

## Incoming PhD Student Checklist

This page provides you, the incoming PhD student in the Department of Computer Science, a chronological step-by-step process that will guide you from the day of accepting admission to your first months at the University of Colorado Boulder. Hopefully, it will make the transition to Boulder even smoother.

DISCLAIMER: This page is made by graduate students for graduate students. Omission of needed information is possible, so read carefully through all official mailings and information to find the current facts.

### Day After Accepting Admission

Good decision! . . . Relax for a little bit!

### Two to Six Months Before Coming to Boulder

During this time, the main focuses on getting to Boulder are housing, handling incoming University of Colorado mail, and registering for classes.

- Housing
  - Start looking for housing options. Boulder does have a tight housing market, but there are always open places around campus. And with the great bus system, it's hard to find housing that is not minutes away from a bus stop. Here's a good place to start finding housing options.
  - Find roommates if desired. A good source of potential roommates is the people who attend the visitors weekend and then decide to attend the University Colorado at Boulder. Having roommates can help lower living expenses and give you a base of people to know when you arrive in town.
- Incoming Mail - Keep everything. Write down deadlines!
  - Health Care Options - There is a deadline for accepting or denying school health care. As graduate students, we get a good discount on the standard plan. See Student Health Insurance for details.
  - Email Account - Once you get an email account, try it out at CULink Mail and Calendaring to make sure it's set up correctly.
  - Admissions Form - You do have to pay the deposit. Paying this allows you to get your PIN (Personal Identification Number).
  - myCUinfo Account - myCUinfo is a portal for all students at CU and gives you access to class registration, bill paying, your grades, etc. You will need your IdentiKey login name and password to login. Use the CU-Boulder Identity Manager to activate your IdentiKey.
  - Department Mail - Read over any mail from the Computer Science Department carefully and keep this mail.
  - Foreign Student Information - This mail will be extremely important for obtaining student visas, seeing deadlines, etc.

- Contact Advisor
  - Remind them you are coming. Professors are surprisingly busy people and need reminding that they have incoming students. See the Faculty Directory to locate contact information for your advisor.
  - Ask him/her what classes you should take. Your advisor best knows your interests and will give invaluable advice on what classes you should take your first semester.
- Register for Classes
  - Do this as early as possible! Remember to ask your advisor about what classes you should take if possible. If you cannot get a hold of him/her, register for classes anyway. You can always change later.
  - Use myCUinfo to register.
- Foreign Students
  - Visit [International Student and Scholar Services](#). International Student and Scholar Services has the current up-to-date information needed for your coming to CU Boulder. Read all the information very carefully, looking for due dates and needed paperwork.

### One Month before Coming to Boulder

- Possibly visit Boulder to secure housing. If you haven't done so already, see housing options.
- Get necessary documentation to begin the residency process.
  - Car registration, title, and/or lien documents. These may take time to retrieve.
  - Passport or secondary photo ID for driver's license. See [Colorado Driver's License](#) for more information on obtaining a license.

### One to Two Weeks Before Classes Start

- Move to Boulder.
- There will be TA training the week before school starts. There is a mandatory sexual harassment course that all incoming students must take to work for CU-Boulder.
- Get a Colorado driver's license - Get the license before school starts, as it is a requirement for getting residency for the next school year. While getting your license, make sure you register to vote as well. They should ask you about it when you get your license. You need two forms of ID to get a license (e.g., passport, old license, etc.). Save your receipt as it will make the residency application much easier. See [Colorado Driver's License Locations](#) for licensing locations, phone numbers, and hours.
- Register your car - Another aspect of the Colorado state residency application is that you register your car, if you have one, before school starts. To register your car, you will need to get an emissions test. Again, save your receipts for the residency application process. See the [Boulder County Department of Motor Vehicles](#) for more on registering a vehicle.
- Get your Buff OneCard - Your Buff OneCard is simply your student ID card. This card allows you to use public transportation and the recreation center, among other things. There can be a long line to get the card, so give yourself enough time. See [Buff OneCard](#) for more information on getting and using your Buff OneCard.

- Contact your advisor again - You'll want to know where you'll be sitting (i.e., where your desk will be). Note: space is only given to incoming PhD students. Your advisor will also be able to tell you to which rooms you will need key card access.
- Buy books - The [CU Book Store](#) should always have the books you need. The [Buffalo Chip](#), housed within the book store, offers software, hardware, accessories and electronic goods, many at educational prices for students, faculty and staff. Online shopping usually saves some money and is worth looking into.
- Parking Permits - Campus parking permit information can be found at [Parking and Transportation Services](#).
- Foreign Students - Apply for your social security number as soon as possible. This and related information can be found at [International Student and Scholar Services](#).

NOTE: The week before school starts will be filled with orientations for both the Department and the University of Colorado in general. No one has too much trouble getting all the above bullets done, but manage your time well during orientation and make sure you get your driver's license and car registered if you plan on applying for residency.

### First Week of Classes

- Mandatory Computer Science meeting - The meeting time and location should be in one of the department mailings that come a couple of weeks before the semester starts.
- Set up payroll - Payroll will be explained to you during orientation, but do this as soon as possible so that you can get paid!
- Visit the CSEL - The CSEL (Computer Science Education Lab) is a computing laboratory open to all Computer Science students. At least make sure your account is setup correctly and that you can get into the room (ECCS 128)!

### First Month of School

- Get a ski pass - Optional of course, but Colorado does have some of the best skiing in the country. See [Colorado Ski Country USA](#) for more about skiing in Colorado.
- Visit Recreation Center - Again optional, but you can't work/study all the time! The [Rec Center](#) has great facilities and if you pay full student fees (most likely you do!), membership is included in your tuition.
- Consider taking a preliminary exam - This is for PhD students only. If you have extensive knowledge in one of the test areas, that test may be coming up soon. You can always ask around about what preparation is recommended for taking these exams.
- Look into transfer credits - If you have taken previous graduate level classes, you can transfer credits after completing one semester at CU.