

Any faculty member who receives a request for academic accommodations on the basis of disability must refer the request to the Case Manager of Student Accessibility Services immediately. No modification of the present program or promises of modification should be made until the Case Manager has made a recommendation. Questions or concerns regarding ADA compliance should be addressed to the Vice President for Finance & Administration at (864) 596-9031. Information on EEOC or Section 504 compliance issues can be obtained from the Director of Human Resources at (864) 596-9029.

#### A. **ADMISSIONS**

Students are admitted to Converse University Graduate School on the basis of meeting of the admission requirements of the specific degree program to which a student applies. These requirements always include a review of academic credentials and additional information submitted to the Graduate Admissions Office. Applicants are not required to disclose any disability on their applications for Graduate Admissions. However, once admitted, a graduate student seeking reasonable academic or physical accommodations for a disability should immediately contact the Case Manager of Student Accessibility Services to obtain an accommodation form.

**Converse University reserves the right in its sole discretion to rescind any notice of acceptance or admission of any incoming student at any time prior to matriculation.**

#### B. **RESOLUTION PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT COMPLAINTS ABOUT ADMISSIONS**

Graduate students who wish to file a complaint should do so by contacting the Office of the Graduate School which is located in Ezell 106 and can be contacted at (864)596-9220.

## 2. Classroom Procedures

**Cell phones and similar communication devices may not be used in the classroom unless specifically permitted by the individual faculty member or as part of a University-approved accommodation plan. Students and faculty are not permitted to bring children to class.**

#### A. **Class Attendance and Absence Policy**

- Course attendance requirements are set by each professor, within the limits of this policy and applicable laws, regulations, and accreditor requirements. Faculty requirements, chiefly with regard to the effect (if any) of unexcused absences on assignment or course grades will be included on the syllabus for each course.
- Students cannot be withdrawn from courses by faculty because of absences.
- Faculty may require students to make up work missed during or due to excused absences but may not impose any grade penalty in any form for work missed during or due to excused absences.



- In the event of documented medical conditions, including but not limited to those established by academic accommodations plans, absences will be considered to be excused.
- Absences due to participation in intercollegiate athletic competition (but not practices) will be considered to be excused.
- Absences due to participation in official University functions will be considered to be excused. Approval of absences due to official University functions and thus excused will be made by and communicated through the offices of the academic deans.
- If for any student in a course the total number of absences due to medical conditions, participation in intercollegiate athletic competition, official University functions, or other excused absences reaches a point that compromises the integrity or essential learning outcomes of the course, the professor will consult with the Associate Provost of Student Success to develop a plan of action for that student. In determining course policies regarding when student absences would compromise the integrity or essential learning outcomes of a course, faculty should consider the following (adapted from the findings of an Office of Civil Rights letter in a case involving the question of when attendance is an essential part of a class and thus not open to accommodation):
  1. What attendance policies are included in the course syllabus?
  2. Is attendance used to calculate any part of the final course grade and so specified in the syllabus?
  3. Does the fundamental nature of the course rely on student participation as an essential method for learning?
  4. Does the course design include significant classroom interaction between the instructor and students and among students?
  5. Do in-class student contributions constitute a significant component of the learning process in the course?
  6. To what degree does a student's failure to attend constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the class?
- For absences due to participation in intercollegiate athletics and curricular or co-curricular events:
  1. Student athletes are responsible for notifying faculty of individual competition schedules in advance of any absence. Competition rosters and schedules will be provided by the Director of Athletics to the Director of Student Accessibility Services, in advance of advising periods. The Associate Provost of Student Success will provide these schedules and rosters to all faculty advisors prior to each advising period. Faculty advisors are encouraged to help student athletes avoid course/competition conflicts wherever possible when creating future course schedules.
  2. Faculty are encouraged to accommodate as far as possible the competition schedules of their students. Such accommodation can include arranging for make-up work, creating substitute experiences for students, and virtual participation in classroom activities through electronic means (where possible).
  3. Faculty are strongly encouraged to communicate with the student, the Associate Provost for Student Success, and the Director of Athletics in any case where the competition schedule appears to create a pattern of absences that will compromise the integrity or essential learning outcomes of the course. In those cases, both coaches and faculty are encouraged to seek specific compromises and solutions. In any case where compromise has not been able to be reached, the Provost will determine the course of action.

## **B. Changing Courses**

Students may add courses only during the first week of term. Dates for adding courses are in the academic calendar. A student may drop a course in accordance with the following conditions:

1. Without a grade - only during the first week of the term may a student drop courses without a grade.
2. Warning: Anyone adding or dropping a course without following the proper procedure will: 1) not receive credit for the course added; and 2) receive an "F" for any course not officially dropped.

## **C. Other Regulations**

Converse University reserves the right to add or drop programs and courses, change fees, change the calendar, and institute new requirements when such changes are necessary. Every effort will be made to minimize any inconveniences for students caused by such changes. Suitable substitutions will be

allowed for required courses that have been withdrawn. Any difficulties arising from changes in published dates, requirements, or courses should be brought to the attention of the office of the Graduate School.

#### **D. Classroom Procedure for Academic Work**

These procedures protect the freedom granted the Student Body under the Honor Tradition and assure self-protection and consideration of others. Violation of any of these procedures is a violation of the Honor Tradition.

1. Quizzes and Examinations:
  - a. Giving or receiving knowledge about a quiz or examination before, during or after a testing situation or attempting to do so is a violation of the Honor Tradition.
  - b. Students are permitted to make use of old quizzes or old examinations in preparation for quizzes and examinations. They may also study the classroom and laboratory notes of others.
  - c. At no time during an examination period is a student permitted to comment to another student about the level of difficulty, specific content, or the general nature of any final examination the student has seen or taken. This prohibition applies even when the other student is not enrolled in the course concerned. Discussing examinations in any way is a violation of the Honor Tradition.
  - d. During a Quiz or Examination:
    1. Examinations or quizzes must be taken in a classroom within the building in which it is administered or in another place designated by the instructor.
    2. There should be no supervision in a proctoring sense and the instructor should be free to come and go as desired.
    3. Students may leave the examination at will, but they are subject to the fixed time limit of the examination or quiz period.
    4. All books, papers, and notes must be left outside the classroom unless permitted by the instructor.
2. Library and Laboratory Procedures:

Improper removal of any library book or material and removal without permission of any laboratory material or equipment violates the Honor Tradition.
3. The Honor Tradition and Academic Work:
  - a. All written work is to be pledged unless otherwise specified by the professor.
  - b. A student may freely discuss ideas with others, since such discussion is a valuable stimulation to independent thought. But in written work material should be organized and ideas should be expressed without help from others.
  - c. Students are expected to do all academic work in accordance with the principles of the Honor Tradition. These principles specifically applied to the preparation of papers are:
    1. The student's written work must be essentially the product of their own mind. Some instructors may prefer that their students have the benefit of consultation with other students in preparing papers. Unless such freedom of consultation is explicitly given by the instructor, a student is expected to do their own work. They may ask other students about specific points of grammar or punctuation. Students should feel free to use the Writing Center without fear of violating the Honor Tradition.
    2. All creative writing is expected to be entirely original and should not be duplicated for another course without the instructor's permission.
    3. In any critical research paper, the source of all material not original with the writer must be given full and specific acknowledgement. All phrases, sentences, or longer passages taken directly from another writer must be placed within quotation marks or in a block quotation and then cited properly; all phrases, sentences, or longer passages paraphrased from another writer must also be cited properly. Whether quoted directly or paraphrased, all ideas, opinions, and facts that are not common knowledge must be cited properly. Failure to distinguish one's own work and ideas from works and ideas taken from another source constitutes plagiarism and is a direct violation of the Honor Tradition. The student is responsible for learning the proper means of distinguishing their own work from material they have borrowed or for asking the instructor if they are in doubt. Whether a

student quotes directly, paraphrases, or summarizes, they must remember that they are obligated to acknowledge their indebtedness for the facts, opinions, ideas or words used.

**a. Facts:** Authority must be cited for the use of any fact not generally known. The assertion that Columbus discovered America in 1492 need not be supported. But if the student writes that Columbus strangled his wife with a red stocking, the authority must be produced. Most frequently, the failure to give adequate support occurs when the student is sketching in background information. For example, do not discuss the education of Thomas Hardy, the romance of the Brownings or the friendship of Tennyson and Hallum without some general acknowledgement as the following (in a footnote) “For the information about..., I am indebted to the following work or works...”

**b. Opinions:** Any opinion not the writer’s own used in a paper should be credited to its owner. If the writer’s thinking on a certain subject happens to lie parallel to that of T.S. Eliot, for instance, this fact must be acknowledged in the usual way and the thought then expressed in the writer’s own words. Many questions arise on this point, and the only satisfactory rule is that of common honesty.

**c. Ideas:** Any idea not the writer’s own used in a paper should be credited to its owner. For example, the idea that the structure of Mark Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* alternates between the river and the shore should be attributed to the originator of the idea, the critic Henry Nash Smith. As with opinions, many questions arise on this point, so the student must use common sense and honesty.

**d. Guide:** For a guide to the correct format for footnotes and other manners of acknowledging borrowed materials, consult a manual or stylebook approved by the instructor. Do not hesitate to consult the instructor about any problem of form or academic honesty.

**e. Procedure:** The instructor must judge evidence sufficient to warrant investigation. The instructor then raises the subject of plagiarism with the student, cites the passages under question, and tells the student either that on the basis of present information, no further action will be taken or that the matter should be reported to the appropriate Chair. In the former case, the question will not be raised again unless new evidence is uncovered. In the latter case, the instructor should remind the student that they have twenty-four hours to report their situation to the Dean of the Graduate School.

4. Plagiarism is distinguished from inadequate documentation, which involves errors in the form of documentation, but which still allows the reader to distinguish words and ideas originated by the student from words and ideas taken from another source. Evidence of plagiarism is sufficient grounds for referral to the appropriate Chair. Inadequate documentation shall be handled by the instructor.

## E. Grades

1. A student failing a course may be permitted to take the second portion of the course, if the course failed is the first term of a continuous course or the next higher course in the subject only with the approval of the department chair concerned.
2. All fees that are currently due must be paid in full for a student to receive a diploma or certificate, or receive a transcript of his/her records. These fees include tuition, library charges, traffic fines (including other area colleges), health center charges, dining room charges, bookstore bills, returned checks, etc.

## 3. Directed Independent Study Policy

The University offers Directed Independent Study according to these general principles:

1. When a graduate student needs a DIS course, it may be provided if the need for the DIS course meets University guidelines and is approved by the student’s adviser, the DIS course instructor of record, the program coordinator, and the Dean of the Graduate School. Such courses require higher than normal fees from students.
2. DIS courses are not considered a part of a faculty member’s normal teaching load unless scheduled and advertised, e.g. some “special topics” courses.

3. While the University cannot guarantee that students can be offered a DIS in an existing course, under unusually compelling circumstances a student may request approval for a DIS. Such a request should be made from a student only:
  - a. If a course is required for program completion, but is not scheduled so that one or more students can enroll.
  - b. If a student has an unalterable schedule conflict.
  - c. If a student needs a course to correct an out-of-sequence program.
  - d. If a student has special circumstances that require a “special topics” that is not offered as a regularly scheduled course and can only be taken as DIS.
  - e. If a student has compelling personal circumstance, such as a health problem.

#### 4. Conditions and Qualifications for Faculty:

- a. If a regular course does not lend itself to DIS, a faculty member should decline to offer the course in this format, i.e., courses that depend on classroom discussion or class interaction or other skill courses.
- b. Normally, a faculty member should not carry more than a total of four (4) DIS students in any term. Exceptions to this load must be based on extenuating student circumstances and must be approved, in advance, by the Dean of the Graduate School.

#### 5. Procedures:

- a. Directed Independent Study Approval Forms can be secured by graduate students from the office of the Graduate School or from the Registrar’s Office. **The form must be completed and approved prior to registration.** A student is not enrolled in the DIS until the form is on file with the Registrar. One copy of the form should be on file with the instructor and in the office of the Graduate School.
  1. An initial conference must be held with the instructor during which all aspects of the DIS course must be discussed and recorded on the DIS approval form. If the DIS course is a regularly scheduled course, a copy of the course syllabus must be attached to the DIS approval form.
  2. A minimum of six (6) contact hours with the instructor is required.
- b. Graduate students, who otherwise qualify for the DIS and cannot secure the support of a faculty member, may discuss individual problems with their advisor first and the Dean of the Graduate School second.

#### 6. Fees:

These policies concerning fees are currently in place:

- a. Graduate Students and Converse II students pay the published current per credit hour costs for a DIS course. Faculty are remunerated for Graduate and Converse II courses at a specified rate per credit hour.

## 4. Graduation

### Application Process

All students must complete and submit a graduation application to the registrar and graduate school office, regardless of whether or not they are participating in commencement exercises. If you are completing your program in December, you must submit your application before the end of that term. If you are completing your program in spring, you must submit your application by December 1 before the graduation year. A \$50.00 late fee will be charged to those who apply after the December 1 deadline. The graduation application fee of \$150 is billed by the Business Office in the spring.

### Commencement

Graduate Commencement is held on the afternoon of Undergraduate Commencement in May every year in Twichell Auditorium. Announcements about regalia, and other details of the graduation ceremony will be on the Registrar’s page of My.Converse under Commencement.

## 5. The Honor Tradition

We at Converse are proud of the fact that the basis of campus life is the Honor Tradition. The Honor Tradition is a system which encompasses all areas of student life and is built on trust which prevails not only among students, but also between the administration and faculty, and the students. This trust places upon each student the responsibility of their own actions, as well as those of their classmates. If a student at any time violates a principle of the Honor Tradition, they are honor bound to turn themselves in. Likewise, if they are aware that a fellow student has violated a principle of the Honor Tradition, they are honor bound to ask the violator to turn themselves in within 24 hours. The Honor System is not destroyed by infractions of the rules; it is damaged when violations are tolerated.

### A. Principles of the Honor Tradition:

1. A student does not lie.
2. A student does not steal; a student respects the property of others.
3. A student does not cheat.
4. A student is honor bound to report any violation of the Honor Tradition.

### B. Procedures for Reporting Honor Violations for Graduate Students:

If a member of the faculty or administration suspects a violation of the Honor Code, they should approach the student whose actions are in question. This meeting should always terminate by the member of the faculty or administration telling the student that either no action will be taken on the basis of present information or that the student has twenty-four hours from the end of the meeting to report the violation to the department chair. After the twenty-four-hour period has expired, the member of the faculty or administration should check with the Dean of the Graduate School to insure that the accused student has reported the incident. If the student has not reported the suspected violation, the accuser will file a report with the department.

### C. Graduate Standards Committee and Procedures:

1. Committee Members: Dean of the Graduate School, Chair, three members of Graduate Council, and a graduate student appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School.

#### Procedures:

- a. Members of the committee are expected to remove themselves from the proceedings if a conflict of interest arises.
- b. The hearing will be recorded. The deliberations of the committee will not be taped.
- c. The decision of the committee will be based on a simple majority vote.
- d. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Graduate Standards Committee to notify the student in writing of the committee's decision.
- e. The Graduate Standards Committee is authorized to hear all cases involving alleged honor violations during the period prior to exams, and during exams.
- f. A student may appeal any graduate honor code decision to the Provost. Such appeals must be presented within 3 days of receipt of the committee's written decision.

### D. Rights and Responsibilities of the Accused:

1. Rights of the Accused:
  - a. The accused has the right to be informed of the charges against him or her prior to the hearing.
  - b. The accused has the right to a fair, impartial and confidential hearing before the Graduate Standards Committee.
  - c. The accused has the right to a minimum of 24 hours advance notice of the case hearing.
  - d. The accused shall be presumed not guilty until proven guilty by a preponderance of the evidence presented at the case hearing. This means that the Graduate Standards Committee must find the evidence supporting the charge against the student more compelling than the contradictory evidence in order for the student to be found guilty of the charge.
  - e. No student shall be brought to a hearing for a violation that occurred more than one year before the charges were made.

- f. No student shall be tried twice for the same case unless new evidence comes to light.
  - g. The Chair of the Graduate Standards Committee shall inform the accused in writing of their rights, the time of the hearing, and the procedures that will be followed.
  - h. The Chair shall advise the accused that they may seek advice and assistance from any member of the Converse community in preparing their case; however, the accused must present their case to the committee by themselves. The accused has the right to request a meeting with the Chair to have the process explained to them.
  - i. The accused shall not be required to testify against themselves, but the Chair may call other students or faculty members to testify against them.
  - j. The accused has the right to be informed of all evidence against them.
  - k. The accused may request any witnesses, either character or circumstantial, to testify on their behalf, if their testimony is deemed relevant by the Chair. The accused must present a list of those persons to the Chair twenty-four hours in advance of the hearing, and state the reasons for calling each one to testify. The Chair reserves the right to limit the testimony of the witnesses if no new information is being presented.
  - l. The accused may elect to remain in the room while witnesses and the accuser(s) involved in the case are questioned. If the accused elects to remain in the room, they must notify the Chair twenty-four hours in advance.
  - m. After the examination of each witness by the Committee, the accused has the right to question the witness. Afterwards, the Committee may ask questions of the witness, or call any witness back at a later point.
  - n. After the examination of the accuser(s) by the Committee, the accused has the right to respond to the testimony. Afterwards, the Committee has the right to ask additional questions of the accuser(s), or call the accuser(s) back at a later point.
  - o. The accused has a right to be present during the entire hearing, with the exception of judicial deliberations. If they fail to appear, the hearing may be held in their absence.
2. **Responsibilities of the Accused:**
- a. The accused is honor-bound to tell the truth.
  - b. The accused is responsible to read and understand the case procedures and student policies and regulations as stated in the Graduate Student Handbook.
  - c. The accused has the responsibility to attend the case hearing and notify the Chair of any time conflicts within twenty-four hours of the designated time of the hearing.
  - d. The accused has the responsibility to complete sanctions by the stated deadline.
  - e. The accused has the responsibility to conduct themselves in a respectful manner.

**E. Possible Sanctions Included but are not Limited to:**

Warning; Failure of assignment; failing grade in course; suspension (length to be determined); expulsion from the University.

## 6. Registration for Classes

Graduate students may register for classes for future terms on the date that advisement for the future term begins. Graduate students should meet with their adviser prior to registering for classes.

**On-line registration:** Graduate students may register online via my.converse. Students must have a user name and password that is provided by Campus Technology in order to participate in online registration.

Once the student signs into my.converse, they should follow these steps to register.

1. Click on Student in the purple area at the top of the screen
2. Click on Course Registration on the left of the screen;
3. Choose the term you wish to register for classes and select classes;
4. Click submit.

The course schedule will be available on the student portal for viewing.

All financial obligations must be resolved by the date set by the university. (For Fall term – August 15th; for Jan Term – December 15th; and for Spring Term- January 15th) Summer dates will be posted on the academic calendar. Refer to the academic calendars for tuition due dates and refund policy dates. Accounts that are outstanding after these dates will result in the classes being cancelled.

Students who have any holds on their record may not register until the holds have been cleared.

## 7. Removal/Withdrawing/Leave of Absence Policy

The Dean of the Graduate School may remove a graduate student from class or a program for “appropriate reasons.” These may include but are not limited to poor academic performance (cumulate GPA below a 3.0) (see good standing below); a grade of F in a single course; a serious academic integrity offense; behavior that is considered dangerous to others or self.

Students removed from a class or program will be notified in writing. Within three days of receipt of this notice, the student may request an appeal before the Graduate Standards Committee comprised of the Dean (Chair of the committee) three members of the Graduate Council, and a graduate student from a program other than the student’s, who is appointed by the Dean.

If the Graduate Standards Committee rules in favor of the student, the student may continue the class or program. If the committee supports the decision to remove the student, the student may appeal in writing to the Provost within three days of the receipt of the Graduate Standards Committee’s decision. The Provost’s decision is final and a finding against the student will result in an Involuntary Separation from Converse University and its graduate programs.

### **A. Good Standing**

In order to maintain good standing in the Graduate School and to maintain the GPA necessary to graduate with an advanced degree from Converse University, a graduate student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0. The only exception to this is in the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) programs, where the state policy of candidates maintaining a 2.75 GPA to qualify for certification supersedes the Converse policy. However, middle and secondary MAT candidates must maintain a 3.0 GPA in content classes to remain in good standing and graduate, regardless of cumulative GPA.

If a student falls below a 3.0 cumulative GPA, he or she has a semester to bring the GPA back to 3.0 or above. After this semester, the student may be dismissed from the program, by the dean, with the approval of the graduate advisor. If the advisor feels the student should be given additional time to raise the cumulative GPA, the advisor may design an academic contract, in conjunction with the student, and approved by the appropriate dean (The Graduate School or School of the Arts). The contract must outline in detail the steps that must be taken and the goals that must be met to remain in the program. Failure to file an academic contract will result in the student being dismissed from the program after two semesters below a 3.0.

### **B. Withdrawal from the Graduate School**

It is very important that graduate students who intend to withdraw from all graduate work for a semester do so officially. If students do not, they may end up with a semester of all F’s, which will greatly lower their cumulative GPA and may make it difficult for students to resume their studies at a later date.

Withdrawal from the Graduate School is done through the Registrar and the form must be turned in to the Registrar’s Office. There is a one-page form, which needs to be filled out and signed by the student by the date for withdrawal in the semester the student withdraws. This form is available in the Graduate School Office (Ezell Hall) or the Registrar’s Office (Wilson Hall). A copy of the form will be sent to the Graduate School, Financial Aid, Registrar, Student Billing and to the Graduate Advisor. Sometimes a student who withdraws may also need to file a Leave of Absence (see below).

### **C. Leave of Absence and Program Extensions**

If a graduate student in good standing feels he or she needs to take a break from his or her program, he or she should apply to the appropriate dean (Graduate School or School of the Arts) for a **leave of absence**. This may be done by e-mail and a letter will be placed in the student's file. This will make it easier for a student to resume studies after time off.

Students should keep in mind that graduate degrees at Converse are to be completed in 5 years from the date they are started. If a student takes a leave of absence and will go beyond five years to complete a program, that student must file a request for a **program extension**. Program extensions specify a semester by which a program must be completed. Applications for Program Extensions should be made via e-mail to the appropriate dean.

## 8. Graduate Council

The governing body of the Graduate School is the Graduate Council. The section below appears in the faculty handbook, but is provided here for a quick reference.

### *Graduate Faculty And Council*

#### 1. **Graduate Faculty**

All fulltime tenure track faculty members are eligible to be **Graduate Faculty**. There is no specific application process. If their peers in their academic department consider them qualified to teach graduate level classes, then they become **Voting Graduate Faculty**.

**Voting Graduate Faculty** are eligible to serve on Graduate Council and its sub committees. The council and committees deal with graduate issues. Voting Graduate Faculty should teach at least one graduate class a year on a regular basis.

#### 2. **The Graduate Council**

The following individuals serve on the Graduate Council by virtue of their Converse appointments:

- Dean of the Graduate School (chair and non-voting member)
- Registrar
- Chair of Education Department
- One graduate advisor from each of the following programs, as decided by each program and reported to Council Administrative Assistant, at the beginning of the fall semester:
  - MLA
  - MFA
  - MMFT
  - MAT
  - MEd
  - EdS
  - PLP(EdD and MiM)
- An at-large representative from art and one from music as reported by each area to the Council Administrative Assistant, at the beginning of the fall semester:

The Council, therefore, has 12 members including one non-voting member who can vote to break ties. Quorum for the group is 6.

The Admissions Sub-Committee and the Curriculum Sub-Committee will be drawn from the twelve voting members. There must be a member from the Education Department on each committee and the other two must be from different academic areas to maintain balance. The Council chair is a non-voting member of both committees and is the summer designee on admissions decisions.

Procedures are as follows: the Council may meet in person once each semester and handles other business electronically. The Curriculum Committee reviews course and program proposals first and on a rolling basis. If approved, proposals move on to the full Council for a



vote. Members have 48 hours to vote. Approved proposals are presented to the Voting Graduate Faculty at the end of the next scheduled faculty meeting.

The Admissions Committee meets if there are provisional applications to be reviewed.

### 3. *Graduate Admissions*

#### Responsibilities

Members (representing each specific graduate program) screen applicants for their area and recommend full admission, provisional admission, rejection or deferment with specific recommendations for future consideration.

The committee members who are present vote on the adviser's recommendation. The committee also discusses and votes on graduate admission policies.

## Policies and Procedures - Other

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### 1. Discrimination and Harassment Policies

See the next section for this policy.

## Converse University Sex & Gender Discrimination and Harassment Policy (Title IX)

**Policy Owner** Office of Diversity and Inclusion

**Responsible Office(s)** Office of Diversity and Inclusion

### Policy Statement

Converse University ("Converse"), in compliance with and as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and its implementing regulations ("Title IX") and other civil rights laws, as well as in furtherance of its own values as a higher education institution, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, pregnancy, disability, age, religion, veteran status, or any other characteristic or status protected by applicable local, state, or federal law in admission, treatment, or access to, or employment in, its programs and activities.

### Purpose

Discrimination and harassment are antithetical to the values and standards of the Converse community; are incompatible with the safe, healthy environment that the Converse community expects and deserves; and will not be tolerated. Converse is committed to providing programs, activities, and an education and work environment free from discrimination and harassment and to fostering a community that provides prompt reporting and fair and timely resolution of those behaviors.

Inquiries concerning discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex or gender may be referred to Converse's Title IX Coordinator. Please see the contact information above.

Inquiries concerning discrimination or harassment based on a protected characteristic or status other than sex or gender may be referred to the Director of Community & Inclusion (for students) or the Director of Human Resources (for employees).

Individuals also may make inquiries regarding discrimination or harassment to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights by contacting the District of Columbia Office, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-1475; Phone 800-421-3481; email: OCR@ed.gov.

## Scope

This policy applies to any allegation of sex or gender discrimination or harassment made by or against a student or an employee of Converse or a third party, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender expression, or gender identity.

The Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures apply only to allegations of Sexual Harassment in Converse's Education Program or Activity.

Converse will address allegations of other types of sex or gender discrimination or harassment (i.e., that do not meet the definition of Sexual Harassment) (1) using other student and employee conduct disciplinary procedures deemed appropriate by the Title IX Coordinator in consultation with other Converse administrators; and/or (2) with Supportive Measures.

When Converse has actual knowledge of sexual harassment (or allegations of) in its Education Program or Activity and against a person in the United States, Converse is obligated to respond and to follow Title IX's specific requirements, which are addressed and incorporated in these Grievance Procedures.

Promptly upon receiving allegations of Sexual Harassment in Converse's Education Program or Activity and against a person in the United States, the Title IX Coordinator will contact the Complainant to discuss the availability of Supportive Measures with or without the filing of a Formal Complaint and to explain to the Complainant the process for filing a Formal Complaint.

## Policy

*Note: The full policy can be found on My Converse at [https://my.converse.edu/ICS/Offices/Human\\_Resources/Title\\_IX.jnz](https://my.converse.edu/ICS/Offices/Human_Resources/Title_IX.jnz). This excerpt serves to provide basic information to students, faculty, and staff. The full policy should be referenced for further information.*

**Important information for individuals who may be victims of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking:** If you or someone you know may have been a victim of sexual assault or any other type of sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to seek immediate assistance. Assistance can be obtained 24 hours a day, seven days a week from the Residence Director on call at 864.621.7114 or Campus Safety at 864.596.9026.

For additional information for students about seeking medical assistance and emotional support, as well as important resource information, contact a member of the Wellness Center staff at 864.596.9258 or [wellnesscenter@converse.edu](mailto:wellnesscenter@converse.edu).

During business hours (8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday), you are also strongly encouraged to contact one of the following individuals:

Title IX Coordinator:	Danielle Stone, MEd Chief Inclusion Excellence Officer/Title IX Coordinator 864.596.9616 <a href="mailto:Danielle.stone@converse.edu">Danielle.stone@converse.edu</a> Location: Montgomery 202H
	Jodi Strehl, MSW Senior Associate Athletic Director/ Senior Woman Administrator 864.596.9671 <a href="mailto:jodi.strehl@converse.edu">jodi.strehl@converse.edu</a> Location: Marsha H. Gibbs Field House, 216
Title IX Deputy Coordinators:	Tori McLean Good, EdD Director of Career Development and Employer Relations 864.596.9647 <a href="mailto:tori.good@converse.edu">tori.good@converse.edu</a> Location: Montgomery 206 B
	Keshia Jackson Gilliam, EdD Director of Human Resources 864.596.9029 <a href="mailto:KeshiaJackson.Gilliam@converse.edu">KeshiaJackson.Gilliam@converse.edu</a> Location: Carnegie 204

Duties and responsibilities of the Coordinators are to monitor and oversee implementation of Title IX compliance at the University, including coordination of training, education, communication, and administration of procedures for faculty, staff, students, and other members of the University community, such as contract employees, Board members, and auxiliary staff. Complaints regarding discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex or gender, against Converse students, employees, or third-party contractors should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Coordinators listed above.

## Version History

Sun, 08/13/2023 - 21:04

## 2. Copyright Information

Whenever a student has questions about the legality of reproducing copyrighted materials - including videotapes, music, art, or material from internet sources - he/she should consult the CONVERSE UNIVERSITY COPYRIGHT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY HANDBOOK. This guide to policy and procedures can be found in the Library.

## 3. Drug Policy

In view of the fact that cases involving the possession and use of illegal drugs and/or narcotics are state and federal offenses, such cases will be handled by the Alcohol and Drug Board. The University cooperates with the Federal and State authorities when it is desirable and/or necessary to do so. If one of the committee members cannot be present, the committee will proceed with the case. If two of the members cannot be present, the meeting will be rescheduled.

1. Possession of stimulant, depressant, narcotic or hallucinogenic drugs, drug paraphernalia and other agents having potential for abuse, and/or potential for health risks, except on physician's or dentist's prescription, violates the State and Federal laws and is prohibited. Also, abuse of over-the-counter drugs is considered to be a health risk and is, therefore, not permitted. The use, selling, bartering, exchanging, and giving away such drugs **to any person** not intended to possess them is also illegal and prohibited.
2. Any student who becomes aware of a violation of the Alcohol and Drug Policy should notify the Campus Life Office.
3. The use of illegal drugs and abuse of over-the-counter drugs poses significant health risks to students, such as severe mental and physical incapacitation or even death. These are issues of primary concern to the University. Educational programs concerning the risks of drugs will be offered on campus throughout the year. Assistance with any problem related to use of drugs is available through the counseling service. This service is confidential.
4. All cases of students who are convicted of a violation of federal or state drug laws will be reviewed by University authorities.

## 4. Freedom of Expression Policy

Converse University employees, students and student organizations are free to examine and debate all questions or issues of importance to them and to express opinions publicly and privately. Converse University recognizes the right of any employee or student to demonstrate peacefully. However, any group that wishes to assemble for such purpose must *first* register and review all activities with the Campus Life Office in order to ensure that the University can provide adequate security and safety measures.

The right to assemble peacefully for the purpose of public expression or opinion is restricted to those students or employees who are currently enrolled or employed at Converse University. Converse is a private institution and will not allow outside individuals or groups to demonstrate on the Converse campus for any reason. Trespassers are subject to prosecution by the law.

Although Converse students enjoy freedom of speech and assembly, no one shall obstruct the free movement of other individuals on campus, interfere with academic instruction, or interfere with the use of University facilities. At all times Converse University students and employees are expected to speak and act responsibly. Students and employees are also obligated to make it clear that when they speak they do so for themselves and not for the University.

## 5. Campus Technology Services Policies and Regulations

- Campus Technology is located in Kuhn 329.
  - The help line telephone number is 864-596-9457
  - The office hours are from 8:00 am - 5:00 pm Monday - Thursday & 8:00am - 1:00pm Friday
- A. Software downloads and other services are available to all graduate students. See the Campus Technology page on my.converse for more information ([https://my.converse.edu/ICS/Offices/Campus\\_Technology/](https://my.converse.edu/ICS/Offices/Campus_Technology/)). Printing on campus, campus internet access, Google workspace access, changing your password and other technology services and acceptable use guidelines.
- B. Email Accounts  
All students are required to have a Converse email account for their personal use, as long as they are enrolled at Converse. Check email frequently. Converse University business and Canvas notifications will be sent to your Converse email address.
- C. Safe Computing - Students have access to storage options and there are recommended data sharing systems. More information is at this address: [https://my.converse.edu/ICS/Offices/Campus\\_Technology/Safe\\_Computing/Protect\\_Converse.jnz](https://my.converse.edu/ICS/Offices/Campus_Technology/Safe_Computing/Protect_Converse.jnz)

## 6. Communications

The Office of Communications is responsible for supporting strategic initiatives of the University that advance institutional visibility and reputation, working collaboratively to provide communications and marketing planning in accordance with the University's vision and institutional priorities. The Communications team serves the external community by building awareness through the management of brand and identity messaging, official print and digital publications, the Converse website, primary social media sites, strategic public relations initiatives, the Converse press and media kit, institutional advertising, photography and video assets, and the release of news.

Located in Wilson Hall, the office encourages students to utilize the resources and experience available to obtain publicity for their events and share news of their significant achievements. Students should contact the Communications Office at extension 9504 to request assistance, with lead time of at least 3 weeks prior to when materials are needed (more complex materials will require longer lead time). The office also provides the campus community with in-house counsel for strategic and creative communications, and can provide recommendations for external vendors for design, print, photography and video production.

### **Daily Announcements**

Students should use Daily Announcements to distribute news and information that is directly relevant to the greater campus community and to the mission of Converse University. Information can be targeted to students, faculty, staff, or any combination of these groups. Personal announcements are not permitted.

The Daily Announcements email is sent each business day except for weekends and when the University is closed. Announcements must be submitted by 8:30 AM on the first day they are to be published.

To submit an announcement, visit my.converse.edu and log in with your Converse username and password, then select Daily Announcements in the left menu to enter your announcement.

Announcements may run for three consecutive days or five times in total. The Daily Announcements team reserves the right to edit announcements for length and content.

### **Share Your Accomplishments**

Converse publishes selected Community News, brief shout-outs for student, faculty and staff accolades, via our website. If you have an accomplishment to share, please send it to [www.converse.edu/communitynews/](http://www.converse.edu/communitynews/)!

### **Converse Email Signature Tools**

All Converse students are encouraged to customize a Converse Email Signature for their email accounts. Email signature instructions can be found on my.converse.edu in the [Students section](#).

### **Photo Opt Out Policy**

Converse University takes pictures and video around campus and at many University events throughout the year. This media is published in a variety of manners including the University's print publications, print and digital advertisements, the Converse website, and on Converse social media channels for purposes of education, publicity, and student recruitment. Should a student NOT wish to be photographed or recorded by a Converse University photographer, or have their name or biographical information used in connection with any such media, they must submit the Opt Out Request Form with an attached current photograph to the Office of Communications. Students who submit an opt out notice are also responsible for removing themselves from areas in which photography and/or recording is taking place, or notifying the photographer of their opt-out status. Failure to do so may result in that individual's inclusion in a photograph or recording and will be treated as consent for the University to use that media accordingly. The Opt Out Request Form can be found online at <https://www.converse.edu/photooptout>.

Images and videos taken in public spaces and/or at public events do not require authorization for publication. Your presence in or around university facilities and/or properties, as well as at off-campus University-sponsored events, constitutes your consent to the capture and/or use of your image and/or voice by Converse University, and waives any claims or rights, whether in law or in equity. When an opt-out request is on file, Converse University will make every effort to honor that student's opt-out status, even in public spaces or at public events.

## **7. Smoking, Tobacco and COVID Policy**

Converse University seeks to provide a safe, healthy, and comfortable environment in which all members of our campus community can live and work. Converse University and The American College Health Association support the findings of the Surgeon General and acknowledge that any form of tobacco use, whether active or passive, is a significant health hazard. The Environmental Protection Agency and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health have both classified second-hand smoke as a known carcinogen (cancer causing). The University realizes that a smoke and tobacco-free environment is a goal we can achieve, through intentional and positive steps to ensure a healthier environment. In pursuit of this goal, Converse University became a tobacco-free campus effective August 1, 2012.

1. Use of any tobacco products is prohibited across the entire campus including the parking lots, campus walkways and all Converse-owned or leased buildings and vehicles.
2. The sale or advertisement of tobacco and smoke products is prohibited on campus and in all University publications.
3. All visitors and vendors working on campus are expected to comply with this policy.
4. Enforcement of the policy is the responsibility of all members of the Converse community. Faculty, staff and students are expected to uphold and enforce the policy for the health and safety of our campus.
5. Campus Safety Officers may issue a smoking citation with fine of \$25 when a violation is noted.
6. Continual violations of the policy may result in disciplinary action. Failure on the part of faculty or staff may result in administrative action up to and including discharge. Failure on the part of

students to follow this policy may result in a violation adjudicated by the appropriate board or administrative sanctioning, which could include but is not limited to community service, monetary fines, and/or suspension from the University. Visitors to the campus who repeatedly violate the policy may be asked to leave University property.

## COVID POLICY

The expectation of Converse University is to follow public health guidance while on campus. COVID policies and personal safety practices are implemented as precautionary safety measures for students, faculty and the Converse community. Students and faculty agree to follow CDC guidance for slowing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. They self-monitor for the development of symptoms and adhere to the University's guidance on COVID and absence reporting requirements to the wellness center. All students and faculty are required to understand and abide by the current University COVID-19 policies and guidelines. Converse reserves the right to modify these policies as may be reasonably necessary for operations and the best interest of the Institution. Current policies, guidelines and additional resources can be found on the COVID-19 resources page.

## 8. Student Complaints Against Faculty Members

**Note: This policy does not include student complaints against faculty members regarding claims of discrimination on the basis of**

- **Race, color, and national origin;**
- **Sex (including pregnancy, parental status, or sex stereotypes);**
- **Disability; or**
- **Age**

**Students who believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of any of these four above conditions should use the grievance policy as stated the section 9.**

1. Students are encouraged to contact professors to discuss any concerns student have about grades, faculty performance in the classroom, or faculty behavior toward students not included in the four categories (race, etc.) immediately above. Professors have office hours that are published on the door of their office and are on the syllabus for the class. Students wanting to talk with professors should speak with the professor before or after class, call the professor on the phone, or communicate via e-mail to set up an appointment. Students who are not comfortable raising an issue or complaint with the faculty member should communicate with the department chair.
2. If the student and the professor cannot resolve the issue, the student should make an appointment to talk with the department chair. The department chair will work with the student and the faculty member to attempt to resolve the issue.
3. If the student and the department chair cannot resolve the issue, or if the student's professor is the department chair, the student should go to the appropriated academic dean. The dean will attempt to resolve the issue and may consult with the provost in doing so. The decision of the dean is final.
4. Complaints must be filed within ten business days from the last day of class of the semester, January term or summer session.

## 9. Student Grievance Procedure

If a student has a concern about a policy or general procedure of the university, they may either direct their concern to the office responsible for the oversight of the policy/procedure or they may address their concern through the resolution process of the SGA Student Senate as outlined in the SGA Constitution. In compliance with the regulations of Title IX of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended in 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Converse University has established the following procedure for students to pursue grievances against faculty or staff members:

**Step One**—The student should request a conference with the employee (professor or staff member) against whom the student has a complaint in order to discuss the problem. The conference must occur within ten working days of the incident. The employee will make an effort to resolve the issue equitably and informally and will send a written response to the student within three working days of the conference.

**Step Two**—If the employee’s response is not satisfactory, the student may send a formal written complaint with supporting evidence and documentation to the department chair or other immediate supervisor of the employee against whom the student has the grievance within three days. The department chair or supervisor will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within three working days and will respond to the student in writing within ten working days of receipt of the complaint.

**Step Three**—If the response of the department chair or supervisor is not satisfactory, the student may notify the dean of the school (UG) or Dean of the Graduate School (Graduate) in which the student is enrolled within three days. The dean of the school or the Dean of the Graduate School will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within three working days, will consider the accumulated evidence, interview any of the parties concerned at his/her discretion, and reply to the student in writing within ten working days of receipt of the complaint.

**Step Four**—A student who is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter may request a formal grievance hearing by notifying the appropriate dean stated above or the Dean of the School of Education and Graduate Studies in writing within three days of receipt of the dean or senior administrator’s response. The request should explain the complaint and should include copies of all letters written and received, as well as supporting evidence and proper documentation. Either the Dean of the School or the Dean of the Graduate School will serve as Chair of a Committee made up of a faculty or staff member appointed by the SGA Executive Committee, a faculty member or administrator chosen by the President, and a faculty member or administrator chosen by the student. The Dean of School or the Dean of the Graduate School will set a date for the hearing within five to ten working days of receipt of the request and will send copies of the appeal to committee members. All members of the committee must be present in order for the hearing to take place. The student will appear before the grievance committee to present the grievance. The committee will also interview the employee against whom the student has the grievance and the employee’s supervisor, as well as any additional witnesses that it considers necessary in order to render a fair decision. The student has the right to present witnesses, either character or circumstantial, if their testimony is deemed relevant by the chairperson. The student must present a list of these witnesses to the chairperson at least twenty-four hours in advance and state the reasons for calling each one to testify. Participants in the hearing may include the following: students, faculty or other agents of the university who may be affected by the case. The appropriate Dean of the School or the Dean of the Graduate School, as chairperson of the committee, will forward copies of the committee’s decision to all involved within three working days.

**Step Five**—A student who wishes to appeal the decision of the committee must notify the President in writing within three days of receipt of the committee’s ruling. The President may interview any of the parties concerned before deciding to approve, modify, or overturn the committee’s decision. The President will inform the student of his/her decision in writing within ten working days of receipt of the appeal.

**Step Six**—A student who is not satisfied with the decision of the Grievance Committee may file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights in Atlanta, Georgia. All information regarding students is confidential and will be communicated only to faculty and administrative personnel who have a justifiable reason to have the information. Because Converse prefers to resolve complaints at the lowest level, a student whose complaint involves accommodations for a disability should contact the Director of Academic Support and either the Vice President for Finance & Administration for ADA issues or the Director of Human Resources for Section 504 issues prior to beginning step one (see also “Academic Policies on Disabilities”). Note: If the case involves a complaint filed against an advisor of a student organization, the procedure will begin with a meeting with the employee as stated in Step One. If necessary, it will then proceed to Step Four, which involves the Committee hearing.

## 10. Student Records

1. In the handling of student records, Converse complies with the provisions of the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974*.
2. **Use of Student Records:** Student records, both academic and personal, are confidential in nature, and they will be used internally by administration, faculty, and staff in such a way to protect their confidential nature at all times.
3. **Release of Student Records:** Student records, except for Directory Information (described below), will be released only to appropriate administrative officers, faculty, and the student. Release of these records to other persons such as employers, prospective employers, other colleges, and governmental and legal agencies shall occur only upon approval of the student or former student or upon subpoena.
4. **Types of Records Maintained:**
  - a. *Highly Confidential*—restricted access.  
*Record Officer(s) Responsible*  
Financial Planning: Director of Financial Planning  
Disciplinary Action: President of the University, Provost, Dean of the Graduate School, Dean of Students, Academic Dean
  - b. *Academic Records*  
Records submitted for Admission grade reports, transcripts, etc. Graduate Admissions Office, Dean of the School of the Arts office, Dean of the Graduate School office; Permanent Record Registrar Credentials File Center for Professional Development (including letters of recommendation)
  - c. *Directory Information*  
Graduate students are not included in directories.
5. **Rights of Students:**
  1. Under the conditions to be stated, the student will be allowed to inspect any record kept for that student *with the following exceptions*:
    - a. faculty records made and used in pursuit of the faculty's duties in instruction;
    - b. the confidential files of medical and counseling staff of the University;
    - c. the records or minutes of deliberations of disciplinary bodies of the University (Student Honor Board, Civitas Council, Alcohol and Drug Board, and Appeals Board); or any other record or document not required by law to be divulged to student or parent Furthermore, the student will not be allowed access to any confidential financial record of the parent in the possession of the University.
  2. The student has the right to withhold disclosure of any category of Directory Information.
6. **Procedures for the Exercise of Rights:**
  1. To withhold disclosure of Directory Information, the student must complete a form prepared for this purpose in the Registrar's Office.
  2. To inspect any University record which is available under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, the student will make the request in writing or in person to the Registrar. When the individual has properly identified herself to the Registrar, the Registrar will set a date for inspection of those records under the supervision of the Registrar. If the record(s) to be inspected is not under the Registrar's supervision, the Registrar will contact the appropriate officer and make arrangements for inspection. Inspection will be allowed as soon as possible in all cases within 45 days as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.
  3. If a correction in a record is requested by the student the Registrar or other appropriate officer will collect the necessary information and make such correction if it is not to be challenged. If the proposed correction is to be challenged by an officer of the University, a hearing will be necessary. The hearing in such cases will be conducted by the Administrative Committee of the University, consisting of the President, the two academic deans, the Dean Student Success, and three faculty members. For such a hearing, the Registrar will serve as an ex-officio member of the Committee.



# General Information

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## 1. Student Store

The Converse University Student Store is the on-campus resource for a wide selection of general university and personal supplies. Personal checks, VISA, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, financial aid, and cash are accepted toward purchases; refunds and exchanges require register receipts. There is a \$25.00 charge for all returned checks. Text books and general merchandise are available in the store or online at [www.conversecollegeshop.com](http://www.conversecollegeshop.com). The store is located in the Montgomery Student Center.

## 2. Campus Safety

The Converse Campus is protected 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by a trained Campus Safety Staff under the supervision of a Director of Campus Safety. Officers patrol the inside of buildings, the grounds, and the parking lots. Campus Safety may be reached by dialing 9026 on campus and 596-9026 off campus. Parking policies can be found at the following link: <https://www.converse.edu/life-at-converse/campus-services/parking-and-vehicle-info/>

Being a part of a small university environment may give a student the impression that they are totally immune to some of the Campus Safety problems that larger communities face. The unfortunate reality is that no university campus is completely safe, even though Converse makes every effort to provide an environment for residents which is secure and comfortable. The University Campus Safety force is on duty 24 hours a day, but it is up to each student to take responsibility for their own personal safety. We encourage students to follow the safety tips listed here:

1. Do not walk alone at night.
2. Stay in well-lit areas.
3. Lock your car and always have your keys ready before reaching your car.
4. Travel with plenty of gas.
5. Do not hitchhike or pick up hitchhikers.
6. Report suspicious people on the hall or around campus to Campus Safety.
7. Contact Campus Safety if you need an escort to or from a parking lot or from working late in an academic building.

### **A. Lost and Found**

The Campus Safety Office in The Towne House serves as the central lost and found for the campus. Report lost or found items as soon as possible.

### **B. Missing/Stolen Items**

Missing or stolen items should be reported to the Campus Safety department as soon as possible by calling 9026. An officer will be dispatched to investigate the incident. A copy of the incident report will be sent to the Dean of the Graduate School.

### **C. Identification Cards**

All graduate students must have a Converse University identification card. The Campus Safety Department makes ID cards Monday—Friday, 9:00am–5:00pm. The cost of the ID card is included in the application fee; replacement cards are \$25 each.

### **D. Emergency Alerts**

Graduate students may sign up to receive emergency alerts by going to [my.converse.edu](http://my.converse.edu) and logging in; then look under the Home section for Campus Alerts.

### **E. Parking and Traffic Violations**

#### **1. Motor Vehicles**

Students are eligible to keep motor vehicles on campus providing they are properly registered and

traffic laws are obeyed. Every student is responsible for knowing and observing the traffic and parking regulations as stated in the *TRAFFIC REGULATIONS* booklet. This booklet is available upon request at the Campus Safety Office.

## 2. **Motor Vehicle Registration**

Graduate students must register their vehicle online at [my.converse.edu](http://my.converse.edu). Log in with your user name and password; then look under the Campus Safety section for the link to vehicle registration. Once you have filled out the online form, you may stop by the Campus Safety office to pick up your decal, Monday – Thursday, 9am-5pm, Friday, 9am-1pm.

## 3. **Parking**

- A. Vehicles may be parked and/or operated on Converse University property *ONLY* in such areas as are marked by signs, street markings, and parking regulations, or other designations indicating that parking and/or operation is permitted. If an area is not specifically marked for parking, you *CANNOT PARK THERE*. See the Traffic Regulations Booklet for more details.
- B. Resident students may park in any purple lined space. Commuting students may park in any white lined space. Yellow lined spaces are reserved for faculty and staff.

## 3. The Division for Student Development and Success

The Division for Student Development and Success is located in the Montgomery Student Center and can be reached at 864-596-9016. This Division will enhance community life and student outcomes through increased collaborations with Academic Affairs. Services include Academic Residential Life, Academic Support, Accommodations and Tutoring, Community Inclusion and Diversity, Religious Life, Service Opportunities and Community celebrations.

## 4. The Center for Career Development

The Center for Career Development is in the Montgomery Student Center and can be reached at 864.596.9614. Appointments can be made by visiting Handshake ([converse.joinhandshake.com](http://converse.joinhandshake.com)) using your Converse login information.

Our staff strives to offer services, programs, and opportunities for students to create networks for professional learning and growth. The team works to meet the needs of all Converse students wherever they are in their academic and personal development journey.

Graduate students are encouraged to use Career Development as a resource. We provide one-on-one support in the following areas:

- Resume & Cover Letter Development
- Interviewing Skills
- Job Search Strategies
- LinkedIn
- Professional Etiquette & Dress
- Professional Small Talk & Elevator Speeches
- Job Opportunities
- Networking

## 5. Counseling Services

EMERGE Therapy Teaching Clinic, located at 138 Dillon Dr., Spartanburg, offers counseling services free of charge to Converse University graduate students. The number to call for an appointment is 864-583-1010. In addition, the campus Counseling Center maintains a list of appropriate counseling referral sources.

## 6. Fees, Fines and Delinquent Accounts

All fees that are currently due must be paid in full for a student to receive a diploma or transcript of his or her records. These fees include tuition, library charges, traffic fines (including other area colleges), returned checks, or other charges that may have occurred.

Converse University levies fines in order to enforce the regulations governing the use of the library and the driving and parking of vehicles on campus. Any member of the community has the right to question the regulations governing the enforcement or the fairness of any fine with the appropriate administrative officer. However, ignoring a fine or refusing to pay it will be a violation of the University's authority to regulate campus life and will not be tolerated.

## 7. Center for Academic Excellence

Located on the third floor of Converse's Mickel Library, the Center for Academic Excellence provides students with a personalized tutoring program and mentorship. Mickel Library, a campus hub for study and research, is the ideal space to support the Center for Academic Excellence's mission to provide an environment to support students with their coursework and enhance overall self-improvement.

The Center for Academic Success is open during open hours for [Mickel Library](#). Tutors are available by appointment Monday through Friday from 9 am - 8 pm, and Sunday from 9 am - 8 pm. Schedule an appointment [here](#).

## 8. Graduate Catalog

The Graduate School office will be responsible for producing and publishing the Graduate Catalog prior to August 1 of each academic year. The catalog will be posted on the university's website. Updates or changes made during the academic year will be published via "Revised Catalog" on the website along with archived Graduate Catalogs. Students will be notified of changes in the Graduate Catalog via student email and my.converse. A hard copy of previous Graduate Catalogs will be kept in the Graduate School Office. Converse University students located at the University Center in Greenville and students who take on-line courses as well as students who attend classes on the Spartanburg campus will have equal, electronic access to Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs.

## 9. Where to Go for Information

Most questions can be answered via email or on the My.Converse website.

Physical locations on campus of graduate services:

**Academic Transcripts and Student Schedules:** Registrar's Office (Wilson Hall)

**Student Billing:** (Wilson Hall)

**Financial Planning:** (Wilson Hall)

**Questions regarding graduate programs:** Office of Graduate Admissions (Wilson Hall)

**Course Schedule:** Converse Website ([www.Converse.edu](http://www.Converse.edu)) or the Registrar link in my.converse

**Dropping a Course:** Your Adviser, Registrar's Office (Wilson Hall)

**ID Cards and Auto Registration:** Campus Safety (The Towne House)

**Parking Tickets:** Campus Safety (The Towne House)

# Graduate School Office Information

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## Graduate School Faculty, Staff and Hours

Dr. Lienne Medford, Dean of the Graduate School 864-596-9082

Dr. Kelly Harrison-Maguire, Associate Dean of Education, Director of Literacy 864-596-9081

### **EDD Program (Professional Leadership)**

Dr. Lee Givins, Director of Professional Leadership 864-596-9467

Dr. Jeff Martin, Assistant Professor 864-596-9737

Dr. Jack Knipe, Assistant Professor 864-596-9649

### **MIM (Professional Leadership)**

Dr. Keshia Jackson Gilliam, Director of MIM in Professional Leadership 864-596-9649

### **EDS Programs**

Dr. Kelly Harrison-Maguire, Associate Dean of Education, Director of Literacy,  
Director of Advanced Studies & Elementary Education 864-596-9081

### **MED Programs**

Dr. Susanne Gunter, Director of Art Education 864-596-9126

Dr. Elena Ghionis, Director of Special Education 864-596-9085

Dr. Margaret Lee, Director of Gifted & Talented 864-596-9529

### **MAT Programs**

Dr. Susanne Gunter, Director of Art Education 864-596-9126

Dr. James Lies, Chair of Education, Director of Elementary 864-596-9732

Dr. Margaret Park, Director of Early Childhood,

Director of Deaf and Hard of Hearing 864-596-9747

Dr. Elena Ghionis, Director of Special Education 864-596-9085

Dr. Sam Mooneyham, Director of Student Teaching 864-596-9398

Mrs. Jenny Dunn, Director of Field Placements, 864-596-9638

### **Master of Music Programs**

Dr. Susie Lalama, Director of Master of Music in Music Education 864-596-9121

Dr. Steve Graff, Director of Master of Music in Performance (Instrumental) 864-596-9006

Dr. Valerie MacPhail, Director of Master of Music in Performance (Voice) 864-596-9168

### **Marriage and Family Therapy Program**

Dr. Evan Thomas, Director of Marriage & Family Therapy, 864-596-9211

Dr. Deneshia Scott-Poe, Assistant Professor 864-596-9550

Dr. Morgan Strickland, Assistant Professor 864-577-2084

A'Lyric Miles, MA, Assistant Professor, UCG Clinic Director 864-596-9219

Dr. Cassie Cacace, Assistant Professor, Community Engagement Director 864-596-9187

### **MLA Program**

Dr. Joe Dunn, Director of Master of Liberal Arts (MLA) 864-596-9101

### **MFA Program**

Prof. Rick Mulkey, Director of Master of Fine Arts (MFA) 864-596-9111

### **Support Staff**

Barbara Austin, Ezell Hall 864-596-9745

Helen Landmesser, UCG 864-596-9212

**Graduate School Office Hours in Ezell Hall or University Center Greenville(UCG)**

Monday - Thursday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Friday - 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

## Graduate Admissions Staff

Ms. Jamie Grant, Vice President of Enrollment Management, 864-596-9010

Ms. Kaley Kilpatrick, Assistant Director of Admissions, 864-596-9746