

A Guide for BA Transfer Students—New Curriculum (Current as of September 24, 2026)

The place to check the precise requirements is the appropriate Quick Guide; they're all linked to from [here](#). There are three general rules :

1. Your school advisor is in charge of whether you can transfer credits from another school—your CS advisor determines whether transferred credits count towards your major.
2. **Major:** Up to four transfer courses are accepted toward the major. Calculus, linear algebra, and probability/statistics courses can be transferred in addition to the four-course limits.
Minor: Up to two transfer courses are accepted toward the minor. A transfer course in linear algebra or probability/statistics counts as one of the two allowed transfers.
If you've taken more courses than that, we don't want you to repeat something you already know; therefore, you will either be told to take a substitute or will replace the credits with any COMS course 3000 level or higher.
3. An AP CS score of 4 or 5 is equivalent to COMS 1004 Introduction to Programming and is not counted as part of the transferred courses.
4. AFC **must** be completed at Columbia.
5. The only person who can approve a course equivalency is the person who teaches it here; your Dean or CS advisor cannot, though they can often offer guidance.
To request a transfer/ equivalency review for a **COMS** course – most commonly transferred courses are COMS W1004 (Introduction to Programming), COMS W3134 (Data Structures), COMS W3157 (Advanced Programming), W3203 (Discrete Mathematics), and CSEE W3827 (Fundamentals of Computer Systems) – please submit a detailed syllabus and not just a catalog description and your transcript for review [here](#). If you have additional questions, please email ug-advising@cs.columbia.edu
6. For non-COMS courses used for the major/minor, you must contact the professor directly with your syllabus and transcript. For Calculus, please contact Prof. George Dragomir dragomir@math.columbia.edu

Notes

We teach introductory programming using Java; many other places use C++. That's usually fine and will probably let you waive COMS 1004. However, we teach data structures using Java, not C++; if you only know the C++, you'll have to teach yourself Java. That shouldn't be too hard, since the essential concepts are the same (and any Columbia CS major should be capable of learning a new language that way).

Very few people can import COMS 3157 (Advanced Programming), and it's a prerequisite for most of the 4000-level courses.

COMS 3857 (Fundamentals of Computer Systems) is a toss-up; some people can import it, some can't. The required math courses are a bit more complex.

Although we prefer our Computational Linear Algebra class (COMS W3251), we will accept Linear Algebra (APMA E3101, APMA E2101, MATH UN2010, or MATH UN2015).

- The probability courses we require are one of STAT UN1201, STAT GU4001, IEOR E3658, or MATH UN2015.
- MATH UN2015 satisfies both the probability and linear algebra requirements, but that probably isn't enough if you want to take Machine Learning. In that case, take separate courses.
- If you've taken discrete mathematics elsewhere and probability in some separate course, you may be able to test out of the course; see <http://www.cs.columbia.edu/~ansaf/more.html> for details.

Finally, if you have any questions about your program, contact ug-advising@cs.columbia.edu . If you have questions about whether you have the prerequisites for a given course (perhaps through a job rather than formal study), contact the person who is teaching it—though there are a few exceptions, most of us don't bite...