Immigration Essentials Session for New International Students

The International Student and Scholar Services office (ISSS) would like to welcome you to the University of Colorado Boulder! ISSS is here to assist you in understanding your immigration status and benefits in the U.S. During your time at CU Boulder, if you have questions or concerns regarding your nonimmigrant visa status in the U.S., or would like resources about connecting on campus, please reach out to ISSS for assistance!

Contact Information for ISSS

Email: isss@colorado.edu  
Location: 2249 Willard Loop Drive  
Building: Center for Community 3rd Floor, Suite 355  
Hours: Check the ISSS website for hours and closures  
Telephone: (303) 492-8057  
Website: www.colorado.edu/issss/  
Mailing Address: Office of International Education, University of Colorado Boulder, ISSS, 123 UCB, Boulder, CO 80309

You do not need an appointment to see an ISSS advisor! Just come to ISSS during our open walk-in advising hours!  The average wait time is 5-20 minutes

Reporting your arrival to International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

- Report your arrival to the U.S. using the online DocuSign Immigration Reporting Form  
  - This is required so that ISSS can register your F-1 or J-1 record in SEVIS (the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System)  
  - You will need to:  
    - Upload your I-94 arrival record (and your dependents’ I-94)  
      - Click on “Get Most Recent I-94”  
    - Enter your local Colorado address and contact information  
    - Sign the Responsibilities Contract  
      - You will automatically be emailed a copy of the Student Responsibilities contract when you submit the Immigration Reporting Form. It is important that you read the full Student Responsibilities Contract to ensure you understand the information presented. Keep a copy of the contract for your records  
  - J-1 visa holders: In addition to the above checklist, you also need to provide proof of comprehensive insurance that meets U.S. government requirements

Failure to report your arrival will negatively affect your visa status in the U.S.  Please report your arrival as soon as possible to avoid problems!
Document Review
The following documents are your responsibility to maintain and update whenever applicable. Please note the expiration date of each document. If you have any questions about these documents, you can ask an ISSS advisor for assistance.

- Passport: Must not expire while inside the U.S. and must be valid at least 6 months into the future each time you enter the U.S.
- Visa: Only needed to enter the U.S. The visa can expire while you are inside the U.S. Visa expiration does not negatively impact status.
- I-20 / DS-2019: Make sure all the information (major, minor, financial information, etc.) on your I-20 is accurate at all times.
- Duration of status (D/S): Legal presence in the U.S.
- I-94: Port of Entry arrival and departure record. Unique to your immigration record.

Maintaining Legal Status
- Keep an accurate local and international address, and phone number in MyCUInfo
  - Check MyCUInfo to ensure both your local (U.S. address) and F1/J1 international (home country) addresses are accurate and up to date
    - Directions to Update Address in myCUinfo
  - To maintain your immigration status, you must report changes to your local address to ISSS within 10 days of a move
  - You must keep an accurate phone number in MyCUInfo at all times

- Maintain a full time course of study at CU Boulder
  You must have full-time course enrollment during the fall and spring semesters
  - Undergraduate students need 12 credit hours per semester
  - Graduate students need 5 credit hours per semester
  - Graduate students: taking a combination of graduate and undergraduate courses, need 8 credit hours per semester
  - Graduate students: registration may change as you advance through your program. See your department advisor and/or ISSS with questions.
  - Online course: only 3 credits of distance learning credits (such as online course credits) will count towards the full-time enrollment requirement for both undergraduate and graduate students

  - On January 31, 2019 a hold will be placed on your academic record, preventing you from dropping any courses without prior approval from ISSS. You will need to email isss@colorado.edu if you want to drop a course after this date

  - Failure to maintain full-time enrollment after January 31, 2019 will result in the termination of your F-1 or J-1 SEVIS record

Reduced Course Load Option: F-1 immigration regulations allow for a Reduced Course Load (RCL) option for a few, specific medical and academic reasons. If you think you may qualify for an exception to the full-time enrollment requirement, you must see an International Student Advisor and obtain permission from ISSS first before you drop any classes!
Ensure your form I-20 or DS-2019 are accurate
- Any changes to your finances, major or minor field of study, or program duration must be updated and reflected on your I-20 or DS-2019
- If something has changed, please email isss@colorado.edu to inform ISSS of the change. Documentation may be required
- If you will not complete your degree or program by the end date on your I-20 or DS-2019, then you must request an extension at least one month prior to the end date

Grace Period at the end of your program
- After successfully completing your academic program at CU Boulder, your immigration status allows for a grace period - a specific amount of time to remain legally in the U.S. to finalize your next steps
- The following grace periods apply:
  - J-1 visa holders: 30 days after the DS-2019 degree program completion
  - F-1 visa holders: 60 days after the I-20 degree program completion

Note: If you do not complete your program, no grace period exists, and you will need to depart the U.S. immediately. Consult with ISSS to determine your individual grace period. Failure to leave the U.S. within your legal grace period can negatively affect future employment, visa eligibility, academic enrollment, or other benefits in the U.S.

Maintain your status
Visa regulations in the U.S. can be complicated! If you have any questions about your status, consult an ISSS advisor before taking action!

DO NOT work on-campus for more than 20 hours per week
- While school is in session during the fall and spring semester, you are permitted to work on-campus up to 20 hours per week
  - If you work more than 20 hours in any week, your F-1 or J-1 status will be terminated for violating your immigration status, and you would need to depart the U.S. immediately
  - You can work more than 20 hours a week during official school breaks, such as winter and summer break

Note: On-campus employment means:
- You will be paid by CU-Boulder
  OR
- You are working for a non-CU company that is located on the CU Boulder campus and your duties directly serve CU Boulder students (such as working at Subway or the UMC)
  - The following are examples that are NOT on-campus work: working online for a company, driving for Uber or Lyft, private tutoring
- **DO NOT work off-campus without prior authorization**
  - Your primary purpose for being in the U.S. is to study. U.S. regulations are strict when it comes to employment benefits for nonimmigrant visa holders.
  - If you work off-campus without PRIOR authorization compliant with your visa status, your status will be terminated and you will have to depart the U.S. immediately.
  - Do not work off-campus unless you received approval for employment from ISSS.

- **DO NOT leave the U.S. without letting ISSS know**
  - Do not take a leave of absence or withdraw from classes without PRIOR authorization from ISSS.
  - ISSS realizes that life happens. You may need to take a semester or more away from your studies to take care of yourself or a family member. Before departing the U.S., it is your responsibility to notify the university and ISSS about your departure. If you need to leave the U.S. unexpectedly for any reason, or you decide not to return to CU Boulder, please let ISSS know and we will provide you with the necessary departure information and update your SEVIS information.

**Immigration Requirements, Resources, and Reminders**

- **Travel Signature**
  - If you leave the U.S. for a short break, you need to have a valid travel signature on your immigration document (I-20 or DS-2019) to re-enter.
    - Travel signatures are on page 2 of your I-20, or page 1 on your DS-2019.
    - For full-time enrolled students, the signature line is valid for ONE YEAR from the date of signature.
    - Do not wait until last minute! Plan ahead for your travel!

- **Tax Obligation**
  - **All students and scholars** who are a “nonresident” for tax purposes are required to file the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) form 8843. This Tax Obligation is required for every international individual every year, regardless if you work or earn money in the U.S., or not.
  - ISSS cannot provide tax advice or a tax software program, however you can consult a commercial tax preparer, or use one of the few tax software programs available.

- **Social Security Number (SSN)**
  - A SSN is a unique nine-digit number assigned to you through the Social Security Administration. It is connected to your financial information, and should be kept secure and safe! Do not share your Social Security Number with ANYONE other than your employer (for payment) and your bank. Do not share the card information on social media, or with your friends! Identity theft is real, but can be avoided.
**Key information about your SSN:**
- You **DO NOT** need a SSN to apply for a job
- You **DO NOT** need a SSN to start working a job in the U.S.
- You **DO** need a job offer letter to apply for a SSN
- You **DO** need a SSN to be paid by an employer inside the U.S.
- It is **free** to apply for a SSN
- It typically takes 2-3 weeks for Social Security Administration to issue a SSN card

**F-1 and J-1 visa holders:**

*You are eligible to apply for a SSN once you have an employment offer:*
- ISSS cannot activate your immigration record until you complete the required Immigration Reporting Form. If you do not have an active SEVIS record, the SSN application will be denied
- You must be enrolled full-time at CU Boulder
- You must show proof of employment through an official offer letter
- Submit the on-campus [Employment SSN Letter Request Form](#) and offer letter to ISSS in order to obtain an additional support letter
- Meet all other SSN eligibility requirements and apply at the [Social Security Administration building](#)

**Enroll in Health Insurance**

It is a requirement of University of Colorado Boulder that every student have health insurance. Students must complete the [health insurance requirement](#) every semester

**What you need to do:**
- Read information on different [insurance plans and options](#)
- Decide whether to purchase the University-sponsored health insurance policy – or –
- Apply to waive university insurance, and purchase another comparable policy

**J-1 visa holders:**

You must have [comprehensive insurance](#) that meets the minimum requirements

**The deadline to submit your immunization records, and to select or waive health insurance for Spring 2019 is February 19, 2019**

For fall and spring semester, you will be billed for the CU insurance

*If you have medical insurance from your home country, there is an option to waive coverage*

- To waive university insurance, you will need your current policy details.
  - Log in to [MyCUInfo](#)
  - Go to the Billing Information tab
  - Look under [Other Billing Services](#)
  - Find the "Select or Waive Health Plans" button to begin the selection process.
  - Choose the health plan that works best for your needs and budget.
  - If you have any questions, please call the Student Health Plans Office at 303-492-5107
FERPA Release Waivers
In the United States, your educational records are considered private information. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 or FERPA, limits public access to your information

All Students:
If you want ISSS to speak to a family member about your educational or immigration record, you must complete the following steps:
- Log in to your MyCUinfo portal
- Click “Profile and Settings” Tab
- Click “Manage profile and privacy”
- Click on and sign a “FERPA Release” - this form authorizes University officials to release your information to the individuals you identify

Sponsored Students:
The University and ISSS needs authorization from you to provide information or transcripts to your sponsor. Complete the online authorization (above) online if you want CU Boulder to provide information to your sponsor on your behalf.

Check your E-Bill and Set-up Authorized Users for Electronic Billing:
It is your responsibility to check for the latest e-bill and pay it by the due date. It is also possible to set up a multi-payment plan. You can pay by credit card, but will be charged a fee. You can grant permission so others, such as your parents, are authorized users and can pay tuition bills

Security Passphrase
As required by FERPA, CU Boulder is committed to protecting your educational record by limiting disclosure of your personal (non-directory) information. If you call ISSS and talk to an advisor on the phone, the advisor will ask you to give your security passphrase in order to confirm your identity

To set up the Passphrase:
- Log in to MyCUInfo
- Click “Profile & Settings” tab
- Click “Manage profile and privacy” tab
- Click “Security Passphrase”
- Create a word, or phrase, that you will remember for years to come!
- Click save

Get a Buff OneCard (Student ID card).
- Your Buff OneCard is an essential part of being a student at CU Boulder
- Bring your passport or another form of photo identification and your student ID number to the Buff OneCard office. They are located on the 1st floor of the C4C.

Open a bank account
Since you will likely be in the U.S. for several years, it is a good idea to open an account with a local bank as soon as possible. This will make things easier, like withdrawals, and avoiding ATM fees and international transaction fees.
The following four banks do NOT require a social security number to open an account. These banks may require proof of your current address, such as a copy of your apartment or house lease. Contact the bank directly with any questions:

- Chase
- US Bank
- First Bank
- Wells Fargo

While convenient, the bank located on the first floor of the University Memorial Center, Elevations Credit Union, does require you to have a SSN to open an account. If you already have an SSN, stop by the Elevations branch in the UMC to discuss opening an account! They are located on the 1st floor of the UMC next to the CU Bookstore.

**Access and check your CU e-mail account**

- Your email address is your identikey@colorado.edu and can be accessed through gmail.com
- Check your university e-mail account daily for all official university communications. **You are responsible for information emailed to you at this account so, be sure to read all official emails**
- Do not let your mailbox get full as you may miss critical communications
- Do not redirect your Colorado.edu email too many times
- If you have questions, get help at the Technology Learning Center in person (Monday - Friday: 7:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m., Saturday - Sunday: 12:00 noon – 6:00 p.m.) or email them at help@colorado.edu

**Graduate Students: Attend mandatory academic orientation session**

- Check with your department for specific program orientation details
- If you have conflicts in your schedule for registration, attend the meetings required by your college, school, or department ahead of other orientation activities
- Talk with a staff member in ISSS if you have questions about any schedule conflicts
- Helpful options to enhance your graduate experience:
  - Join the [United Government of Graduate Students](mailto:)
    - Meetings and activities are open to all graduate students!
  - It is highly recommended that you take the [Graduate Teacher Program](mailto:) training if you will be teaching undergraduates! Ask your department about teacher training for new graduate students

**Community Equity Training and Bystander Intervention Trainings**

ALL incoming undergraduate students are required to attend training on [Community Equity and Bystander Education](mailto:).

- The **Bystander Education training** is an in-person class that explores practice skills for intervening effectively when someone around you needs help. Sign up for a training that will not conflict with your individual college orientation
- The class needs to be completed within the first three weeks of school
- The **Community Equity Training** is a required online course that includes information and resources you will need to understand what is expected based on our campus discrimination and harassment policies and procedures
  - Log in through your [D2L course portal](https://) to complete this training
If you have questions or concerns, contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance.

Failure to complete both of these trainings will result in a hold on your account. This will prevent future class registration and possible consequences for your immigration status.

- Register your laptop and bicycle with the CU Police
  - CU Boulder offers a laptop computer registration program that is quick, easy and free.
  - Owners must bring their laptops to the registration site so that the computer can be marked with a tamper-resistant sticker.
  - To register your bicycle fill out the online google forum or bring your bike to one of the CU Bike Stations (located by the UMC and Folsom Field and are open Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.)

- English Screening Test
  - The following Graduate students are required to take the English Screening Test: Music, Economics, Engineering TA’s and RA’s.
  - Other graduate or undergraduate international students may also be required or may want to take the test; check with your department for required test dates.

ISSS is here to assist in answering any questions you have regarding your immigration status, employment benefits, cultural adjustment concerns, or any other issues pertinent to your time on campus. If we do not have the answers you need, we will work with you in finding the most appropriate resource.

We wish you a beneficial and enriching academic, social, and cultural experience here at the University of Colorado Boulder!