Carnegie Mellon University
Heinz College
INFORMATION SYSTEMS • PUBLIC POLICY • MANAGEMENT

Academic Year 2026-2027

Master of Science in Technology & Artificial Intelligence Leadership (MSAIL) Student Handbook Addendum

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1. Introduction

This handbook provides specific information on the curriculum and program requirements for the Master of Science in Technology & Artificial Intelligence Leadership program, including both concentrations (AI Management and Privacy & Cybersecurity). The Heinz College also publishes a separate handbook detailing College-wide policies and procedures regarding educational planning, program committee, teaching, scheduling and course credit, performance standards, academic standing, ethics and discipline, student privacy rights, and major forms and deadlines.

While this handbook is specific to your academic experience in the department, it is just one element of the Graduate Student Handbook Suite. There are several other resources within the suite that you should consult when needed:

- The Heinz College Handbook
- University-Wide Graduate Student Handbook (Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs)
- The Carnegie Mellon Student Handbook

You must familiarize yourself with all handbooks, but this handbook will include any policies that may differ from the college-wide handbook.

2. MSAIL Program Overview

The MSAIL program is designed for experienced technology professionals to complete a master's program focusing on one of two concentrations on a part-time basis alongside their full-time job. It offers fully online study with optional in-person residencies. The program allows the flexibility for students to choose a course load each semester that best suits their work and personal situation. Most part-time MSAIL students take 2 courses each semester (typically 24 units, and up to 35 units (maximum) and can complete the program in 5 semesters. However, students have up to five years to finish the program, allowing them to take a slower pace (one class) each semester. They may extend the length up to seven years when due to extenuating circumstances resulting in leaves of absence.

The MSAIL program offers two pathways, both asynchronous and online with optional residencies:

- MSAIL - Artificial Intelligence Management
- MSAIL - Information Privacy & Cybersecurity

Each degree requires completion of 120 units of core courses including a capstone, and 48 units of pathway coursework. Of those 48 units of electives up to 24 units of graduate-level coursework may be transferred in from credit earned at another university before matriculation into MSAIL.

Electives may be courses from the MSAIL online course catalog, and online graduate-level courses offered by other Heinz College programs (i.e., 94-xxx, 91-xxx, 90-xxx) or CMU departments (e.g., Tepper, Software & Societal Systems, Language Technologies), subject to pre-approval from the MSAIL Program Director.

Students who graduate from the MSAIL program will be able to:

- Evaluate technical foundations and organizational and societal implications of AI/ML systems
- Construct, interpret and communicate quantitative evaluation frameworks
- Apply decision-making analytic frameworks to technology investment and risk trade-offs
- Design and lead technology-enabled organizational transformation
- Synthesize technical, ethical, and regulatory considerations into governance frameworks

3. Department Overview

The staff listed below are directly associated with the MSAIL program. There is a robust team at Heinz College and CMU available to help you navigate your education, from financial aid and student services to disability services and more.

Sara Moussawi	Senior Associate Dean	smoussaw@andrew.cmu.ed
Alyson Jarnagin	Interim Senior Director of Online Education	ajarnagi@andrew.cmu.edu
J. David Riel	Interim Program Director MSAIL	jriel@andrew.cmu.edu
Kayla Molzer	Academic Program Coordinator	kmolzer@andrew.cmu.edu
Annie Julian	Director of Student Experience	ajulian@cmu.edu
Christine Sundry	Associate Director, Career Advisor	christinesundry@cmu.edu

4. MSAIL Program-Specific Policies

The **Master of Science in Technology & Artificial Intelligence Leadership** (MSAIL) program abides by all policies of the Heinz College, as outlined in the college-wide Student Handbook. MSAIL students are expected to maintain good academic performance with integrity, as outlined in its sections on Grading and Evaluation, Academic Standing, and Ethics and Discipline. The following are MSAIL program requirements and some modifications from the college handbook that are specific to MSAIL:

4.1. Graduation Requirements

MSAIL students must satisfy the following requirements within five years from the first semester in which they matriculated to graduate from the MSAIL program:

- Earned 120 units of course credit
- Successfully passed all core courses
- Achieved a minimum cumulative quality point average (QPA) of 3.0

The statute of limitations to complete the MSAIL degree is five years. This is a more restrictive policy than the 7-year statute posted in the college handbook or from Carnegie Mellon University. After five years, a student may petition to extend this up to seven years if the delay was due to extenuating circumstances and/or extended leave(s) of absence. Students must contact the Program Director during their fifth year to discuss their plan for completion within seven years.

Students who achieve a final QPA of 3.75 or higher will be recognized with a certificate of graduation with distinction or highest distinction from the Heinz College. See the section on Awards in the Student Handbook for more information.

4.2. Part-Time Course Load

MSAIL is a part-time only program, and students may take up to 30 units per semester, although most find around 24 units is a manageable load. Students who intend to enroll full-time (36 units or more) should pursue one of the full-time Heinz College programs instead. MSAIL is also not eligible for a student (F-1 or J-1) immigration status.

Students may petition to exceed 30 units per semester if the student has extenuating circumstances that warrant a heavier course load and their academic performance to that point shows they can handle the extra course load. International MSAIL students can never exceed 30 units, regardless of circumstances, due to visa regulations.

A full-semester course carries 12 units (equivalent to 4 credits on that common scale) and generally expects 12 hours of time and effort per week on average, including 3 hours of lecture per week. “Mini” courses are half of a semester in length; they generally carry 6 units (equivalent to 2 credits) and require about 12 hours per week as well. Part-time students should use this as a guide to determine how much coursework they can manage on top of their existing employment and personal commitments.

Students may adjust their course load without any academic or financial penalty up until the official Add/Drop deadline for Heinz College classes, which is typically within the first two weeks of a semester-long class and just the first week of each mini-semester class. Any schedule changes after that deadline must be due to extenuating circumstances and require filing a General Petition form. Students should discuss their situation with the Program Director first, as there may be other options besides dropping, such as requesting an Incomplete (I) grade or using your annual Late Voucher to switch to Pass/No Pass Grade.

4.3. Exemption and Transfer Credit

All petitions for exemption and transfer credit should be submitted within your first semester of enrollment.

MSAIL students may pursue exemptions from core courses if they have already successfully completed a course with the same learning objectives. To receive an exemption, you must petition the instructor of the relevant course or take their qualifying exam. The procedures are in the Student Handbook, and general information is posted here. Please note you do not earn credit for an exemption; therefore, you must take an additional elective to make up the core units that were exempted. An exemption does mean you have satisfied completion of that core course for purposes of graduation, as well as if that course is a prerequisite for another class.

Refer to the Heinz College Student Handbook section for Transfer Credit information (In general, the Heinz College full-time programs do not give transfer credit for graduate courses taken before admission). The MSAIL program will consider up to 24 units of graduate-level coursework from credit earned at another university before matriculation into MSAIL to count towards MSAIL electives. The Application for Transfer Credit is available upon request from your program director. Applications are decided on a case-by-case basis and depend on a few factors, including the minimum criteria below:

- The credit was earned with a grade of B or better
- It was earned within the last 5 years
- It was earned at a regionally accredited university

The grade earned will not be calculated into your CMU quality point average, but the units will be counted towards MSAIL elective and will appear on your CMU transcript as a transfer credit.

4.4. Elective Options

Independent Study: Students may take up to 12 units of Independent Study as an elective. Contact the MSAIL Program Director for guidelines on developing an appropriate independent study.

Pass/No Pass Grade Option: Students may take up to 12 units of non-core coursework with the Pass/No Pass grade. See more details in the College Handbook.

Registering for Non-Heinz College Courses: Students may take up to 24 units of graduate coursework from other CMU departments outside of Heinz College. You must get approval in advance from the Program Director via email or by filing a General Petition prior to the course start date.

Courses at Other Universities: This falls under the transfer credit policy for MSAIL (see Section 4.3 above) and must be courses completed prior to admission. Any exceptions to that policy must be due to extenuating circumstances and require a petition to the Program Director before taking the non-CMU course.

Residency: All students have the opportunity to attend 1 or 2 residencies as they matriculate through the degree program. Students will have the ability to explore their preferences regarding topics such as leadership, teamwork, negotiation, and change management. The two day residencies are taught by world renowned Carnegie Mellon University faculty and use an experiential approach, allowing students to participate in mini poster sessions, simulation activities, and small group workshops to strategically address common tensions among professional stakeholders.

5. MSAIL Curriculum

5.1. MSAIL - Core Courses

This degree can be done fully online or a hybrid of online and on-campus residencies. It is recommended to have prior programming knowledge and familiarity with interpreting quantitative information and using data to inform decisions but it is not required.

No.	Title	Units
95-800	Foundations of AI/ML	12
95-802	AI, Data, and Society	12
95-811	Technology, Strategy, and Market Dynamics	12
95-734	Delivering Technology at Scale	6
95-804	Leading and Communicating with Data	6
95-817	Measuring what Matters	12
94-739	Capstone	12
Various	Pathway Courses	48
	Total:	**120**

5.2. MSAIL Pathway: Artificial Intelligence Management

This degree can be done fully online with optional in-person residencies.

No.	Title	Units
95-833	Leading AI Implementation	12
95-834	Scaling AI Organizations	12
95-841	Responsible AI Governance	12
	Total:	**36**

5.3. MSAIL Pathway: Privacy & Cybersecurity

This degree can be done fully online with optional in-person residencies.

No.	Title	Units
95-847	Cybersecurity Risk, Policy, and Governance	12
95-853	Cybersecurity for Intelligent Systems	12
95-858	Technology Governance, Policy, and Privacy	12
	Total:	**36**

6. Customized Partner Programs

All Heinz College and MSAIL policies apply unless otherwise modified in the curriculum distribution listed here or in the educational partnership agreement/contract.

6.1. General Motors

Required MSAIL Core Courses			
Course Title	Units	Semester Credits	Semester Offered
Foundations of AI/ML	12	4	Fall, Spring
AI, Data, & Society	12	4	Spring
Technology, Strategy, and Market Dynamics	12	4	Spring
Leading and Communicating with Data	12	4	Fall
Measuring What Matters	12	4	Summer
Capstone Project	24	8	Fall, Spring, Summer
Total MSAIL Core:	84	28 credits	

MSAIL Managing Artificial Intelligence PATHWAY			
Course Title	Units	Semester Credits	Semesters Offered
Leading AI Implementation	12	4	Fall

Scaling AI Organizations	12	4	Summer
Responsible AI Governance	12	4	Spring
Total Pathway:	36	12 Credits	

MSAIL Cybersecurity & Privacy PATHWAY			
Course Title		Semester Credits	Semesters Offered
Cybersecurity, Risk, Policy and Governance	12	4	Fall
Cybersecurity for Intelligent Systems	12	4	Summer
Technology, Governance, Policy and Privacy	12	4	Spring
Total Pathway:	36	12 Credits	