Graduate Student Handbook
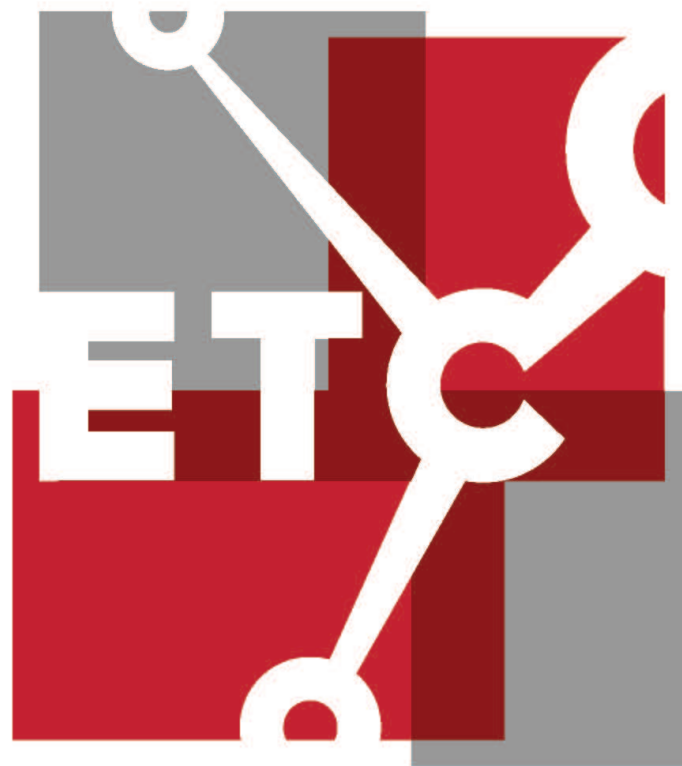
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Introduction

The Entertainment Technology Center (ETC) of Carnegie Mellon is the premiere professional graduate program for interactive entertainment as it is applied across a variety of fields. The ETC offers a unique two-year Masters of Entertainment Technology degree that is jointly conferred by the School of Computer Science and the College of Fine Arts. At the ETC, interdisciplinary project work focuses around a range of areas, spanning learning, health, training, social impact, civics, entertainment and more; and project teams develop games, animation, location-based installations, augmented reality, mobile devices, robotics, interactive performances, transmedia storytelling, etc. This breadth of interests is one of the strongest components of the ETC experience.

The core of the ETC is the MET degree. As a professional graduate program, the focus is on our students and providing them with an educational experience that helps their career development through applied research on interdisciplinary projects. Founded in 1998, the ETC's curriculum balances educational goals, professional development, and engaging experiences; or learn, work and play. The heart of the program focuses on communication and collaboration, challenging students to learn about leadership, teamwork, innovation and positive social impact. Carnegie Mellon is rare among US universities in being able to offer this kind of degree, as there are both top-quality fine arts and design programs as well as premiere science and engineering programs. Also, the business and management programs offer entrepreneurial expertise. This allows the entire university to serve as a resource for ETC students.

The "high concept" behind both the Center and the Masters program is the principle of having interdisciplinary groups work together on projects to produce artifacts that are intended to entertain, inform, inspire, or otherwise impact an audience/guest/player/participant. The master's degree is focused on project courses because the larger challenge students face in authoring interactive media is bringing together different disciplines. The Master of Entertainment Technology degree program is driven by trying to do this as effectively as possible through a research and development agenda that illustrates the range of the expertise and experience of the ETC. ETC projects and courses explore transformational games, interactive storytelling, innovation by design, and learning and media. The emphasis is on leadership, innovation and communication by creating challenging experiences through which students learn how to collaborate, experiment, and iterate solutions.

The ETC does not intend to take artists and turn them into engineers, nor vice-versa. While some students will be able to achieve mastery in multiple areas, it is not our intention to have students master "the other side" or "all sides." Instead, it is the intent for typical students in this program to enter with mastery/training in a specific area and spend their two years at Carnegie Mellon learning the vocabulary, values, and working patterns of the other culture. This learning will be evidenced by their ability to work effectively with those from different and various backgrounds and expertise.

ETC Mission Statement

Providing leadership in education and applied research that combines technology and art, to explore learning, storytelling, innovation and entertainment, and to create experiences that educate, engage and inspire.

Please Note

Any policies not explicitly described in this document conform to university policies as defined by Carnegie Mellon University's Graduate Education policies (including policies on cheating, plagiarism, and graduate academic disciplinary actions.)
http://www.cmu.edu/graduate/

ETC and CMU Contacts

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A full listing of ETC faculty and staff can be found on the website:
http://etc.cmu.edu/site/people/facultystaff/

Enrollment

Registration Procedures

Registration is handled through the University's On-Line Registration (OLR) system on the HUB website. Students are responsible for enrolling themselves in required courses and electives.

The first step in the registration process is to review the appropriate ETC curriculum in this handbook. If there is room for an elective in the semester for which the student wishes to register, she or he must confer with the Director of Student Services to determine an appropriate course. The Director of Student Services will grant exceptions to the curriculum only after consultation with the Director.

Once students have decided on a course schedule, they can then access the OLR system, using any computer, by visiting the website at http://www.cmu.edu/hub.

Full Time Status

A student's schedule is considered over-loaded when it exceeds 50 units per semester. Students must receive approval for a course over-load from the Director.

Qualifying Examinations and Masters Thesis

There are no qualifying examinations or masters thesis required for the MET degree.

Financial Support

The ETC has traditionally not offered any form of financial support to students. Students interested in learning about outside sources of aid can investigate the AIAS Randy Pausch Scholarship, the Penny Arcade Scholarship, and Google offers several scholarships. Also, CMU Enrollment Services has information on Needs-Based financial assistance: http://www.cmu.edu/finaid/graduate/

Orientation

Each fall, the ETC provides an orientation session for new students in the week prior to the start of classes and then an update orientation for 2nd year students during the 1st week of the semester.

Curriculum and Graduation Requirements

Because the ETC has a tight chronological and specific curriculum, students may only begin work towards their MET in an "Immersion" 1st semester. 1st semester starts in the fall in Pittsburgh. All students have to start with the 1st semester curriculum.

Academic Advising

The ETC is a two-year professional graduate program with defined curriculum choices and no thesis. To that end, the role of academic advisor is a limited one. While the Director of Student Services and the Director must approve all matters dealing with the academic program, students should feel free to seek academic guidance from any member of the ETC faculty.

The Director should also be considered an advisor for non-academic issues as well, and will be able to refer the student to university or community resources whenever necessary.

Curriculum Requirements

Graduation requirements are listed below. Failure to meet the requirements of each semester will result in the appropriate academic action. Failure to meet the final semester requirements prevents the student from receiving their diploma during commencement ceremonies, and may prevent the student from graduating on time at all. In general, this is a two-year program, requiring enrollment in the equivalent of four full-time semesters. There is an optional summer internship. There is no maximum/minimum number of units required for graduation. However, every student is required to take one elective each semester and can request to take up to two electives (no more than 24 units). On rare occasions, and always under special circumstances, the one elective per semester requirement may be waived by the Director.

Since there is project work required each semester; the program cannot be completed in fewer than four semesters of full-time study.

When a course is taken outside the ETC to fulfill a curriculum requirement, the policies and procedures of the instructor, department and school in which the course is taken must be adhered to fully. The grade assigned by the course professor shall stand.

While the ETC curriculum is subject to change, the curriculum in effect at the time of students' matriculation will be the one that dictates their graduation requirements. Exception to this policy will be at the discretion of the Director.

Graduation Requirements

It is ultimately the responsibility of the students to ensure that all courses necessary for graduation have been successfully completed. Faculty and staff are available to assist students, and the Director of Student Services will attempt to advise students individually each semester, but only students can be held responsible for their failure to complete graduation requirements.

In order to graduate from the ETC, students must complete four full semesters of study and complete at least 2 Interdisciplinary Projects. Note: the summer break does not count as a full semester.

Curriculum

Semester 1	Fundamentals of the ETC	9 units
	Improvisational Acting	9 units
	Visual Storytelling	12 units
	Building Virtual Worlds	24 units
		54 units
Semester 2	Interdisciplinary Project II	36 units
	One Elective as discussed with the Director of Student Services	9-12 units
		45-48 units
Semester 3	Interdisciplinary Project II	36 units
	One Elective as discussed with the Director of Student Services	9-12 units
		45-48 units
Semester 4	Interdisciplinary Project III	36 units
	One Elective as discussed with the Director of Student Services	9-12 units
		45-48 units

Grades

The ETC follows CMU policy in giving letter grades for all courses. Grades are available online, and will be mailed to students at the end of each semester. Graduate students at Carnegie Mellon are graded on a letter grade system, optionally augmented by a plus or minus as appropriate. The letter grades at the ETC are representative of the following:

A – Excellent work that exceeds expectations
B – Acceptable work for an ETC student
C – Unacceptable work for an ETC student
F – Egregiously unacceptable work

Minimum grades and QPAs

The minimum acceptable grade in a core course (which includes "Fundamentals of the Entertainment Technology Center," "Improvisational Acting," "Building Virtual Worlds," "Visual Storytelling" and all Project courses) is a B, the minimum acceptable grade on other non-core courses is also a B. If a grade of B- or lower is earned for a core course, the student will immediately be placed on academic probation for the following semester. A student who earns a B- or lower on more than one core/project course (even if the multiple courses all occur within their first semester) must petition to remain in the program. Students may be suspended from the program for a minimum of one year, and would then have to petition for reinstatement into the program. If reinstated, students will return on academic probation. Any students on academic probation must maintain a B or above in all their courses the following semester. Those that do maintain the minimum grade requirement are released from probation. Those that don't maintain the minimum grade requirement fail out of the program entirely. For non-core courses, if a grade of C- or lower is earned, that course cannot be counted towards the degree; the student must either retake the course and earn a C or better, or take another course in its place. Additionally, all students must maintain a QPA of 3.0 or above to remain in good academic standing in the program. Students must be in good academic standing in order to matriculate to a location other than Pittsburgh. This is to provide students with the most educational support, and Pittsburgh is the only full campus with all the support that entails.

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It is not possible to take more than one project course (for this definition, "Building Virtual Worlds" is considered a project course) in a given semester, so retaking the project course (or "Building Virtual Worlds") will require staying more than four semesters in the program. Note that students who enter the program having taken "Building Virtual Worlds" before they come to the ETC are required to take the BVW course again in order to obtain their degree. The ETC requires a B average for the first semester because mastering these core classes is essential for successfully entering the semester-long project courses.

As per CMU policy, a graduate student who believes a final grade assigned for a course is based upon a manifest error (e.g. clear error such as arithmetic error in computing a grade) or the faculty or staff member who assigned the grade did so in violation of a University policy should first present the case informally to the faculty or staff member responsible for the course in which the student believes an inappropriate grade has been awarded. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution at this first step, the student shall submit a formal, written appeal, with appropriate documentation, within the first fourteen (14) days of the semester following the awarding of the final grade under challenge, to the head of the department in which the course was offered. The department head (or the program head if the department head chooses to delegate the decision to him/her) will issue a written decision on the appeal within 30 days, or as soon thereafter as practical. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the department head (or program head), the student may submit a formal, written appeal, with appropriate documentation, within seven (7) days to the Vice Provost of the College in which the course is offered. The Vice Provost shall render a decision within 30 days, or as soon thereafter as practical. The decision of the Vice Provost shall be final and not appealable.

Summary of Levels of Appeal for Final Grades:
- Informal discussion with the faculty member
- Formal written appeal to the department head (or the program head if the department head chooses to delegate the decision to him/her)
- Formal written appeal to the Vice Provost
- Vice Provost issues final non-appealable decision

Critique

Throughout the course of a student's study, the ETC provides both project and personal critiques of academic work. This is a process of critical thinking and constructive criticism aimed to offer both positive and negative feedback in an insightful and supportive context.

During critiques, faculty will focus on the positive aspects of the work as well as comment on what improvements could be made and why. Critique of a project focuses on the work and not on the students involved. Critique of students focuses on their performance and not on them as individuals.

As recipients of critique, students are encouraged to focus on the constructive elements of the feedback with an open attitude. Critiques are opportunities to learn and understand how to best improve their performance and their work.

Semester Performance Review

The ETC evaluates students above and beyond the normal grading procedures. During and after the first Immersion semester, the faculty meets as a whole to review each student's overall performance for the past semester. This assessment is led by faculty members who teach the core Immersion courses, but all faculty participate.

This is not a grading evaluation, but is instead a performance review used to assess the wellbeing of the student during their first semester at the ETC. The overall goal of this assessment is to identify any individuals who may need additional advising in terms of how to best succeed in their studies.

This process is then repeated during and at the end of the second semester. Students whose performance is determined to be wanting in both the first and second semesters will have to meet with the Director to decide if they should continue studying at the ETC.

This individual assessment is not directly related solely to a student's grades, though it could be. It is possible however that a student could pass his or her courses or projects, but still be assessed as needing further advising.

This performance assessment is a subjective process based on the faculty's shared perceptions of a student's performance. It is meant to provide students with essential feedback and to provide an opportunity for improvement. This supportive process is intended to help students succeed at the ETC.

Incompletes

The ETC does not grant incompletes. The only exceptions are for instances when serious extenuating circumstances prevent a student from completing assigned work for a class. These circumstances include but are not limited to personal illness (physical or mental), family distress, or some other major obstacle to successful completion of coursework. An incomplete grade is granted exclusively at the discretion of the course instructor. Once the decision has been made to grant a grade of incomplete, it is the student's responsibility to arrange a deadline for work completion with the instructor. University policy dictates that any incomplete grade will automatically be changed to a failing grade by the end of the following semester if the coursework is not completed.

Leave of Absence

A student who withdraws or takes a leave of absence from the University at any time, up to and including the last day of classes and excluding the final examination period, does so with the understanding that no grades will be recorded for that semester. In some cases the student's department or may choose to state the time at which, or the conditions under which, the student may be permitted to return. Withdrawal or voluntary leave of absence requires that a student file a Withdrawal/Leave of Absence form with the HUB, after securing the appropriate signature approvals. Return from withdrawal or voluntary leave of absence requires department or College approval through a Request for Return from Leave of Absence form.

ETC students should keep in mind the following if they are considering a withdrawal/leave of absence:
- Students are encouraged to take a leave of absence if they feel they need to take a break from the intense educational experiences during their graduate studies.
- Our curriculum focus on teamwork is such that students who take more than two semesters away from the department will be required to reapply to the program.
- Students in good standing in all courses, and on no academic action when taking the leave, will be reinstated into the ETC at the level they were about to take upon requesting the leave.
- Students in poor standing or on academic action who request a leave will be required to re-interview when the leave is up before being permitted to re-enter the school.
- Students who, due to illness or personal problems, take a leave of absence during the semester will be discussed on an individual basis. If the amount of time absent affects academic performance, a student may be asked to repeat the incomplete semester's study. If their academic progress remains excellent, a student will allowed to return and complete the semester.

ETC Academic Policies

Attendance and Tardiness

The program will require attendance at various seminars, meetings, lectures, presentations, and demonstrations. These events will be announced in advance as mandatory meetings. Exceptions to this policy are at the sole discretion of the Director. Punctuality is expected. If students must be late or absent for any reason, please contact the Director in advance to discuss their personal situation, and a reasonable solution will be discussed. *After two unexcused absences, each additional unexcused absence will reduce the student's grade in that semester's project course by 1/3 of a letter grade.*

Note: all individual courses have their own attendance policies that will be stated in their syllabi.

Independent Study

For ETC students
Independent study is available for students who are in good academic standing. Independent study allows the student, with the support of faculty, to develop a self-generated project or body of work outside the classroom or project course setting. In order to register for an independent study, the student must first propose their idea to a faculty member (who does not have to be from our department) who agrees to oversee their project, and finally fill out the appropriate paperwork available from the Director of Student Services.

For non-ETC students
Students outside the department will sometimes have an opportunity to become supporting team members of an ETC project by registering for ETC independent study units. At the beginning of each semester, the ETC may hold an "open call" for interested students, where the projects for the current semester will be explained. Students will then have an opportunity to "audition" for the project team-members and/or faculty advisor (auditioning includes but is not limited to: sharing or creating code samples, writing samples, portfolio excerpts, etc.) Students selected to become a supporting project team-member will be asked to sign an agreement detailing what their contributions will be to the project, and describing grading criteria.

Field Research

The ETC has found that among the most important steps in the educational process are hands-on learning, interacting with industry professionals, and behind-the-scenes tours. Experiences that cannot be read about.

To that end, ETC students and project teams spend time in the program traveling locally and nationally to visit entertainment venues, attend conferences and trade shows, and to take workshops. Our students attend plays, gallery exhibits and conferences, and visit relevant companies, venues and clients in the greater Pittsburgh area, as well as traveling outside the local area during the academic year.

Our visits usually include behind-the-scenes access for our students. ETC first year students participate in extended field trips for an insider's look at the entertainment industry. It's this access that makes our program unique.

NOTE: All field research experiences must be approved by the Project Team ETC faculty advisor(s) and the Director. Field research is not an entitlement but an important educational opportunity.

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Outside Work

Due to the time commitment necessary to complete the program, the ETC does not allow students to work outside the department for more than 10 hours per week. If outside employment of more than 10 hours per week is desired, the student must obtain written permission from the Director. Outside employment of any kind does not constitute an excused absence from ETC classes, or from the completion of any project assignments. International students will be required to apply for CPT.

Intellectual Property

The Intellectual Property rights of Carnegie Mellon University as it relates to coursework is very straightforward: students own all work created for a registered CMU course for which tuition has been paid and no internal or external sponsored research funds are used.

As coursework, however, the fruits of this labor can be shown publicly via presentations, demonstrations, and on websites of the CMU Entertainment Technology Center without the written permission of the student. In certain instances, however, companies will want ETC students to work on and/or review software or other products under NDAs or some other agreement. These are defined below:

Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA)

NDAs are Non-Disclosure Agreements. They are designed to safeguard the intellectual property of a company by having individuals sign a legally binding document wherein the individual agrees not to disclose what he or she has seen, observed, or worked on, to a competing company. The intent of the NDA in fact, is to essentially swear the individual to secrecy, though they are entered into in good faith. It is very rare that the legal impact of NDAs is an issue unless an individual willfully violates the terms of the NDA and intends to compromise the competitive advantage of one company by divulging secrets to a competitor. That said, companies requiring NDAs take the exercise seriously. There has been significant friction generated between companies and students over perceived violation of NDA principles.

Grant of Rights and Licenses Student Form

Instances will arise wherein ETC students are given the opportunity to work with dynamic, potentially revolutionary technology which may indeed have a tremendous impact on the entertainment industry. The benefit here is in students being able to work on the next generation of entertainment technology, in having a company become familiar with their talent, dedication, and work ethic for the purposes of offering students a summer internship and/or employment, and for enhanced resume and portfolio purposes. It is often the case that even in instances where a *Grant of Rights and Licenses Student Form* are signed, the student is able to reference the work done and often include a demonstration of the work for the purpose of portfolio review.

Internships and Co-ops

In the intervening summer between the two years of academic study, the ETC strongly encourages students to obtain an internship (paid or unpaid). The ETC finds that students who obtain an internship not only have a valuable learning experience, but also have improved chances for success after they graduate.

International students holding an F1 visa on an internship will receive CPT (curricular practical training) credit for their internship and will be enrolled in the ETC internship course for a Pass/Fail evaluation that does not count toward their graduation requirements. While the ETC faculty and Director of Career Services will assist students in their efforts to obtain a summer internship, and while the ETC may develop relationships with some companies to help place summer interns, obtaining an internship is the responsibility of the student. The Director of Career Services may contact the student's internship supervisor during the summer to check in on the student's performance.

Students who obtain a summer internship may, in some cases, wish to extend their stay through an additional semester of ETC study at that company for a semester-long co-op, or find a co-op for the final semester of study.

An ETC co-op requires the approval of the Director. Students need to send their requests to the Director.

Students are able to request a co-op for one semester of study during their 2nd year with the ETC (for their 3rd or 4th semester, but not both). If approved, students will enroll in the ETC Co-op Course for the coming semester. If denied, students will receive written feedback from the faculty stating reasons for the denial.

Decisions will be made based on the faculty's academic evaluation of the student's performance to date and the assessment of the best learning opportunity for the student. Students need to be in good academic standing to request a co-op. Students cannot co-op at a company in which another student has a supervisory or financial role. Denied students can appeal to the Director.

During the semester, the student will be considered a full-time, registered Carnegie Mellon student, and pay full tuition. A Co-op Course syllabus will be shared with all the information pertinent to the student's academic responsibilities while on co-op.

Due to the team nature of project courses, students are required to make the decision to go on a co-op prior to the start of the semester. Co-ops must be requested and reported to the ETC Director no later than six weeks before the commencement of classes. This is necessary to allow time to make sure all project teams are well balanced.

Students who request a co-op offer after this date will need to consider an official Leave-of-Absence for the semester.

In addition, there may be co-op offers that arise during a semester. In general, this is not allowed and companies will be advised to have the students start after the semester ends.

Furthermore, all student-pitched projects are subject to cancellation if a member of the original student pitch team abandons the project for a co-op after the project has been selected for inclusion in the semester listing.

Publishing Papers

Although the ETC is more about "making things" than about "publishing papers," for some projects, publication is an appropriate way to share lessons learned with colleagues. Publication can leave an archival record of the project work that can live much longer than the project artifact itself. Since publication is a process where experience matters, ETC students should work closely with their faculty advisors when publishing. One model for authorship is that if an individual student takes on the bulk of the work of writing the paper, she or he should be the first author listed. Based on the traditional convention, it is customary for the faculty advisor(s) to be listed last (this is sometimes known in academic culture as "senior author"), unless the faculty advisor actually writes the paper. Barring unusual circumstances, all other student members on a project should be listed as authors on an ETC produced paper, in alphabetical order, to reflect their contribution to the project. All ETC project teams will be required to write post-mortems as part of their archival materials.

Intercultural Communication Center

All CMU instruction is offered, and all student assignments are submitted, in English. As such, all ETC students are required to use English in their academic work and meetings in order to most effectively communicate with their teams.

The Intercultural Communication Center (ICC) offers language support and cross-cultural training to help all students who are non-native English speakers succeed in their studies. The ICC offers individual appointments both for spoken language practice and writing skills development. In addition, there is a wide variety of classes and non-credit workshops offered each semester.
For more information, visit: http://www.cmu.edu/icc.

Career Services Code of Ethics

The ETC provides career service support and professional development advice, but it's ultimately the responsibility of students to apply and interview for opportunities while conducting themselves in a professional manner. This Code of Ethics applies to students searching for employment (internship, co-op and full time) as conducted through the Entertainment Technology Center Career Services and CMU's Career and Professional Development Center. By adhering to this code, students will project a positive image of themselves, their class, the ETC and CMU.

If students plan to utilize Career Services or any of its resources, follow this code and sign this handbook, indicating an understanding and willingness to abide by its tenets. Due to the potential harm that the violation of this Code of Ethics could cause to other students and important employer relationships, students should understand that violations can result in severe sanctions (e.g., termination of some or all career services, referral to the Director of Career Services or referral to the Director).

Present qualifications and interests accurately.
Falsifying data, such as GPA, date of graduation, degrees obtained, institutions attended, prior work experience and eligibility to work in the United States is unethical and is grounds for immediate dismissal with most employing organizations.

Learn about the employers and their positions.
Employers expect that candidates will make an effort to learn about their companies. Failure to do so indicates a lack of interest and reflects poorly on the candidate and the school.

Interview only when genuinely interested in the advertised positions.
Do not interview for practice; this will cause the recruiter to feel his or her time is being wasted and takes away valuable interview time from fellow students who may have a sincere interest in the organization. If students are concerned about their interviewing skills, mock interviews are available. When signing up to attend an employer sponsored event/information session or Career Services event *it is expected that students will be on time and remain until the conclusion of the event*.

Participate in the interview.
Employers take the interview process seriously and expect students to honor their agreement to arrive on time and participate in the interview. Not showing or canceling late (defined as canceling less than 24 hours before an interview, or 72 hours if the interview is scheduled on a Monday) reflects poorly on the candidate and the ETC.

Notify organizations of a student's acceptance or rejection of offers as soon as that decision is made and no later than the deadline prescribed by the employer.
Candidates should expect offers to be confirmed in writing, and likewise, should notify the company of accepted or rejected offers by telephone first, followed-up with a letter or email. Requests for extensions of decision deadlines should be made as early as possible, not at the last minute.

Honor an accepted offer as a contractual agreement.
Upon accepting a position, candidates should withdraw from interviewing and notify Career Services of a decision. Continuing to interview after accepting an offer, or reneging on an accepted offer is unethical.

Be fully engaged when attending events such as information sessions, workshops and site visits.
1. RSVPs are required for many events. Students should RSVP through the given website for the events they are attending then honor that RSVP by coming to the event. If students can no long attend the event, they need to cancel their RSVP.
2. Be on-time and stay for the duration of the event. If students need to leave early, let the employer or Career Service professional know.
3. Turn off cell phones and close laptops.
4. Students should give their full attention to the presenter.

ETC Project and Group Policies

Professional Standards

As a member of the ETC, and as a member of a project group, students should consider themselves a professional representing our department, our school, and themselves. Please behave as a professional, especially when meeting with clients. For client meetings and when making departmental presentations, business casual dress is expected. Students should ask the faculty or Director of Career Services to define business casual if they are unsure what this means. Always remember that punctuality is essential.

ETC Project Process

The central part of the ETC curriculum is the project course. The ETC regularly surveys the student body in order to get regular student input on project interests as related to career goals, to help shape the types of projects offered for the upcoming semesters. Students are asked about their preferred role(s) based on their expertise and experience and the type(s) of project based on interests. The faculty and staff work to offer projects that resonate with the interests expressed through the student surveys. Faculty will work to get students their role on the type of project they're interested.

Note: certain types of projects may generate high demand for the specific project team roles, in which case student applicants may be asked to follow up with resumes and portfolios to help select well-balanced teams.

ETC Project Course Structure

In the project course, students are in small, interdisciplinary teams, creating artifacts under direct faculty supervision. An artifact may be a web site, a piece of software, a piece of hardware, a design document, or a number of other things. Artifacts are typically intended to be working prototypes or playable proofs of concept, not production models. Each project team, working with guidance from their faculty advisor(s), must design what they are going to create, the mechanisms by which they will create it, and then actually create it.

ETC Projects occur in 3 ways:

1) Client Sponsored – in which an external group supports a project on which an ETC team will work.
2) ETC Research – in which a faculty member has a research idea on which an ETC team can work.
3) Student Pitch – in which a group of students go through the ETC pitch process and get approved.

The structure of the project course is intended to balance several issues:
1) The creation of an environment where all students can receive individual guidance and feedback on how they are doing, in the context of a group project where the group succeeding is a paramount value.
2) The focus on process (learning how to work effectively), product (successfully creating an artifact/prototype) and production (the team deliverables throughout the semester.)

A Project Course syllabus will be shared with all ETC students during their semesters of study at the ETC. For many students, this kind of project course may be a new experience; so please feel free to ask questions of faculty advisor(s), any other ETC faculty members, or the Director at any time. The goal is to help all the ETC students learn how to do this kind of interdisciplinary work effectively and professionally.

Year-Long Projects
The ETC offers year-long projects for students to consider across the fall and spring semesters of the 2nd year of study. This enables larger-scale studio projects that engage professional pipeline strategies from ideation to completion. The ETC faculty works to balance teams across both semesters, as well as for continuity for the project. If a project isn't meeting expectations in the fall semester, it may be determined to not continue it into the spring.

Project Purchasing

ETC projects will periodically need additional software, props, and other material requiring purchase from outside companies ranging from standard retail outlets to online vendors. Still, the presumption is that ETC projects do not have intrinsic budgets, but rather the needs of the project will drive and justify the purchase of goods and services. As a general rule of thumb, requests that are made with reasonable lead time, and requests for equipment that is likely to also be useful in other current or future ETC projects, are mostly likely to be approved.

A request to purchase goods and/or services for an ETC project should be made directly through the Faculty Advisor(s) of the specified ETC Project. If there is a serious time constraint involved, petition can be made directly to the Director. All purchase requests for ETC project course material must check with the Facilities Coordinator to see if the ETC already has the item(s), and all requests must be authorized by the Director through written confirmation.

If the ETC cannot make an approved purchase, it is required that students get a Not-for-Profit Tax Exempt form or number obtained for them from the Facilities Coordinator; otherwise vendors will charge Pennsylvania sales tax. If students fail to identify the purchase as being for Carnegie Mellon, a tax-exempt institution, and tax is added to the overall purchase price, the university will not reimburse the tax and students will be held accountable for it. Also, purchase made by students that are not already approved will not be reimbursed.

ETC Communication Policies

Email Policy

The culture of the ETC relies heavily on email and mailing list communication. Official communications are often made only through email.

Students are required to check email at least once every 24-hours. 24-hours after an email is sent, students are responsible for having read and understood it (including weekends). Forwarding problems and spam filtering false-positives cannot be used as excuses.

Official emails are sent to students CMU (Andrew) email address. If students are using a different email address, they are obligated to either check both accounts, or set up forwarding from their CMU address to that address. For more information on forwarding CMU email, look here: http://www.cmu.edu/computing/email/cyrus/doc-email/mgmt/forwarding/

Mailing Lists (dlists)

There are many mailing lists used by the ETC, including ones for each class of students, faculty and staff, each BVW team, each class taught, and each project. Membership of some lists is mandatory, for others it is optional. For a complete listing of the lists and description of how they are nested and used, look here: http://www.etc.cmu.edu/computing/lists/

Mailboxes (physical)

Students have individual mailboxes in the fifth floor ETC mailroom for professional use. These mailboxes should not be used for personal mail. Please check mailboxes daily. If students would like to have something mailed or delivered to this address, please be sure to use the complete address: **First Name and Family Name, Entertainment Technology Center, Carnegie Mellon University, 700 Technology Drive, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 15219**. Students should also make sure the Administrative Coordinator has a phone number with which to notify them of incoming Fed Ex, UPS, Priority Mail, or other overnight package deliveries that may be delivered. The department will empty mailboxes at the end of each semester.

Telephones (wired)

There are phones in the conference and interview rooms in the building. To make calls pertaining to ETC projects or business, students can reserve the rooms with the Administrative Coordinator. Faxes may be made with the Administrative Coordinator. ETC students are encouraged to share cell phone numbers.

Department Resources

Listed below are the ETC policies on the use and distribution of resources within the department. All of the policies are designed with a few key ideas in mind:

1) The ETC faculty and staff make the decisions on how resources are distributed.
2) Decisions are based around the needs of a project, or in some cases a course, <u>not personal needs.</u>
3) Mutual respect, personal responsibility, teamwork and effective sharing.

Computers

The computing environment at the ETC is unique and its design is always being re-evaluated based on the needs of the ever-changing industry in which the ETC educates students to thrive.

All of the policies and guidelines set forth by the Computing Services group at Carnegie Mellon apply here at the ETC. In addition to those rules, the ETC has its own policies and guidelines, none of which supersede Computing Services. Please refer to the following URL for Computing Services' policies and guidelines: http://www.cmu.edu/computing/guideline/. Students are responsible for following the policies and guidelines of the ETC and Carnegie Mellon.

Each student will be assigned a computer pre-loaded with all the software needed for the course and project work assigned here. The computer belongs to the ETC, but will be considered the student's personal space during the duration of their study here, subject to all University policies governing the use of computer equipment. Proper use of the desktop computer is the student's responsibility. For more detailed information on the levels of desktop support, visit: http://www.etc.cmu.edu/computing/

ETC students are given Administrator Rights to their computers, and are free to install software, or make configuration changes, that they feel are necessary to complete their project and course work However, because of this privilege, a student also has the ability to "un-do" configurations (such as un-installing programs, disabling the local firewall, or removing the anti-virus application) that can negatively impact the use of the computer. As such, the overall security and health of a student's computer ultimately is that student's responsibility. The ETC technical staff is here to help with anything that goes wrong, but the staff can't be held responsible for any problems that may result from the abuse or neglect of the computer.

Support is only provided for computers that the ETC owns and maintains. The ETC cannot provide support for computers that students own, such as personal laptops, even if the student chooses to use it for their coursework or project work here. This includes floating and cloud-licensed software, such as Adobe CC, as official support is tied to the hardware upon which the supported software runs.

Software

In addition to the software pre-loaded on each student's machine, software is available on the main file server. Most of this software is free and/or open-source and as such, it does not need to be licensed to install and use.

Most of the licensed software is there as well, but is only to be used in cases of re-install or re-configuration, and is not to be installed on machines that the ETC does not own. Sometimes there are upgrades to newer versions of pre-loaded software available, and when deemed necessary, it will be upgraded over the network by the ETC system administrators automatically. In some cases, students may be emailed instructions on how to perform the upgrade with assistance from the ETC technical staff.

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Printing

There are several communal, monochrome network printers located throughout the building. In general, use of the printers is for project and academic needs only. Color printing, is reserved for official project, class, and internal needs and access for color printing must be requested. As each color printer resides in a staff or faculty office, students must plan ahead for requests, as access will only be granted during normal business hours.

For a list of the shared printers, their locations, capabilities and restrictions, look here:
http://www.etc.cmu.edu/computing/printing/

Servers

There are four types of servers at the ETC:
1) Class I - Production Servers for General Infrastructure
2) Class II - Production Servers for Projects
3) Class III - Non-production Servers for Projects
4) Class IV - Testing Servers

For a list of ETC servers and their services, look here: http://www.etc.cmu.edu/computing/servers/

It's common for a project team to require a server on which to host the deliverable the team is creating, such as a web-based game or dynamical website. If this is required, student teams should consult with their project advisor(s) and, if approved, then contact the IT department to request the server.

A virtual server, either GNU/Linux or Windows, can be provisioned and control of it can be delegated to a designated member of the project team. The server will be maintained for the duration of the project, after which time it will be decommissioned and archived.

The main thing to note with the use of ETC servers is that they are solely for ETC class and project use. Personal use of ETC servers, services or storage is not permitted. This includes storing personal files on ETC servers.

Loaning of ETC Equipment and Resources

The ETC has a wide variety of items that can be signed out to students, faculty and staff for periods of time ranging from brief to semester-long. Currently there are two main Checkout Systems.

Library Checkout System
This checkout system is self-governed as there is no "librarian" to facilitate the lending process. Instead, there is a laptop with a bar-code scanner that displays the ETC Library Checkout System website. From there, students can choose a book and sign it out by following the posted instructions. Students are on their honor to properly sign an item out before taking it from the library. To see the listing of books, look here: http://www.etc.cmu.edu/checkout/library/

Equipment and Media Checkout System
This checkout system is managed by several of the ETC staff members. The physical location of items is listed in the detail view on the Equipment Checkout System webpage, which is here:
http://www.etc.cmu.edu/checkout/

To sign out an item, go to the listed location and ask for it from the staff member there. Students must return the item, in person, to the same location as where they signed it out originally. Students cannot

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leave it in front of the staff member's door or give it to someone else. Until students see the item's manager sign the item back in upon returning it, they are responsible for it.   Please read carefully the full list of rules and policies regarding equipment and media loaning here: http://checkout.etc.cmu.edu/policy/

Lockers

Students will have a carrel in the bullpen for their first semester. Every carrel has a locker area above the desk. Students can get the key to their locker from the Administrative Coordinator. The department will clean out the lockers at the end of the first semester, unless prior arrangements are made with the Administrative Coordinator.

ETC Facility Policies

Facility hours

The ETC is open to ETC students, staff and faculty 24 hours a day, with brief exceptions surrounding some holidays. Signs will be posted, and email will be sent, in advance of any such closings.

PTC Shuttle

The PTC Shuttle operates daily, and departs from CMU campus on the 3/4 of the hour, and departs from the ETC on the 1/4 of the hour. For a full schedule and more information, visit: http://www.cmu.edu/police/shuttleandescort/

Facility rooms

Trash and recyclables are to be thrown out in the proper receptacles. There are two types of recycling receptacles; for paper, and for aluminum, glass and plastic. CMU is the 'greenest university' in America and the ETC wants to keep it that way and, in fact, make it better. Recycling is taken very seriously. Recycling, though, takes effort and individual responsibility. Everyone in the ETC needs to police this policy. If students see the need for a recycling container in a designated ETC areas please let the staff know.

No personal items are to be kept beside computers or on tables in the fifth floor computer lab. Students are not allowed to attempt to "establish ownership" of the public terminals or work areas. Personal items must be kept in a project room or a locker, or they may get thrown out.

There are public refrigerators in the kitchen area on each floor and in the Student Bullpens on the fifth floor. Students are responsible for helping keep the kitchen areas clean.

No ETC room is to be used by any person or group not affiliated with the ETC unless the Director approves such use in advance.

Keys

The Administrative Coordinator will assign keys. Every student will receive the general ETC key, and project room keys will be assigned by semester according to need. Keys must be signed out and in, and loss of a key will result in a $25 charge placed against the student's account. If the general key is lost and the entire space must be re-keyed, the ETC reserves the right to charge the student for the modifications. The ETC is not responsible for the loss of anything of value that may be left unattended in the project rooms or lockers. However, students should consider using lockers and locking their project rooms, as this will ensure a little extra security measure on their part.

All common ETC areas (the mailroom, library, lounge, etc) have combination locks and security cameras. The combinations will be changed regularly for security of these areas.

Meeting Rooms

Students need to reserve meetings rooms in advance in order to use them. The Fifth and Second Floor Conference Rooms and Interview Rooms need to be reserved with the Administrative Coordinator. All other rooms in the PTC need to be reserved with the PTC Receptionist.

Project Rooms

Each project group will be assigned a project room. The Facilities Coordinator will give teams proper hanging supplies for walls, do not use tape or tacks. No permanent changes may be made to the space however without the permission of the Director. At the end of the semester, students are responsible for cleaning out their rooms before they leave. If a room is damaged, each team member will have a $50 charge placed on their student's account. To help reduce the potential for damage, the rooms are set up in advance for the teams.

In some rooms there is equipment set up by the department that runs various kiosks and other devices that are visible from the hallway. Under no circumstances are students to tamper with the equipment, unplug it or any of its peripherals, or borrow any of its cables. If students need those items, they need request them.

Etiquette for Facilities Rooms and Project Rooms

Basic etiquette and mutual respect apply, but there is one special note to be made with regards to noise in shared rooms. Computer speakers are not distributed with student workstations. In a shared space, students must respect others by not playing audio out loud. Students will often need to listen to audio to do their work, but when doing so they must use headphones.

The ETC doesn't stock headphones for general use because of hygiene. Therefore, students are responsible for bringing in their own headphones.

This policy is strictly applied in the Bullpen and Dugout. It is viewed as a guideline for project rooms as each project team can decide how they want to deal with audio for themselves. However, desktop speakers and headphones are still not provided in these cases.

University Resources

Please refer to CMU's Graduate Educations Policies for information on the following topics:
http://www.cmu.edu/graduate/

Computer clusters	Academic support
Libraries	Parking
Health services	Security
Childcare	Transportation (shuttle, escort, safe-walk)
Dining	Post office
Career services	GSA

Student Acknowledgement

The ETC Student Handbook has been prepared for your information and understanding of the policies, philosophies and practices of the Entertainment Technology Center at Carnegie Mellon University. Please read it carefully. Upon completion of your review of the handbook, sign the statement below, and return it to the Director by the due date. A copy of this acknowledgment appears at the back of the handbook for your records.

By signing, you are stating that you have read a copy of the ETC Student Handbook and that you acknowledge, understand, accept and agree to comply with the information and guidelines contained therein, including the Career Services Code of Ethics, and all references to external information (i.e. links to webpages with additional information).

You understand this handbook is not intended to cover every situation that may arise during your course of study, but is simply a general guide to the goals, policies, practices, and expectations of the ETC. You understand that the ETC Student Handbook is not a contract and should not be deemed as such.

_____   _____

(Student Signature)   (Date)

_____

(Printed Name)

Please return by: The Friday of the First Week of School.

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700 Pittsburgh Technology Center
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219
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Fax: (412) 268-4988
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