



ALMA COLLEGE

COMMUNICATION AND
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Alma College
614 W. Superior Street, Alma MI 48801

Welcome to The Alma College M.S in Communication and Information Technology

Be prepared for tomorrow and have a hand in shaping it

The graduate program in communication and information technology (CIT) is designed to prepare students to lead organizations through the rapidly evolving technological and regulatory landscape. CIT is an interdisciplinary professional master's program designed to cultivate communication and leadership skills along with a foundation in technical knowledge and data skills. Students will gain an in-depth knowledge of networks, cloud computing, cybersecurity, and data warehousing, while also developing leadership and communication skills.

As information technology continues to evolve and expand across all industries, the demand for talented, qualified leaders at all levels continues to increase across all sectors. CIT provides graduates with the skills and opportunities to grow and shape their careers into promising futures. Employers are looking for talented and motivated employees who are great communicators and writers, who possess relevant technical skill sets with emerging enterprise tools, and who can learn to lead and grow. CIT provides the framework for the modern information technology leaders of the future.

CIT offers a flexible course of study. Classes will be delivered online with weekly access to faculty for discussion and guidance. Students will also participate in a three-day kickoff residency in their first semester of the program as well as a semester ending final project in residence. An additional residence will be a component of the capstone class in the final semester of study.

A Graduate of the CIT program will be exposed to not only course material reflective of current industry trends and technical fundamentals but will also have access to industry professionals in residence who will be part of the journey of both academic and career growth. While no program can offer guarantees of employment prospects, students will advance in their understanding of the foundations of the industry as well as enhance their existing education, which are goals of the program. Students will be exposed to innovative learning designed to provide student-driven, life-changing opportunities.

Accreditation and Compliance Statements

A full list of compliances and policies is available at <https://www.alma.edu/about/alma-at-a-glance/college-policies-disclosures/>.

The Alma College MS in CIT has received accreditation or approval from the following state or national credential-granting organizations.

Higher Learning Commission

230 South La Salle Street, Suite 7-500 Chicago, IL 60604-1411

Phone: 1-800-621-7440 / (312) 263-0456

E-mail: info@hlcommission.org Web site: hlcommission.org

Michigan Department of Education

John A. Hannah Office Building 608 West Allegan, Box 30008

Lansing, MI 48909

Phone: (517) 373-3324

Web site: michigan.gov/mde/

Membership in the National Council for State Authorization (NC-SARA)

Alma College is a member of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA). We are listed on the www.nc-sara.org website as a participating institution. NC-SARA was established to help expand students' access to educational opportunities and ensure more efficient, consistent, and effective regulation of distance learning programs. As a member institution, Alma can make its academic programs more widely available and accept enrollments from students in all states except for California without additional work to seek state authorization.

Federal Compliance Statements

Campus Security

Alma College abides by the Student Right-to-Know, the Campus Security Act of 1990 and the Higher Education Act Reauthorization of 2008. The College makes information concerning campus crime statistics available in printed form and electronically to the campus community each year. This information is also available to prospective students or employees upon request.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Respecting our students' right to privacy is a priority at Alma College. The college complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended — a federal law that requires each institution to establish a written policy and procedures to protect the confidentiality of a student's education records.

At its discretion, Alma College may provide directory information in accordance with the provisions of the Act. Typical use of this information includes but is not limited to media releases, publications, event programs and lists for on-campus office use. Directory information may include (1) student name, address, telephone number, and date and place of birth; (2) e-mail address; (3) field of study; (4) class schedule and class rosters; (5) identity of parents, guardians or next of kin; (6) dates of attendance, and degrees and awards received; (7) most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student; (8) participation in officially recognized activities and sports; (9) photographs; and (10) weight and height of members of athletic teams. Social security numbers are not considered directory information and will not be released except as required or permitted by the Act. As a general rule, Alma College will not release lists of directory information to off-campus vendors.

The Registrar at Alma College coordinates the inspection and review of procedures related to the protection and release of student education records. For more information about the law and related college policies, go to alma.edu/offices/registrar/student-rights.

Financial Information

The College's annual financial report is available for review by prospective students, alumni, and the public upon request at the Financial Services Office.

Alma College Policy on Nondiscrimination

Alma College adheres to all federal and state civil rights laws banning discrimination in private institutions of higher education. Alma College will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment, student or applicant for admission on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, age, height, weight, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, arrest record, genetic information, or any other protected category under applicable local, state or federal laws; including protections for those opposing discrimination or participating in any resolution process on campus or within the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or other human rights agencies. Questions or concerns about our policies and practices regarding these matters should be directed to David Blandford, Civil Rights/Title IX Coordinator at (989) 463-7251 or blandford@alma.edu.

Students with Disabilities

Alma College is committed to complying with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by providing access to campus facilities and reasonable accommodations in programs, services, and classroom activities. Students with disabilities who require accommodation should contact the Center for Student Opportunity to initiate services.

Right to Modify Policy

Alma's academic catalog contains the most accurate information available at the time of publication. Alma College reserves the right to change without notice statements in this catalog concerning, but not limited to, curricula, fees, rules, policies, scholarships, and tuition.

Alma College shall have full academic freedom to determine the best method and manner of teaching and does not guarantee a particular method of teaching, including but not limited to, face-to-face or virtual classes.

Our Commitment to Diversity and Diverse Voices

Alma College recognizes that we are all transformed when we celebrate and value the varied identities, backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives in our campus community. We are committed to recognizing and removing barriers to success and providing equitable access to opportunities through education and advocacy. In our increasingly diverse campus and world, we pledge to create a climate where everyone is safe and free to grow intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally. For more information about the Office of Diversity and Inclusion go to <https://www.alma.edu/offices/diversity-and-inclusion>.

Alma College Policies

CIT students are bound to all policies and procedures as stated in the Alma College Student handbook, available online on the Alma College website at www.alma.edu/student-handbook.

Program Director

The program director, Jared Linder, will check in with students and advise them about program goals, class choices, program requirements, transfer credits, and other official program business. He can be reached by email at: linderjb@alma.edu.

Inside Alma

Alma College provides a self-service portal, Inside Alma, through which students can access registration and courses, pay their bills, access their academic records, and maintain their contact information. The portal is located at <https://inside.alma.edu/>. Accepted students will be notified with instructions for how to login.

New Student Email

New students, upon receipt of their official commitment deposit of \$300, will be notified by the program office when their alma.edu email account has been created. It is then the responsibility of the new student to activate their new email account and to check it regularly. This is the way the program will communicate with you.

Emergency Procedures

Alma College has adopted an Emergency Response Plan that provides contingency procedures for Alma College administrators, staff, faculty, and students in the event of a campus emergency. The College also has implemented a Campus Alert System that allows the College to send immediate, time-sensitive voice, e-mail and text notifications to students, faculty, and staff in the event of a campus emergency. Students, faculty, and staff can update their emergency contact information via Inside Alma. Online students may opt out of these notifications at <https://inside.alma.edu/>.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees are determined on an annual basis and published on the Alma College CIT website. Tuition and fees are subject to change. Tuition bills are made available online 30 days prior to the beginning of each new term. Payments may be made by check, e-check, or by credit card payment.

All applicable fees and charges are payable in advance of classes starting. Tuition is due on a term basis. Each term begins with a three-day residency, so tuition is due before the first day of each new residency. Tuition and fees are subject to change. All CIT students will receive an email that their bill is available online through their student self-service account at <https://inside.alma.edu/>.

Enrollment Deposit Fee

All accepted applicants are required to pay a commitment fee of \$300, which is applied towards the first term's bill.

Late Payment Fee

Tuition and fees are due before classes start for each term. A late fee of \$25 per month is assessed on student accounts with a past due balance.

Admissions

To apply to a graduate program at Alma College, students must submit an application for admission and the following materials. Additional program specific requirements will be listed on the program application.

- Statement of Purpose (explaining the student's intellectual interests, preparation, and goals)
- A minimum of 2 letters of recommendation (individual programs may require more)
- Transcripts from any undergraduate and/or graduate work
 - Completion, or on-track to completion, of an undergraduate degree from an accredited college/university prior to the start of the program
- Resume/CV

Admission will be determined by the following factors:

- Undergraduate academic performance GPA of at least a 3.0 cumulative grade point average
 - Students with under a 3.0 will be considered on an individual basis by the faculty reading committee based on academic and professional experience(s)
 - Graduate level work should show similar academic performance
- Writing Quality
 - Students entering a graduate program at Alma are expected to demonstrate their ability to effectively communicate their viewpoint(s)
- Academic and/or professional preparation
 - Students should show that they are adequately prepared to succeed at the graduate level
- International Applicants
 - Provide English Language Proficiency (official score reports can be emailed to admissions@alma.edu)
 - TOEFL iBT score of 79 (school code: 1010)
 - IELTS score of 6.5
 - Interview with CIT program Director
 - If you are an international student currently living outside of the United States and want to attend the MS CIT online program, we do not provide documents for an F-1 or J-1 visa. The classes are all online and you are not required to attend physical classes on campus.

These guidelines represent the minimum requirements for admission; however, meeting these requirements does not guarantee admission. Overall academic record, writing quality, and preparedness will be major factors in evaluating applications. No GRE is required for admission to the CIT program.

International Students

Due to being an online course of study, this program is unable to support F-1 visa for international students to pursue this degree and program requirements cannot be completed remotely. International students applying to the program should contact the Admissions office for details on visa requirements.

Degree Overview

The M.S. in CIT requires the successful completion of 36 credit hours of coursework that constitute the entirety of the degree. No independent thesis or qualifying exams are required for completion of the degree

Full and Part-time Status

Full-time enrollment at the Alma College MS in CIT is defined as a maximum of 9 credits per term. Part-time enrollment is not only allowed but also required for students who are currently employed and is defined as 6 or fewer credits per term. The CIT program requires a minimum of 36 credit hours for the award of the degree.

Transfer Credit

Alma College will accept credit earned from regionally accredited colleges or universities in the United States. An evaluation of credit gained is available upon submission of an application and transcripts to the Admissions Office. Limitations are as follows:

1. Only non-developmental courses that are graded "C" (2.0) or higher will be accepted for credit.
2. Transferred credit must be documented by receipt of an official transcript from each institution attended.
3. Transfer credits from courses below the graduate level will not be accepted.

Transfer students are encouraged to consult with the Program Director to review transfer credit equivalencies.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon leaving the program, CIT students will be able to demonstrate:

1. Multi-disciplinary communication and information technology problem solving
2. Technical leadership and strategic decision making
3. An understanding of the current technology landscape, industry trends, and best practices
4. Human-centered design ideology and practice
5. Fundamentals of data and database design for business intelligence
6. Project management fundamentals
7. Business and technology leadership skills

Program Schedule

Students accepted to the Alma College MS in CIT can start studies in either the Fall or Winter academic semester, with classes also offered in the summer semester. Core curriculum classes will be offered during both Fall and Winter. There is no program requirement to participate in classes in consecutive semesters. All courses must be completed within five years of starting the degree.

Program Structure

CIT offers a flexible course of study. The CIT program is offered online to allow students the flexibility to learn when it fits into their lives and will also have regular touch points with classmates and faculty to ensure mastery of class material.

M.S in CIT Grading

Grading System

The following letters are used to record evaluations of student work: “A” (4.0); “AB” (3.5); “B” (3.0); “C” (2.0) and “E” (0.0-failing). An “E” will be recorded for such reasons (other than failure to meet course requirements) as dishonesty, excessive absence, or failure to comply with other conditions specified by the instructor.

Incomplete Grades

Incomplete (“IN”) grades must be replaced by letter grades within six weeks after the end of the term or they automatically convert to “E.”

The A or AB Term: The student handed in high-quality original or substantially revised work for all five packets at or near the maximum allowable word count, by or before the due date, along with a clear and informative cover letter. The student took advice well and applied it, with positive results, to their writing. Communication with the faculty mentor was prompt, respectful, open-minded (i.e., not defensive) and limited to the schedule on the syllabus and/or study plan. The student wrote strong critical papers, expressing clear ideas on craft, based on the books read on the term list.

The B Term: The student handed in some original and some revised work for all five packets at or near the minimum word count and after the due date, along with an unclear or uninformative cover letter. The student did not always take advice well and/or sometimes did not apply it to their writing. Communication with the faculty mentor was sometimes late, disrespectful, closed-minded (i.e., defensive), and/or in violation of the schedule on the syllabus and/or study plan. The student either failed to write strong critical papers or read all the books on the term list.

The C Term (not passing): The student failed to hand in the required amount of work according to the schedule outlined on the study plan or syllabus. The student did not take advice well and/or did not apply it to their writing. Communication with the faculty mentor was late, disrespectful, closed-minded (i.e., defensive), and/or in violation of the schedule on the syllabus and/or study plan. The student either failed to write critical papers or read the books on the term list.

Note: A “C” term would place the student on academic probation. More than one “C” term would result in an expulsion from the program.

Degree Requirements

The MS in CIT will be granted to students who successfully complete 36 credit hours of courses within the CIT curriculum. No independent thesis or qualifying exams are required for completion of the degree.

Course Descriptions

Core Curriculum

CIT 680 Information Technology Foundations: Leadership, Profession, and Society (3 credits)

Description: This course is the foundations class for the CIT program. The objective of the course is to provide both a leadership and a technical foundation for the program. It surveys the broad current and emerging technical trends and the key competencies necessary for professional success.

Course Designation: Graduate Credit, MS in CIT

Prerequisite: admission to the MS in CIT

CIT 601 Information Technology Fundamentals (3 credits)

Description: This course is designed to facilitate an understanding of how information is created, stored, and moved across various types of networks. We will focus on the fundamental application of systems engineering, emerging wireless networks, cloud architecture, security fundamentals, TCP/IP fundamentals, with research work focused on student interests.

Course Designation: Graduate Credit, MS in CIT

Prerequisite: admission to the MS in CIT

CIT 602 Human Computer Interaction UI/UX (3 credits)

Description: This course is designed to introduce students to the principles of user interface and user experience design. Students will learn various design patterns and how to apply them to the creation of storyboards, mockups, and prototypes for web and mobile applications.

Course Designation: Graduate Credit, MS in CIT

Prerequisite: CIT 601, 680, or by permission

CIT 603 Finance in Technology Management (3 credits)

Description: This course is focused on the ways in which new technologies are disrupting the financial services industry and driving material change in business models, products, applications, and customer user interface. Students will gain an understanding of the key technologies, market structure, participants, regulations, and the dynamics of change being brought about by FinTech.

Course Designation: Graduate Credit, MS in CIT

Prerequisite: CIT 601, 680, or by permission

CIT 604 Policy and Regulatory (3 credits)

Description: This course is focused on public policy and the regulation of technology industries from a historical perspective, and how emerging technologies will challenge current regulatory policy. Specific topics covered include privacy, ethics, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and other legal issues tied to the industry

Course Designation: Graduate Credit, MS in CIT

Prerequisite: CIT 601, 680, or by permission

CIT 605 Introduction to Project Management (3 credits)

Description: Students in this course will develop the competencies and skills for planning and controlling projects and understanding interpersonal issues that drive successful project outcomes. Focusing on the introduction of new products and processes, we will examine the project management life cycle, defining project parameters, matrix management challenges, effective project management tools and techniques, and the role of a project manager.

Course Designation: Graduate Credit, MS in CIT

Prerequisite: CIT 601, 680, or by permission

CIT 606 Quantitative analysis for CIT (3 credits)

Description: This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of business analytics and the data used to drive decisions in organizations. Students are introduced to modern software tools for conducting analyses using quantitative methods. Case studies from a variety of settings are used to illustrate ways these topics lead to modern practice in data science.

Course Designation: Graduate Credit, MS in CIT

Prerequisite: CIT 601, 680, or by permission

Electives

Cloud Computing

CIT 621: Cloud Computing Foundations (3 credits)

Description: This course is designed to provide an overall understanding of cloud computing concepts, independent of specific technical roles. It provides a detailed overview of cloud concepts, cloud core services, security, architecture, pricing, and support.

Course Designation: Graduate Credit, MS in CIT

Prerequisite: CIT 601, 680, or by permission

CIT 622: Cloud Solution Architecture (3 credits)

Description: Students will learn how to deploy, manage, and operate scalable, highly available, and fault tolerant systems on using cloud technology. The course delivers an overview of monitoring and reporting in a network environment and moves on to deployment and provisioning, high availability, storage and data management, security and compliance, and networking.

Course Designation: Graduate Credit, MS in CIT

Prerequisite: CIT 621, or by permission

Cyber Security

CIT 631 Cybersecurity Regulation and Law (3 credits)

Description: The course is designed to guide students through the intricacies of securing information and assets according to government and industry cybersecurity acts, rules, and regulations.

Course Designation: Graduate Credit, MS in CIT

Prerequisite: CIT 601, 680, or by permission

CIT 632 Cybersecurity Gateway (3 credits)

Description: This course provides students an understanding of the fundamental tenets of networking and covers the general concepts involved in maintaining a secure network computing environment.

Course Designation: Graduate Credit, MS in CIT

Prerequisite: CIT 631, or by permission

Data Analytics

CIT 641 Data Warehousing (3 credits)

Description: The main objective of this course is to provide students with an in-depth understanding of the design and implementation of database warehousing and analytics database systems.

Course Designation: Graduate Credit, MS in CIT

Prerequisite: CIT 601, 680, or by permission

CIT 642 Data Mining and Business Intelligence (3 credits)

Description: The goal of this course is to give students a solid understanding of the opportunities, techniques, and critical challenges in using data mining and predictive modeling in a business setting.

Course Designation: Graduate Credit, MS in CIT

Prerequisite: C CIT 642, or by permission

Business and Project Management

CIT 613 Capstone (3 credits)

Description: This is the capstone residency for the program. Students will synthesize what they have learned and demonstrate their ability to apply theoretical concepts in real world settings.

Course Designation: Graduate Credit, MS in CIT

Prerequisite: CIT 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606

CIT 651 Organizational Behavior (3 credits)

Description: This course is an introduction to the basic concepts and topics in organizational behavior and management. The course focuses on organizational behavior at three levels: individual, interpersonal, and collective.

Course Designation: Graduate Credit, MS in CIT

Prerequisite: CIT 601, 680, or by permission

Academic Probation

A student may be placed on academic probation by the Alma Provost if the student has earned a C or below in any given term. The student will remain on probation throughout the remainder of the program. If the student earns a second C their enrollment will be discontinued.

Federal regulations require that students make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) towards the completion of their degree and maintain good academic standing. Students who fall behind in their coursework or fail to achieve minimum standards for grade point average and completion of classes, risk losing their eligibility for federal and state financial aid and external scholarships/grants/loans. A student can consult the full Satisfactory Academic Progress policy at <https://www.alma.edu/admissions/financial-aid/mastersgraduate-programs/>.

Withdrawal

Complete policies for withdrawal and tuition refund may be found online in the Alma College Student Handbook at www.alma.edu/student-handbook and at <https://www.alma.edu/admissions/financial-aid/mastersgraduate-programs/>.

Graduation

Graduation requires both academic and financial clearance. The program director and registrar will certify that all academic degree requirements have been fulfilled. The financial office will audit financial accounts. If academic and/or financial clearance is not granted, a hold will be placed on the graduation process until the academic deficiency and/or the financial obligation is cleared.

Commencement

Alma College's commencement ceremony takes place each spring. All graduating MFA students are encouraged to attend, dressed in full regalia, and participate in the festivities. Students graduating in the summer should attend commencement prior to their final residency in June. They will receive their diplomas at that residency. Students graduating in the winter should attend commencement after they have received their diplomas at their final residency in January.

Diplomas and Transcripts

Students who have not fulfilled their financial obligations with the college will not receive diplomas or transcripts until all amounts due to the college have been paid.

Student Standards of Conduct

Alma students and faculty share responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. This includes using information technology responsibly in online and other courses. In order for faculty members to provide, and for students to receive, effective instruction in online courses, and other learning areas, the Alma CIT Program and the faculty expect students to conduct themselves in an orderly and cooperative manner and not to engage in disruptive behavior, disorderly conduct, or intentionally interfere in the freedom of expression of others.

“Disruptive Behavior” or “Disorderly Conduct” as applied in all academic settings and formats (i.e., classroom, online, independent study, etc.) means behavior that a reasonable faculty member or student would view as intentionally or recklessly interfering with normal academic functions, college events, or college-sponsored activities.

Dismissal

Occasionally, a student may be dismissed from the College by the program director, on the recommendation of the faculty, with approval of the Academic Provost if the student has consistently failed to do the minimum amount of work required, has goals and working methods which are inconsistent with the program design and purposes, refuses to participate fully in the

residency, or is abusive of faculty and other students. If the work of a student is found to be below the standard of performance reasonably expected at the graduate level, his or her continuation in the program can be denied. Approved dismissals will take effect at the end of the term in which such a recommendation is initiated and granted. Only in rare and extreme circumstances may a dismissal take place during the course of an enrolled term.

Details can be found in the Alma College Student Handbook at <https://www.alma.edu/offices/student-life/policies-procedures/>.

Failure to comply with any of the rules or regulations in this Handbook and the Alma College policies posted in the online Student Handbook is grounds for dismissal from the program.

Academic Integrity

Honesty in academic endeavors is a central tenet of the Alma College philosophy. One may feel proud of accomplishments and success attained honorably through hard work. Knowledge gained in this way often leads to later success in professional pursuits and in personal life. Unfortunately, academic stress and anxiety sometimes impact on the individual in ways that produce dishonest behavior.

In view of the college's commitment to ethical integrity, it must take strong exception to behavior which is untruthful.

Academic dishonesty includes the following:

1. Plagiarism
2. Exchange of information on examinations
3. Assistance in the completion of an exam, writing of essays or laboratory reports
4. Computer software theft

Disciplinary action following dishonesty is handled by the faculty member. It may result in failure of the course involved. All infractions and actions will be reported and recorded in the Provost's Office.

Repeated evidence of academic dishonesty is reviewed by the program director and the provost and may involve more severe penalties.

Academic Appeals

Students dissatisfied with some aspects of the program are encouraged to seek a resolution to the problem. The review and appeal process can be found in the Alma College Student Handbook at <https://www.alma.edu/offices/student-life/policies-procedures/>.

Media Use Policy

Alma College reserves the right to use any photograph or video taken on campus or at an event sponsored by the college as well as any photo provided to the college. A student who wishes to be excluded from campus photography must contact the Associate Vice President of Communications in writing within the first two weeks of the first day of a residency. Requests for non-disclosure will be honored by the institution for only the current academic year, therefore, the request must be filed annually with the Communication and Marketing Office. By failing to provide such notification, you agree that the college may use your likeness. No person or organization may use, copy, alter or modify Alma College photographs, graphics, videography or other similar reproductions or recordings without the advance written permission of an authorized designee in the Communication and Marketing Office at Alma College.

Alma College reserves the right to change any provision, requirement, statement of policy or procedure, service or facility detailed in this handbook. This handbook does not constitute a contractual agreement between the student and Alma College.