

**AY 2025–26 ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION: GUIDANCE FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL AND FOR COLLEGES, SCHOOLS, DEPARTMENTS, AND PROGRAMS FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST**

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## **The purpose of Academic Instruction Guidance**

Academic Instruction Guidance, published before each fall, spring, and (if needed) summer term, provides instructional personnel and academic units essential information to start the new academic term. Supplemental editions of Academic Instruction Guidance may also be published if needed in between these intervals. For instructional personnel, guidance includes important reminders for course planning and highlights pedagogical opportunities and student needs. For those planning the curriculum, guidance highlights policy and procedural standards and changes.

## **Plan spring 2026 using the new academic calendar**

### **Key facts and dates for spring 2026**

In fall 2025, the campus moved to the [new academic calendar](#) that was approved in 2023. Note: the Colorado Law academic calendar varies from that of the rest of the university, and faculty and staff in Colorado Law should continue to consult the [Colorado Law academic calendar website](#).

The [Office of the Registrar academic calendar web site](#) is your source for academic calendar information, including [the spring 2026 academic calendar](#), [future academic calendars through 2028–29](#), and [FAQs about the changes from the old academic calendar to the new](#).

Here are the key things you need to know to plan your spring 2026 courses:

- The number of instructional days per semester has been reduced from 73 to 70 per semester (14 weeks of classes), not including reading days and the final exam period.
- The number of instructional days per semester has been equalized for MTWRF (14 instances of each weekday). **The Friday of the last week of classes (Friday, April 24) operates as a Monday in order to equalize MTWRF instructional days.**
- The first day of classes is earlier each semester: classes begin on Thursday rather than the following Monday. **The first day of spring 2026 classes is Thursday, Jan. 8.**
- There is a midsemester reading day on the eighth Thursday of each semester. Thursday is chosen to facilitate equal MTWRF instructional days. **The midsemester reading day for spring 2026 is Thursday, Feb. 26.**
- Spring break falls a week earlier than in the old academic calendar (after Week 9, rather than Week 10) and aligns with the spring break schedules of both Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley School Districts. **In spring 2026, spring break is Monday–Friday, Mar. 16–Mar. 20.**
- The number of reading days between the end of classes and the beginning of the final exam period has increased from 1 to 2 per semester. **The end of term reading days for spring 2026 are Saturday–Sunday, Apr. 25–26.**
- The last day of classes falls on a Friday; end of term reading days are on Saturday–Sunday; and the final exam period is Monday–Friday, ending at 4:00 p.m. on Friday. **In spring 2026, the final exam period is Monday–Friday, Apr. 27–May 1.**
- The spring campus commencement ceremony takes place on the Saturday immediately following the end of the final exam period. **In spring 2026, the campus commencement ceremony is on Saturday, May 2.** Details are on [the campus Commencement website](#).
- Unit-level graduation/commencement recognition events begin after the final exam period has ended. **In spring 2026, recognition events begin after May 1, 4:00 p.m., and continue through Sunday, May 3.** Scheduling is posted on [the campus Commencement website](#).

### Do's and don'ts: the new midsemester reading day and the day following

Thursday, Feb. 26, is designated as a midsemester reading day—a time for students to reflect, review and prepare for the remainder of the semester. Key points:

- The midsemester reading day functions like the end of term reading days before the [final exam period](#). Class sessions or graded assignments of any kind, including papers, lab practicums, presentations, portfolios and projects, may not take place or be due that day. Units may hold optional exam review sessions if that is their typical practice on a reading day.
- Unlike the end of term reading days, the midterm reading day is not a “blackout date” for other campus events. Athletic events and academically scheduled student events (e.g., concerts, performances) may proceed as scheduled.
- Friday, Feb. 27, is a regular class day. Faculty should not cancel classes or reschedule exams or assignments on that day in anticipation of potentially low attendance because of the midsemester reading day. Campus will be sending the message to students that classes will be held as usual on Friday.

- The midsemester reading day does not govern when faculty may schedule midterm exams or other due dates. However, faculty may take the reading day into account as an opportunity for students to prepare for an exam or assignment due date that occurs shortly after the reading day.
- Colorado Law faculty, please note: if you are teaching a LAWS class that enrolls undergraduate or graduate (non-Law) students, you must respect the midsemester reading day, even if the Law School calendar does not have that day.

### **If you teach Mondays or Fridays: adjust if necessary for the last week of classes**

In the new academic calendar, the Friday of the last week of classes operates as a Monday in order to equalize MTWRF instructional days across the semester. If you teach on Mondays or Fridays, you might be teaching an extra day that week or one fewer day that week, depending on your class meeting pattern. (MWF classes will not need to shift anything.) Be sure to adjust your syllabus if needed and highlight the change for your students.

### **Plan for the last week of class and your final exam**

Your syllabus should include the date, time, and delivery mode of your final exam. The [spring 2026 final exam schedule](#) is posted on the Office of the Registrar website.

Check your class instruction mode(s) below for policy and guidance around scheduling and delivery modes of final exams and around assignments during the last week of class and on reading days.

#### *All classes*

All classes must follow the campus [Final Examination Policy](#) exam scheduling provisions:

- For classes in sessions of 10 weeks or longer, no examinations may be given during the week of classes preceding the start of the campus's final examination period; however, assignments listed in the syllabus such as papers, lab practicums, presentations, portfolios, and projects may be due during that week.
- Class sessions or graded assignments of any kind, including papers, lab practicums, presentations, portfolios and projects, may not take place or be due on a day designated in the academic calendar as a reading day. For regular-term courses in spring 2026, there are three reading days:
  - Thursday, Feb. 26 (midsemester reading day)
  - Saturday–Sunday, Apr. 25–26 (end of term reading days)

Note: the reading day and final exam period schedule for Colorado Law is different and is posted on the [Colorado Law website](#).

- When students have three or more final examinations on the same day, they are entitled to arrange an alternative examination time for the last exam or exams scheduled on that day. When students have two final examinations scheduled to meet at the same time, they are entitled to arrange an alternative examination time for the course that meets later in the week during the term or, if the two courses meet on the same day during the term, the course that meets later in the day.

### *In-person classes*

- Final exams for all in-person classes should be administered during the [designated time for that class](#) during the final exam period (Apr. 27–May 1). (Note: the reading day and final exam period schedule for Colorado Law is posted on the [Colorado Law website](#).)
- Final exams for in-person classes are normally held in person, but may be administered remotely at the discretion of the instructor of record.
- The class syllabus must specify the final exam timing and mode of delivery.

### *Remote (synchronous) classes*

- Final exams for all remote (synchronous) classes must be given remotely. They should be administered one of two ways:
  1. During the [designated time for that class](#) during the final exam period (Apr. 27–May 1). Be prepared to accommodate students who have computer or connectivity problems during that time slot. (Note: the reading day and final exam period schedule for Colorado Law is posted on the [Colorado Law website](#).)
  2. Within a time window of at least 24 hours, as long as that time window (a) includes the entirety of the [designated final exam time for that class](#) and (2) begins and ends within the final exam period (Apr. 27–May 1). (Note: the reading day and final exam period schedule for Colorado Law is posted on the [Colorado Law website](#).)
- The class syllabus must specify the final exam timing and mode of delivery.

### *Online (asynchronous) classes*

- Final exams for completely online (asynchronous) classes should be offered during a time window, inclusive of start and completion times, of at least 48 hours. The window allows students to fit the exam for an asynchronous class into the rest of their exam schedule.
- Final exams for online (asynchronous) classes must be administered during the final exam period (Apr. 27–May 1). They may be offered at any time during that period, as long as the administration time window of at least 48 hours begins and ends within that final exam period. (Note: the reading day and final exam period schedule for Colorado Law is posted on the [Colorado Law website](#).)
- There is an exception to the above two bullet points: Some online classes are included on the [common final exam schedule](#) for exams to be given at a specific time during the final exam period. These online classes may require the final exam to be taken remotely at that specific time. For those teaching one of these courses, please communicate your expectations clearly to your students about when their exam will be given.
- The class syllabus must specify the final exam timing and mode of delivery.

### *Hybrid classes*

- Final exams for hybrid classes may use the guidelines for either of their instruction modes, as specified above. For example, a hybrid in-person/remote class may follow the guidelines for either in-person classes or remote classes.
- The class syllabus must specify the final exam timing and mode of delivery.

## *Exam delivery mode for common exams*

- Departments that offer [common final exams](#) may choose to offer an exam in person or remotely. If the course includes remote or online sections, a remote exam *must* be administered to students in those sections. The department may also choose to administer the common final exam remotely for students in *all* sections. (See “In-person classes,” above.) Those teaching a class with a common final exam should check with the department about the exam delivery mode.
- The class syllabus for each section must specify the final exam timing and mode of delivery.

## **Spring 2026 course planning reminders**

### **Register for the new CU Secure network to start your classes**

CU Secure and CU Guest have replaced UCB Wireless and UCB Guest across campus in all buildings. To use the new CU Secure network that replaced UCB Wireless, you must [register your devices](#) in advance so they can connect. When students return to campus after the break, if they didn’t install the CU Secure certificate, they will need to first connect to CU Guest while on campus, then [register for CU Secure](#). Please consider showing one of these [post-cutover slides](#) before each of your classes to help students get connected.

### **Set up your course in Canvas; consider using the CU Boulder Canvas template**

[Log in to Canvas](#) to see your [spring 2026 course shells](#). These courses are created in an “unpublished” state by default, and will not be visible to students until instructors publish them. For more information, please review the [Canvas Automatic Course Creation FAQ](#).

To set up your course in Canvas in a way that saves you time and makes it easy for students to find the course information and resources they need, consider using the campus’s [Canvas course template](#), created by CU Boulder faculty and staff experts. To get help with integrating the Canvas template into your courses, participate in one of [OIT’s training sessions](#).

### **Include required syllabus statements**

Required syllabus statements distill CU Boulder or University of Colorado System policy related to students and faculty in the classroom. Syllabus statements are periodically updated to reflect changes in campus procedures and to keep web links current. Please use the [current version of the syllabus statements](#).

### **Include an AI syllabus statement and articulate your AI standards for coursework and thesis/dissertation/independent study work**

CU Boulder does not have a policy on how generative AI may be used in student work and thus does not have a single required syllabus statement on AI. As a matter of academic freedom, faculty may allow AI to be used in a range of different ways, including not allowing it at all. In order for your students to understand what uses of AI are allowable in your course vs. what uses will be regarded as academic dishonesty, it is strongly recommended that you:

- Include in your syllabus a statement about the permissible use(s) of AI in your course. You can consult [recommended syllabus language](#) regarding student use of AI in classes. This document,

created by a working group of CU Boulder faculty, staff, and students facilitated by the [Boulder Faculty Assembly \(BFA\)](#) and the [Center for Teaching & Learning \(CTL\)](#), will be refined over time based on further input from campus experts.

- When deciding what uses of AI, if any, will be allowed, consider how AI may support or undermine the learning outcomes of your course as a whole or of that particular assignment. For more guidance, explore [CTL's AI & Assessment page](#).
- For each assignment, re-articulate your AI policy so that students are informed and prepared. The [AI Assessment Scale](#) (Perkins et al., 2024) is a helpful tool for defining and communicating to students what specific uses of AI are allowed.
- Have a [dialogue](#) with students about acceptable uses of generative AI in your course.
- Communicate clearly with students about acceptable uses of generative AI in out-of-classroom teaching and learning situations, including their work on theses, dissertations, independent studies, examinations (e.g., qualifying/comprehensive/final), and the like.
- Stress that students are ultimately responsible for the work they turn in and that any violations of your policy may be referred to the [Office of Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution](#) as a potential [Honor Code](#) violation.
- Take caution before uploading student work to unapproved, third party tools that offer AI content detection as there are risks regarding data privacy and security, including potentially breaking [FERPA student privacy protections](#). The Office of Information Technology (OIT) is currently re-evaluating AI detection tools after [an initial review indicated concerns of inaccuracy and bias](#).
- Check [Artificial Intelligence at CU Boulder](#) for more information about AI efforts on campus, guidance and resources about responsible use of AI, and how to get involved.

### **Consider a recommended syllabus statement on mental health resources**

Upon the recommendation of the Boulder Faculty Assembly, a syllabus statement on mental health and wellness resources is available in the same document as the [required syllabus statements](#). You may wish to add this statement to your syllabus to help your students understand their options.

### **Plan an attendance/make-up work policy that accommodates health-related absences and religious obligations**

When creating your attendance policy for your class, please consider that students may have to miss class or an exam for health-related reasons or for religious obligations. Key points:

- Students should not be penalized for missing class or an exam for health-related reasons or religious obligations.
- In particular, it violates [CU Boulder policy](#) and may be an act of discrimination if you penalize students for missing class or an exam for religious obligations. Therefore, if you have a class attendance policy, classes missed due to religious obligations should not be counted as an absence. If you allow your students the opportunity to skip an exam or drop their lowest-scored exam, an exam missed because of religious obligations should not be counted toward that opportunity.
- You may not ask a student for evidence of their religious obligations or query the legitimacy of a student's religious affiliation or belief.
- Please make clear on your syllabus how you will handle student absence for health-related reasons or religious obligations, including how students should notify you of absences (including

timing of advance notice for religious obligations), how they can make up work or exams, and how they should request assignment extensions.

- You should not ask students to provide appointment verifications, otherwise known as “doctor’s notes,” to document illness. Requiring doctor’s notes puts a strain on medical services and forces students to make unnecessary trips to the doctor. Student health services on campus—Medical Services at Wardenburg Health Center, Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS), and Student Support and Case Management (SSCM)—do not provide “doctor’s notes.”
- Instructors are encouraged to develop attendance policies that build in flexibility for students who must miss class for health-related reasons or for religious obligations. The Center for Teaching & Learning has provided ideas and resources for [planning effective attendance policies](#) and encouraging student attendance.
- While faculty teaching in-person classes should provide make-up opportunities for students who miss their classes for health reasons or for religious obligations, those opportunities do not have to include making arrangements for students to attend class remotely, giving remote exams to these students, or sharing your class notes or slides with these students. However, you may choose to do so if you wish. You may also use other practices for helping your students keep up with their work, such as having other students share class notes with the student who is absent.
- For more information on accommodating students’ needs, see [guidance and FAQs from the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#).

### **Use the Grade for Student Success Guide to help students understand their grades**

In 2023–24, a working group of faculty members joined the Center for Teaching & Learning and the Office of Information Technology to create [Grade for Student Success](#), a faculty guide for using grading policies and the Canvas gradebook to promote the success of all students and make grading in Canvas more efficient and customizable for instructors. In 2024–25, two major rollouts of the Grade for Student Success practices were carried out, involving 190 instructors and nearly 12,000 students across 76 courses (319 sections). Findings revealed high instructor adoption rates and positive instructor and student experiences with the practices.

This year, the CTL and OIT are continuing to encourage CU educators to adopt the Grade for Student Success practices via [department trainings](#) and a series of Grade for Student Success Tips of the Week in Canvas.

Grade for Student Success recommends the following key practices:

- Articulate your grading policies clearly and transparently from the outset of the semester.
- Post grades in a timely manner.
- Set up a [grading scheme](#) in Canvas that shows percentage cutoffs for letter grades.
- Avoid changing grading policies after the start of the semester.

Other useful practices involve making effective use of the [gradebook](#) and other features within Canvas:

- Post all [assignments, quizzes, graded discussions](#), etc. for the entire course at the beginning of the semester, and assure students that they can trust the grades they see in Canvas.
- Include due dates for all assignments, and provide guidance to students on when and where to find feedback.
- Provide opportunities to receive substantive feedback and/or grades before the drop deadline.

- If applicable, ensure that the [weighting of assignments](#) or [assignment groups](#) aligns with the syllabus.
- If students have the option to complete a subset of assignments from an assignment group (e.g., taking 3 of 5 quizzes) or dropping a certain number of assignments from an assignment group. (e.g., dropping their lowest score out of 5 quizzes), ensure that this is accurately reflected in the [“rules” of your gradebook](#).

For more grading resources, review the [Grade for Student Success](#) faculty guide on the CTL website, which also includes video resources and tutorials to support implementation. In addition, consider adopting the [Canvas course template](#), which incorporates the Grade for Student Success practices.

### **Give your students feedback and/or grades before the pass/fail and withdraw deadlines**

For undergraduate students especially, it's important that students know how they're doing in your class before the deadline for students to declare a class pass/fail (or to change a pass/fail designation to a grade) or to withdraw from a class, so they can make informed decisions about changing a grading basis (pass/fail) or withdrawing from a class. Please make sure you've assigned and provided substantive feedback and/or grades on several assignments by this point. For spring 2026, that deadline is Tuesday, Mar. 24, for full semester courses (prorated for [special session](#)/shorter-term classes). Instructors of short-session classes should help students understand the specific deadlines applicable to the course, as this can be confusing for them.

### **Plan to use Course Alerts for undergraduate classes**

[Course alerts](#) are an essential tool for identifying students who may be struggling and providing early intervention. They are designed to encourage students to engage with their professors and use academic support resources when needed. You can submit alerts weeks 2–13 (adjusted for shorter classes), and more than once per term (one per student). Both the student and their advisor are notified whenever a course alert is submitted.

Submit alerts as early as possible during the term and in advance of the drop deadline so that students have ample time to make positive changes and succeed. Spring 2026 dates and instructions are on the OIT [Course Alert page](#).

Suggested syllabus/Canvas language:

*This course participates in a campus effort to alert students early if there are concerns about grades, attendance, or performance. The goal is to give timely feedback and connect students with support resources.*

### **Be aware of the CU Book Access subscription service**

The [CU Book Access course materials program](#) is a subscription service that provides degree-seeking undergraduate students access to all of their required course materials before the first day of class for a one-time flat-rate price. The cost for the 2025–26 academic year is \$259 (plus tax) per semester—\$10 lower than in 2024–25. Students may opt out of the program and have until the deadline for dropping a course without financial penalty to do so. For the spring 2026 semester, that deadline is Friday, Jan. 23.

Materials in this program are provided in a digital first format on or before the first day of class via Canvas, CU Boulder's online learning platform. Should a particular class require print materials, students

will receive an email letting them know they have a pick up at the CU Book Store. The CU Book Access website explains more about [how the program works](#) and answers [frequently asked questions](#).

### **Be aware of resources for students who speak English as an additional language**

International and domestic students who speak English as an additional language may access free tutoring and enroll in elective academic English courses LING 3200 and LING 3210, which are for first-year and continuing students. Students practice writing, pronunciation, public speaking and reading, and learn about U.S academic culture and expectations. Visit the [International English Center's English Language and Academic Support Services](#) for details.

### **What to do in cases of instructor or TA illness or absence from campus**

Chairs, directors, and deans have the discretion to work with their instructional staff as appropriate to make sure instruction is covered in case of instructor illness or temporary absence from campus. Similarly, instructors of record have the discretion to do the same with their TAs.

- Faculty members who plan to be absent from campus due to travel must follow the campus [Policy on Faculty Absences from Campus](#) to inform their chair/director/dean and to make sure their classes are covered. This policy applies to any faculty member who has teaching responsibilities, regardless of rank or job title.
- A temporary shift from in-person to remote teaching is allowable, but it must be approved. An instructor should notify their chair or director (or, in schools and colleges that do not have departments, their dean). A TA should notify the instructor of record for the class. ***Higher-level approval is not required for a temporary shift to remote teaching.*** The instructor/TA will need to be in close communication with their students about the class's temporary shift to remote instruction mode and should return to the classroom as soon as possible.
- If an instructor/TA becomes unable to teach due to illness or absence from campus, the department/program or college/school should use their usual procedures for covering the class.

### **What to do if you are concerned about a student's mental health or behavior**

CU's [Red Folder](#) is a resource designed for instructional personnel that provides information on how to recognize and respond to students in distress. Faculty can be uniquely positioned to recognize when a [student is experiencing distress](#) and to refer students to the many resources on campus. You can download a [Red Folder shortcut](#) for your computer desktop or your mobile phone/device.

If you are unsure how to respond to a specific student, you may also consult directly with [Counseling and Psychiatric Services](#) (CAPS). A CAPS counselor will assist in identifying approaches you can take with the student as well as support you in the referral process. Each college and school has an embedded [therapist or Health and Wellness liaison](#) who can also serve as a resource. Reporting options, support resources, and skills for identifying and responding to concerns are included on the [Don't Ignore It](#) website as well.

If you would like to develop additional skills for how to respond, consider taking the "Skills for Mental Health Support" Skillsoft course offered by Health & Wellness Services. The course takes only 15 minutes to complete and provides additional tactics and resources for faculty. Register on the [Health & Wellness Services Trainings website](#).

## What to do in cases of campus emergency

### Be prepared: download the new CU Boulder Safe app

[CU Boulder Safe](#) is a new mobile safety app designed to centralize emergency alerts, safety tools and campus resources.

- CU Boulder Safe also includes quick access to [CUPD](#), alerts social feeds ([@CUBoulderAlerts](#) and [@CUBoulderPolice](#)), and community safety partners like [BoCoAlert](#) and the [Boulder Police Department](#).
- Please also encourage your students to download this app.

### Understand the university's alert levels

The university has three alert levels. At the top level, CU Emergency Alert, emergency notification is sent to the campus when there is a confirmed immediate threat to the safety of those on campus, or near campus in areas of high student populations, or if there is a change to the university's operating status due to weather, etc. Emergency threats include natural disasters, active harmers, severe weather, time-sensitive life safety concerns, campus closures, delayed starts and other on-campus emergencies. Visit the [CU Boulder Alerts website](#) for more information.

### Find and receive safety information and instructions during emergency situations

The CU Boulder Safe app is complementary to the existing CU Boulder Alerts. Follow links from the CU Boulder Safe app alerts or visit the [CU Boulder Alerts website](#) for safety information and instructions during an emergency. Keep your emergency notification information current to [receive real-time alerts](#) about campus closures, extreme weather and other emergencies—sent straight to your mobile phone via the text messaging service.

### Holding vs. canceling class during emergencies

An emergency that affects one area of campus does not necessarily mean that you should cancel your class in another area of campus. Key points:

- Please follow instructions posted via the [CU Boulder Alerts website](#) about canceling or dismissing your class.
- During a non-weather emergency, the [CU Boulder Alerts website](#) will indicate if any portion of the campus is restricted or closed, whether classes held in that area should be canceled, and whether classes in progress in that area should be dismissed or shelter in place. Campus text alerts will also link to the CU Boulder Alerts website.
- If your class is held during an emergency that affects another part of campus or an alert area off campus, please exercise compassion with students who cannot attend your class. Recognize that students may be confused or frightened, or their transportation to campus may be blocked because of emergency closures.

### Do's and don'ts for instruction modes and makeup class sessions in cases of emergency

If you cannot hold your in-person class on campus due to a weather or non-weather emergency, you may not simply change your class to remote instruction mode and require your students to attend.

Students may not receive notice in time, and/or they may not be able to access the class remotely because they do not have access to the necessary technology.

If your class is canceled due to a weather or non-weather emergency, you may schedule an in-person or remote makeup session, but you may not require that students attend that session if it is not during your regular class time. However, you may also record a makeup session for students to access on their own schedule. If your makeup session covers material that will be on an exam, you should record the lecture and make it very clear to your students (put it in writing) that they are responsible for that material.

### **Campus closure procedures for weather and other emergencies**

CU Boulder's [Campus Closure Policy](#) governs what happens when the campus must be closed due to weather or other emergencies, or when a delayed start or early closure is scheduled.

#### *Delayed start*

1. A decision for a delayed start will normally be made by 5:30 a.m. of the emergency day.
2. All campus events, facilities, and venues are open and on schedule after the delay period has ended.
3. All in-person and remote (synchronous) classes with a start time that is during the closure period will be canceled.
4. All online (asynchronous) classes will be held as normal, and no classes or exams will be delayed or canceled due to a delayed start.
5. In the event of a delay during the final examination period, the provost will provide a directive regarding exams according to the [final examination policy](#).

#### *Early closure*

1. All campus events, facilities, and venues are open until the early closure time.
2. All in-person and remote (synchronous) classes with a start time after the early closure time will be canceled.
3. All online (asynchronous) classes will be held as normal, and no classes or exams will be delayed or canceled due to an early closure.
4. In the event of an early closure during the final examination period, the provost will provide a directive regarding exams according to the [final examination policy](#).

#### *Classes canceled and administrative closure for the entire day*

1. A decision for a class cancellation will normally be made by 5:30 a.m. of the emergency day.
2. All in-person and remote (synchronous) classes will be canceled.
3. All online (asynchronous) classes will be held as normal, and no classes or exams for online (asynchronous) classes will be delayed or canceled due to a decision for class cancellation.
4. In the event of a closure during the final examination period, the provost will provide a directive regarding exams according to the [final examination policy](#).
5. Communications will contain information on how the campus may be impacted. Contact your supervisor or event venue if there are specific concerns. Campus events, facilities, and venues may be closed or canceled; employees, students, and others should contact them directly for questions regarding operating status.

#### *FAQ: Why are remote (synchronous) classes canceled on an emergency/weather day?*

Many students and faculty depend on campus facilities and internet access to teach or take remote classes. Holding a remote class when some students cannot participate is unfair to those students, and faculty or students should not feel that they must travel to campus to teach or take a class when it is not safe to do so.

#### **Active harmer response training and security assessment available**

Review the CU Boulder Police Department's [Run. Hide. Fight active harmer response website](#) and watch the [training video for safety instructions \(YouTube video\)](#), resources, and basic statistical data. Although the recording contains descriptions and reenactments of disturbing situations, the presentation is sensitive to language and visuals that may be triggering.

As a follow-up to this video training, departments may request an in-person site security assessment from [Emergency Management](#) personnel, who can assist in the creation or update of an all-hazards emergency action plan for shared work spaces, including evacuation plans, shelter in place plans and plans to maintain the continuity of operations. The Emergency Management team can also provide a tabletop exercise to test your plan and ensure it's functional and understandable. To request a site assessment after viewing the training video, [email the Emergency Management team](#).

#### **Free speech, academic freedom, and political activity**

As a public university, CU Boulder works to educate our students and campus community about the privileges and responsibilities of free speech, academic freedom, and civic engagement.

Instructional personnel may find these resources especially useful:

- [Guidelines for University of Colorado employees](#) regarding political campaign-related activity and expression (prepared in advance of the 2024 election)
- [Tips and resources from the Center for Teaching & Learning](#) on conducting civil discourse in the classroom (prepared in advance of the 2024 election)
- The [CU Boulder Campus Use of University Facilities \(CUUF\) policy](#) and [CUUF procedures](#), which govern the conduct of political events, demonstrations, canvassing, and the like on campus
- CU Boulder's websites on [free expression](#) and [academic freedom](#), including the [definition of academic freedom](#), [academic freedom FAQs](#), and the [CU Boulder guide on scholarship and safety](#)
- CU Boulder's [academic unit guidance for issuing statements on university websites](#)

#### **Federal government impacts: updates, resources, and questions**

The [CU Boulder Today federal government impacts webpage](#) serves as a hub for the CU Boulder campus, including CU system updates, resources for the research community, and student support information. Use [Buff Info](#) to ask your questions, seek guidance, and provide information on all topics related to the federal government transition. Feel free to bookmark these websites, too, for quick reference:

- [CU System Office of Government Relations](#)
- [CU System Federal Relations Updates](#)
- [Research and Innovation Office \(RIO\)—Research and Federal Funding News](#)

## Other teaching and advising reminders

### Changing the instruction mode, meeting time, or location of a class

The university is committed to teaching each course and section in the manner listed when student registration began. Changes in course instruction mode for the entire semester (such as from in-person to remote for the entire semester) and changes in meeting time for the semester must always be approved at the department/program level and by the dean. Changes in class location for the semester only need to be approved at the department/program level. ***Instructors may not independently change the semester's instruction mode, meeting time, or location of a course or section they are teaching, and requests for changes based only on the instructor's preference will not be approved.***

For information on changing an in-person class to remote instruction on a short-term basis, see [What to do in cases of instructor or TA illness or absence from campus](#) and [Do's and don'ts for instruction modes in cases of emergency](#).

### Requests for remote instruction: students with disabilities and others

Students cannot request that an in-person course be taught to them remotely for reasons other than a documented disability that would require such an accommodation. Remote location, commuting time, scheduling issues, and personal preference are not valid reasons for requesting an accommodation. Students who require an accommodation based on a documented disability must receive approval from the [Office of Disability Services](#). If approval is granted, Disability Services will contact the course instructor to determine if the accommodation will fundamentally alter their course and whether necessary technology support is in place.

### In person or remote? Other teaching situations

- *Instructor office hours.* Faculty and graduate students who are instructors of record may hold office hours in person or remotely, at their discretion. Office hour locations/modes for TAs and others who are working under the supervision of an instructor of record should be planned in concert with the instructor of record, so that everyone engaged in teaching the class is aware of office hour plans. Please make the mode/location of office hours clear in the class syllabus.
- *Undergraduate advising.* Academic advising for undergraduate students is offered both in person and remotely. The availability of in-person support may vary by college.
- *Graduate advising.* Students should communicate directly with their faculty advisor and graduate program to determine whether advising is available remotely or in person. [Staff in the Graduate School](#) can provide assistance, support, and resources in a hybrid manner.
- *Exams and defenses for graduate or honors students.* Qualifying/preliminary/comprehensive examinations and final exam/thesis defenses for graduate or honors students are typically held in person, but remote or hybrid examinations/defenses are also allowed. Each examination should be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the circumstances affecting both the student and each committee member.

## **International travel by/with students**

All international travel by/with students that is CU Boulder-sponsored, affiliated, funded, or related to a CU Boulder activity/program is subject to the [CU Boulder Policy on Student International Travel and Programs](#). Please contact [Education Abroad](#) if you are taking/sending students abroad.

## **Continuing Education Auditors program**

The former senior and community auditors programs have merged into the [Continuing Education Auditors program](#). The following course instruction modes are available to auditors:

- Boulder Main Campus: All instruction modes are available (in-person, remote [synchronous], online [asynchronous], and hybrid)
- Continuing Education Campus: CE Online Credit term-based classes and CE Evening Credit classes (in-person, hybrid remote/online, hybrid in-person/online-remote)

Auditing always requires instructor permission. Certain courses and types of courses are not available for auditing; see the [Restrictions page for the Auditors program](#) for more details.

## **Buff OneCard required for academic building access on designated dates**

Students, faculty and staff are required to carry their Buff OneCard at all times when on campus.

On designated weekdays, Buff OneCards are required to access academic buildings. These include weekday home football games, the midsemester reading day, and the final exam period, as well as other weekdays featuring impactful events. This practice ensures that academic buildings remain accessible to CU Boulder students, staff, and faculty on weekdays when public access to academic buildings might substantially interfere with the campus core activities of teaching, research, and creative work. Refer to the [Access Services website](#) to stay informed on when Buff OneCards will be required to access academic buildings.

In spring 2026, you will need your Buff OneCard to access academic buildings on these weekdays:

- Thursday, Feb. 26 (midsemester reading day)
- Monday–Friday, Apr. 27–May 1 (final exam period)
- Days may be added in case of other impactful events

Public buildings such as the UMC and the University Libraries will remain open on these dates, though select Libraries locations may close. Check the [University Libraries website](#) for updates.

Please also be aware that campus buildings are accessible only to those with pre-programmed 24/7 Buff OneCard access:

- if campus is closed due to weather or other emergencies;
- on weekends, including end of term reading days; and
- on university holidays and administrative leave days (Jan. 19 and Mar. 20).

## **Teaching resources updates from the Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL)**

The [Center for Teaching & Learning website](#) is continually updated with resources addressing a range of topics in teaching and learning, such as [course design and development](#), [assessment](#), [inclusivity](#), and

[technology & AI](#). Our [Course-in-a-box](#) provides educators new to CU with guidance on designing, developing, and delivering effective courses from start to finish.

In addition to [CTL workshops, conferences, and other events](#) offered throughout the year, we offer [individual and group teaching consultations](#), [classroom observations](#), and a range of [teaching and learning-related programs and communities of practice](#). Contact us at [CTL@colorado.edu](mailto:CTL@colorado.edu), and [subscribe here to receive the CTL's monthly newsletter](#), with teaching strategies and resources.

## Teaching resources updates from the Office of Information Technology (OIT)

### New, improved Wi-Fi is here!

CU Secure and CU Guest have now replaced UCB Wireless and UCB Guest across campus in all buildings. To use the new CU Secure network that replaced UCB Wireless, you must [register your devices](#) in advance so they can connect.

Read Vice Chancellor for Information Technology Marin Stanek's response to community concerns about privacy on the new Wi-Fi in this news article, ["New CU Secure Wi-Fi: What you need to know."](#)

When students return to campus after the break, if they didn't install the CU Secure certificate, they will need to first connect to CU Guest while on campus, then [register for CU Secure](#). Please consider showing one of these [post-cutover slides](#) before each of your classes to help students get connected.

### Check out the campus Canvas template and get help with Canvas

Consider using the [Canvas Template](#), which will give you a head start on building your courses. With resources like a start-of-semester survey, campus resources page, and a fillable student-centered syllabus, the course template aims to reduce the time spent building out your courses, while promoting promising practices in teaching and learning, digital accessibility, and design. OIT offers [training sessions on integrating the template](#) into your Canvas courses and also offers regular office hours for Canvas questions!

### Improved Automatic Course Creation for Canvas

In Fall 2024, OIT launched Automatic Course Creation (ACC) for Canvas and has since been fine-tuning the process to save instructors more time. For fall 2025, ACC automatically created 6,325 unique Canvas courses and cross-listed 2,493 sections, more than tripling the number of sections cross-listed automatically. Most Canvas sections are automatically cross-listed when class sections are listed as either associated or combined in the campus student information system ([Campus Solutions](#)). Additional Canvas Course changes related to cross-listing sections are still available [upon request](#).

### New Features in Canvas

As part of the December 2025 Canvas release, educators can now:

- [Schedule the visibility of grades and feedback for individual assignments](#). Grades and comments can be released together or separately.
- [Create Surveys in New Quizzes](#). Graded and ungraded surveys are available with the option to keep submissions anonymous.

## New Cidilabs Sidebar

Educators using Cidilabs to design and organize their Canvas courses must transition to the [New DesignPlus Sidebar](#) for all spring 2026 courses to ensure content remains available for students.

## Turnitin Clarity Pilot

OIT is offering a limited pilot of [Turnitin Clarity](#), an AI transparency tool and composition space for student assignments. Clarity is designed to support writing instruction by providing visibility into the writing process and is a potential alternative to AI detection tools. Capacity is limited, but if you are interested in piloting Clarity in your course, contact [oithelp@colorado.edu](mailto:oithelp@colorado.edu) by January 16.

## AI Resources at CU Boulder

Visit the [Artificial Intelligence at CU Boulder](#) page on the OIT website to access guidance on the responsible use of AI, explore a list of approved enterprise-level AI tools, and learn how you can get involved in AI initiatives across campus.

## Resources for lecture recordings and hybrid synchronous classes

Consider giving students flexibility to review course content by using OIT-supported recording tools such as Classroom Capture and Zoom:

- [Classroom Capture](#) is a fully automated recording service [available in a number of CU classrooms](#). [Once requested](#), Classroom Capture automatically records your class and publishes to online video channels, where faculty can make the recordings available to students. A recent [CU Boulder survey](#) revealed that both instructors and students benefit from lecture recordings.
- As of spring 2026, Classroom Capture has been updated with enhanced Canvas integration making it easier to share videos within Canvas, as well as giving instructors access to edit the videos using My Mediasite. Visit [What's New With Classroom Capture page](#) to learn more.
- [Zoom](#) can also be used to record class sessions or host hybrid synchronous classes. Watch a short video on how to [connect your computer to classroom technology](#) and visit OIT's [Hybrid Capable Classrooms page](#) for more information and a list of hybrid-capable spaces. Reminder: you can [schedule, start, and share your Zoom recordings directly from your Canvas course](#)—keeping everything in one convenient place.

## Enhanced Microsoft 365 Resources for Students

[OIT's Microsoft 365 – Student Resources page](#) provides an overview of Microsoft 365 tools available to CU Boulder students, with enhanced student-focused descriptions and tutorials. Faculty can share these resources to help students effectively communicate, collaborate, and manage coursework using Microsoft 365.

## Academic technology training and consulting resources

[OIT](#) offers a number of [real-time or on-demand technology training sessions](#) to help instructors make the most of campus-supported teaching technologies. Set up an [individual session](#) with [OIT's Academic Technology Consultants](#) to dive into a specific problem or question with academic technology tools such as Canvas, Zoom, CUClickers, and much more.

Use the [Classroom Technology Reporting Form](#) to request a training session to get familiar with the technology in the classroom. You may also use this form to report an urgent problem when teaching in the space. If you need ongoing assistance with your hybrid or synchronous courses this semester, [request a Technology Copilot](#) to assist with audio/visual setup as well as Zoom management during your classes.

OIT specialists are available to give training on a number of Microsoft 365 topics or develop a custom training tailored to your needs. Explore [training resources available for Microsoft OneDrive, Teams, and other Microsoft 365 apps](#).

### **File backups, storage and data security for instructors**

Given that Google Drive has a 5 gigabyte storage limit, it is strongly suggested that you back up your personal work files to [Microsoft OneDrive](#) where you are given 5 terabytes of storage. The [File Storage Solutions page](#) can help you select which storage location is appropriate for the data in your care such as shared departmental or research data. OIT recommends saving course materials and other files that need to be accessed by others to a shared repository such as a [Microsoft Sharepoint site](#) or [Microsoft Teams](#). Please check with your department to determine if it has a preferred shared resource to store these types of files. Identifying a common place to store departmental shared files is especially important if you are a part-time or short-term instructor. It is also important to understand the sensitivity of the data you work with so you can ensure adequate protections are in place. The [Data Classification guide](#) helps inform relevant handling requirements.

### **OIT help and support**

For questions about OIT services and supported technology tools, please contact the [IT Service Center](#) at [OIThelp@colorado.edu](mailto:OIThelp@colorado.edu) or 303-735-4357 or [submit a Help Request](#) form.

## **Teaching resources updates from the University Libraries**

### **Opening hours**

[Library hours](#) for all five locations including Norlin are published on the website and updated regularly. Libraries will be closed on Jan. 10–11 and Jan. 17–19. For Spring Break, Mar. 14–22, non-Norlin locations will be closed; Norlin will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Mar. 16–19 and closed Mar. 20–22. Special hours for end of term reading days, finals, and commencement are published on the website.

### **Library instruction**

Faculty librarians are available to provide [library instruction](#) to all faculty and students.

### **Research consultations**

Students can [schedule a research consultation with a librarian](#) to help them refine and focus research topics, develop successful search strategies and identify appropriate sources for academic research projects and assignments. Faculty can also make use of this resource for their research.

## Buff One Read

This year's [Buff One Read](#) title is *Callings: The Purpose and Passion of Work*, by Dave Isay. The Buffs One Read Program is a high-impact educational practice that establishes a unifying title for the year that serves as a basis for classroom discussion, programming, social and civic development, and connection to campus. This year's selection is the compilation of 53 interviews gathered from the [StoryCorps](#) archive to explore what it means to find passion and purpose in work. Told through moving conversations between friends, coworkers, and family members, the stories promise to inspire. To help facilitate campus educators' integration of the text into their courses or programming, we've created a number of materials available for use:

- [Canvas course](#)
- [Guide](#)
- [Book club materials](#)
- [Brief video about the content](#)

All members of the community are invited to join the canvas community course, and educators are welcome to reuse, repurpose, or adapt the materials in their classes. The course includes groupings of stories by occupation and theme to help you pick stories applicable to your class or intended use.

All first year and transfer students can [get a complimentary copy](#) of the book at the CU Bookstore and Libraries' events, and other members of the CU Boulder community can access the [book in print, ebook, and audio](#) through the University Libraries.

Check the [Buff One Read web page](#) for upcoming events!

## Course reserves

By using [course reserves](#), you can help provide your students with access to materials that are hard to find or beyond their financial means.

## Technology lending to students

- If you discover a student who does not have reliable access to the internet off campus, you can assist them in [requesting a wifi hotspot](#).
- University Libraries maintains a [Multimedia Equipment Lending Library \(MELL\)](#), and students, staff and faculty may borrow multimedia equipment, including cameras, a variety of audio equipment, tripods, and smartphone accessories. Students can also check out [iClickers as well as Colorado State Park Passes](#). If you would like the libraries to buy equipment to support your class, please send details to [libraries@colorado.edu](mailto:libraries@colorado.edu).

## Video creation station (Norlin Library)

A [video creation station](#) is available in Norlin for faculty and staff to create instructional content including video recorded lectures, MOOC content, and podcasts.

## **Teaching resources updates from the CU Art Museum**

The CU Art Museum offers [support for teaching](#) using original works of art and digital resources and can design customized teaching resources.

## **Teaching resources updates from the CU Museum of Natural History**

The CU Museum of Natural History is closed until early in the spring semester. During this time, collection visits will be available by appointment and other special access requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please email [CUmuseum@colorado.edu](mailto:CUmuseum@colorado.edu) for information. Contact the [visitor services coordinator](#) to rent space for a future event.

## **Teaching resources updates from Fiske Planetarium**

[Fiske Planetarium](#) is a teaching resource for the full campus community, with an 8K-x-8K digital theater system housed within a 65-foot dome that seats 206 students. Graduate students may learn about science communication through preparation and delivery of public talks at Fiske. Contact [Director John Keller](#) for more information.

## **Curriculum planning and teaching assignments for spring 2026 and beyond**

### **Faculty, GPTI, and TA work modes: standards of practice related to teaching**

The campus has established [standards for faculty in-person and remote work](#) that are reflected in this edition of academic instruction guidance. The baseline assumption is that any faculty member who is teaching, along with everyone holding a GPTI or TA appointment, is available to teach in person, unless their position is explicitly devoted to remote teaching.

A faculty member who is working fully remotely (including research and creative work, teaching, and service) must have written approval from their chair/director and their dean. Approvals are to be archived in the dean's office and a copy maintained in the department/program (if applicable). A copy of the approval will also be sent to the Office of Faculty Affairs to be included in the faculty member's personnel file.

Faculty, staff, researchers, graduate student teachers, and student employees who need work-related accommodations or leave due to disability or health issues should consult the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance webpage](#) (for work-related accommodations) or the [Human Resources webpage](#) (for leave) and follow up with OIEC or Human Resources as needed.

### **Proportions of in-person vs. remote/online classes**

The campus does not set desired ratios of in-person vs. remote/online classes. It is the responsibility of each school and college dean, working with department/program chairs and directors, to determine the instruction mode patterns for each semester. The dean of each college or school is responsible for the curriculum, and thus has final approval authority for the proportion of in-person vs. remote/online classes within each department/program and for the college/school as a whole.

## Instruction modes and class assignments

Please use the following principles in planning instruction modes and class assignments:

- Departments and programs should weigh demand for remote and online classes and may propose to offer a selection of sections remotely or online. The campus will not set any target percentages of in-person courses for each department, program, college or school, and it is not required that a program offer remote or online classes.
- Departments and deans will define appropriate course instruction modes in concert with faculty and other instructional personnel. Instructor preference should not determine a class's instruction mode. Each class's instruction mode should be determined according to college/school and department/program priorities, based on pedagogical reasons and on student needs. For example, priorities for remote/online instruction might include one or a few sections of a course that has multiple sections, where there is student demand, where the course is crucial for students to make progress toward their degrees, and where the course can be taught effectively remotely or online.
- Keep in mind that international students must enroll in a minimum number of in-person credit hours to maintain their visa status. Offering only a limited selection of in-person classes may be detrimental to international students, resulting in delays or complications for these students.
  - From an immigration compliance perspective, it is imperative for international students that those courses designated as in-person, do in fact meet regularly in person. Professors may need to assist international students in documenting their in-class attendance.
  - International students enrolled in an in-person section cannot attend a remote/online section of the class instead.
  - Changing an in-person class to remote/online after students register can be detrimental to international students who have enrolled with the assumption that the class will be in person.
- All instructional personnel should be treated equitably in assigning them to classes/sections in various instruction modes. Please work with your graduate student teachers (TAs, GPTIs) the same way you do with your tenure-track faculty, teaching faculty, and lecturers. No one should be presumed to have "dibs" on remote teaching due to seniority, personal circumstances, or any other factor not related to pedagogical reasons or student needs.
- It is reasonable to assess evidence of an instructor's effectiveness at remote/online teaching (or willingness to participate in training in effective remote/online pedagogy) before assigning classroom assignment and utilization procedures someone remote/online teaching. If you're a department or program chair/director and need help with this task, please consult your dean and/or work with [CTL](#) for resources to assess effectiveness with teaching remotely/online.
- Some students may want to sign up for solely remote or online courses. However, students (except for those in online programs) cannot expect that every course they might want to take will be offered in an online or remote mode, and departments and programs are not obliged to make that possible.

## Classroom assignments, space utilization, and class scheduling

In accordance with the [Instructional Space Utilization Policy](#), the Office of the Registrar and academic units follow [Schedule Distribution Procedures](#) designed to use classroom space efficiently and distribute the class schedule across "non-prime" teaching hours as well as "prime" hours, maximizing students'

opportunities to enroll in the classes they need to make progress toward their degree. The distribution of the class schedule across all teaching hours applies to remote classes as well as in-person classes.

## **Past guidance editions, questions, and requests**

Past and current editions of Academic Instruction Guidance and their supporting materials are available on the [Academic Affairs website](#). Please send all requests for clarification and requests for future guidance editions to [Katherine Eggert](#), vice chancellor for academic planning and assessment. Your communications are welcome and help shape decisions by academic leadership about instructional policies and procedures and support for teaching and learning.

## **Other issues? Contact Buff Info**

[Buff Info](#) is a team of dedicated professionals who are available to answer questions on a wide variety of topics related to CU Boulder and to help faculty, staff, students, and parents connect with the appropriate campus office for additional information or assistance as needed. Buff Info liaisons may be reached at 303-492-INFO (4636), via email at [BuffInfo@colorado.edu](mailto:BuffInfo@colorado.edu), or via [live chat](#) 9 AM to 6 PM, Monday through Friday. The university will extend these hours when needed.