Talk the Talk: Higher Ed Lingo

**4-Year Plan:** This is a roadmap created by students to help ensure that the requirements of the desired degree, including benchmark or gateway, major, and Gen Ed requirements, are understood and fulfilled. It is a tentative outline and can be made with the help of the Peer Mentors at 1317 Symons Hall.

**Academic Advisor:** This is a faculty member of CMNS who will be assisting you as you make progress towards graduation. This person is likely to help you plan your schedule for following semesters and is a good resource for talking about educational and career goals. You are required to meet with your academic advisor once a semester.

**Audit:** If one decides to audit a class, they are choosing to attend the class informally rather than for academic credit.

**Academic Dismissal:** Students who have not met the applicable terms designated by their academic probation requirements will not be allowed to continue their coursework and will be dismissed from the University.

**Academic Integrity:** At UMD, the student-administered Honor Code and Honor Pledge prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures.

**Academic Probation:** Students who have a cumulative GPA below 2.0 are placed on academic probation. Full-time students who are on probation and have earned fewer than 60 cumulative credits will be permitted to continue on probation by completing 9 or more credits and achieving a minimum semester GPA of 2.0 each semester of probation. Full-time students who are on probation and have earned 60 cumulative credits or more will be dismissed from the University if their cumulative GPA remains below a 2.0 at the end of their probationary semester.

**Bachelor's Degree:** This is the degree usually earned by undergraduates at UMD and requires three to five years of study, depending on the major.

**Benchmark Requirements:** Major-specific, entry-level coursework that includes General Education and major courses that must be completed within a set number of semesters and by earning the minimum grade specified.

**Bursar:** The Office of the Bursar is in charge of managing financial affairs, which includes billing, collection of tuition and fees, scholarships, and financial aid. It is located in the Lee Building.

**Credits:** Units for measuring progress towards graduation. These are loosely based on the number of hours the course meets a week. For example, most classes meet for approximately three hours per week and are worth three credits. *Note:* All majors require at least 120 credits to graduate. A student may take a maximum of 17 credits in a semester without having to request permission.

**Course Catalog:** This can be found under “Schedule of Classes” on testudo.umd.edu and lists all of the courses offered at UMD during a particular semester.

**Course Section:** A specific offering of a particular course, at a particular time and location, by a particular instructor, during a specific academic term.
**Cumulative Credits:** The total number of all applicable college credits earned, including AP/IB and transfer credits.

**CLEP:** The College-Level Examination Program provides students with the opportunity to receive undergraduate credit for knowledge and achievements gained through prior learning/competency-based education. Credit is awarded based on the approval of the relevant department offering the course material. No more than 30 of these credits can be from CLEP.

**CMNS:** The abbreviation for the College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences.

**Dean:** The dean of our college is Dr. Jayanth Banavar and has responsibilities that involve students and faculty of CMNS.

**Degree Audit:** An official academic audit is a way to provide important information to students about their academic progress. This is usually done the semester prior to the student graduating in order to ensure that they will be clear to graduate.

**Degree Clearance:** This is completed by advisors of the college and involves reviewing a student’s files and curriculum sheet in order to ensure that he/she is clear to graduate.

**Discussion Section:** A required small group supplement designed to enhance many large lecture courses. Discussions provide students with an opportunity to ask questions and further explore topics from the lecture.

**Drop-Add:** This is the link on testudo.umd.edu that a student should use when choosing to drop/add a course. The last day drop a class without a W or add a course without permission is after the first 10 days of classes. The last day to drop a class with a W is the last day of classes of the semester.

**Duplicate Credit:** Coursework you have previously taken, through AP/IB or at a previous institution that replicates coursework at UMD. Note: Students cannot receive duplicate credit.

**Early Registration:** The registration period during which students register for the next term’s courses. Early registration dates are determined by cumulative credits, with students who have the most credits registering before students who have the least.

**Electives:** These are courses that are not required for your major but can be used to reach the minimum of 120 credits needed to graduate.

**Full-time Student:** These are students who are taking at least 12 credits in a semester.

**FERPA:** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA rights apply to students and no other person unless an exception has been listed. Access is also granted to appropriate University administrators, faculty members, or staff members who require access to educational records in order to perform their legitimate educational duties.

**General Education:** The set of general education, bachelor’s degree requirements beginning Fall 2012; students admitted to college and enrolled in classes following award of the high scholar diploma or transferring from private institutions and non-Maryland public institutions are subject to this program. Gen Ed courses will constitute approximately 40-46 credits toward your degree, and may also fulfill major requirements.
**GPA:** Computed by dividing the total number of quality points accumulated in courses by the total number of credits attempted in those courses. Each letter grade has a numerical value: A+/A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, B = 3.0, B- = 2.7, C+ = 2.3, C = 2.0, C- = 1.7, D+ = 1.3, D = 1.0, D- = .7 F = 0. Multiplying this value by the number of credits for a particular course gives the number of quality points earned for that course.

**Hold-file:** A roster of students who wish to register for a course, but do not meet the departmental restrictions. Students on the waitlist receive priority consideration over those on the hold-file because these students meet the department requirements of the course. Students on a hold-file will not be considered for placement into the course until the first day of classes. Like a waitlist, students on the hold-file must check-in on the first day of classes, and then daily, to remain on a hold-file. At this time, if space is available, the students will be moved into the class when they check-in. If no space is available, the hold-file will be placed on the end of the waitlist.

**Humanities:** These are courses within the academic disciplines that study human culture.

**Independent Study:** These allow undergraduates to pursue an individualized course of study. Generally, a student interested in completing an independent study contacts a faculty member who is working in (or is knowledgeable about) a particular field in which a student has developed an interest. There is an application process required as well so that the student can receive credit for the course.

**Leave of Absence:** A leave of absence is a type of withdrawal and is available for students wishing to take time away from the University with the intention of returning the following semester. The leave of absence status is especially helpful for recipients of federal financial aid because they are not considered to be withdrawn provided they do return and complete the following semester. Students may apply for a leave of absence only during the last 60 days of the semester.

**LEP:** Students in a Limited Enrollment major must successfully complete a specific set of courses, or "gateway" requirements by the semester in which they earn 45 credits. All students may apply for Limited Enrollment Programs. Within CMNS, LEP majors include the Biological Sciences, Biochemistry, Chemistry and Environmental Sciences and Policy-Biodiversity and Conservation.

**Lower-Level Courses:** Courses at the 100- or 200-level, typically viewed as freshman- and sophomore-level coursework.

**Major Requirements:** Courses required by, and unique to, your declared major. All students must complete both major and Gen Ed requirements as part of completing their degree.

**Office of the Registrar:** The campus office responsible for registration and the maintenance of student records, located in the Mitchell Building.

**Part-time Student:** This is a student taking less than 12 credit hours in a given semester.

**Pass-Fail:** Under the pass-fail option, a course that is completed with a passing grade will count toward the student’s total credit hours but will not be computed in the grade point average. A course that is completed with a failing grade will appear on the student’s record and will be computed both in the overall average and in the semester average.

**Prerequisite:** A course that a student must complete in order to take a more advanced course.
**Provost**: This is the chief academic officer of the University. The Provost’s Office has budgetary responsibility for campus academic programs and resources and oversees the development, review, and implementation of all academic policies and regulations. It is located in the Main Administration Building.

**Registration Appointment**: This assigned date and time for early registration, based on cumulative credits. Your registration appointment is set by the Office of the Registrar and can be checked on TESTUDO. Note: Students in good academic standing will register online using the add/drop system via TESTUDO, even though the registration appointment will state that it will be held at the location of the student’s primary major’s advising office.

**Registration Block**: Holds placed on student records to prevent them from being able to register at their specified registration appointment time. Blocks may include, but are not limited to, Proof of Vaccination, Financial, (English or Math), and Mandatory Advising. Note: The only way blocks may be removed is by you taking action to remove them.

**Schedule Adjustment Period**: The first 10 days of Spring and Fall semesters when students can make changes to their schedules. For the summer sessions, this period is shortened to the first five days of classes. During this period, students can add or drop a class without a withdrawal notation appearing on their transcript (“W”). In addition, students can change the grading method and/or credit level of courses (i.e., for variable credit courses). If a student enrolls in 12 or more credits at any time during the Schedule Adjustment Period, s/he will be billed as a full-time student.

**Schedule of Classes**: A listing of courses, published each term by the Office of the Registrar, located online through Testudo. The Schedule of Classes includes course descriptions and prerequisites, days and times of course offerings, and course locations. PDF versions of the Schedule of Classes can be found on the Registrar’s Office’s website; these versions also include University policies, ranging from Gen Ed to graduation.

**Transcript**: A copy of a student’s permanent academic record. The unofficial version can be accessed on testudo.umd.edu and the official version can be accessed through the Office of the Registrar.

**Upper-Level Courses**: Courses at the 300- or 400-level, typically viewed as junior- and senior-level coursework.

**UID**: Each student’s unique nine-digit University identification. This number can be found on your University ID card.

**Waitlist**: A virtual waiting line that students may have the option to use if a course section is full. Students on a waitlist must check-in on the first day of classes, and then daily, to remain on a waitlist. Note: The waitlist option may not be available for every course.

**Withdrawal**: A withdrawal is available anytime between the first and last day of classes. Students must submit written notice of withdrawal to the Office of the Registrar no later than the last day of classes. In exceptional cases, a retroactive withdrawal may be granted based on documented requests in which extenuating circumstances significantly impaired the student’s ability to complete the semester and officially withdraw by the established semester deadlines. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, medical or psychological causes.