



International Student & Scholar Services  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

## Handbook for International Scholars Visiting the University of Colorado Boulder

### Welcome to the University of Colorado Boulder!

You are joining the community at the University of Colorado Boulder with many goals and expectations, and we hope your time spent at CU Boulder will be stimulating, productive, and enjoyable. Boulder, with its spectacular scenery, relatively mild weather, and many opportunities for cultural and recreational activities, will prove to be a wonderful place to visit.

This Handbook has been developed to give you practical information for your stay – from living in Boulder to immigration regulations. Each topic or heading has a corresponding internet site, if applicable, for your convenience. Refer to this Handbook if you have questions about Boulder, University services, issues concerning your legal status in the United States, or other matters that come up during your time here.

The International Student and Scholar Services staff is available to see you on a walk-in basis during regular business hours, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. However, if you have a topic to discuss that needs special attention, you may request an appointment.

International Student and Scholar Services is part of the Office of International Education.

Street address: 2249 Willard Loop Drive, Suite S355, Center for Community (C4C)  
Mailing address: 123 UCB, Boulder, CO 80309-0123 USA

Home Page: <http://www.colorado.edu/iss>  
Email: [iss@colorado.edu](mailto:iss@colorado.edu)  
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Best wishes from the staff of International Student and Scholar Services. We hope your time spent at the University is rewarding!

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## Get a University Identity Card

There are two kinds of identity (ID) cards, and which one you get depends on whether or not you are being paid by CU.

### **Buff OneCard Identification Card**

If you are being paid by CU Boulder, you will be issued an ID card called the Buff OneCard. It verifies your appointment with CU Boulder, and you should carry it with you at all times. You will need to have your Social Security number before you can get your Buff OneCard. It will take about three weeks after you apply for your Social Security number to get the card, but you can get a Visitor/Guest card to use until then.

Also, employees who qualify for a Buff OneCard and are also employed over 20 percent time may obtain an Eco Pass free of charge. An Eco Pass serves as your bus pass, and you can ride any RTD bus free of charge (with the exception of the SkyRide bus to the airport, which requires a small fee)

Your Buff OneCard and Eco Pass must be surrendered at the time of termination of employment. The first Buff OneCard is free, but if you lose it, you will have to pay a replacement fee.

### **A Visitor/Guest Card**

If you are not permanent faculty or staff, you can get a Visitor/Guest Card. The card does not serve as a bus pass, but Visitor/Guest Cards can be set up to access electronic locks, meal plans, lab printing, and more, depending on what your department authorizes for you.

In order to get the Visitor/Guest Card, fill out a Department and Guest Card Request Form (someone in your department will help you do that). Take the completed form and a government-issued photo ID to the Campus Card Office in the Center for Community, room N180. The \$5 fee is payable upon ordering the card.

The Campus Card Office is located in the Center for Community (C4C), N180

Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday

Telephone: 303-492-0355

<http://services.jsatech.com/index.php?cid=59>

## These steps are for visitors who will be paid by CU:

### **Go to the Employment Eligibility Verification (I-9) Office**

You will need to complete the I-9 form, which documents to the U.S. government that each new employee (both citizen and non-citizen) is authorized to work in the United States. Form I-9 has to be completed within three days of the date you start your employment.

Employment Eligibility Verification Office

3100 Marine Street, on the third floor

From campus, you can take a 20-minute walk on the bike path down to Marine Street or take the Stampede shuttle bus. (The Stampede shuttle bus runs Monday through Friday, every ten minutes, and loops through campus to connect main campus to the east campus and the Research Park. You can use your validated EcoPass to ride, or pay the \$2.60 fare. You must have the exact amount of cash; the bus driver does not give change.)

Take the following documents with you to your appointment:

- Unexpired passport with an unexpired Form I-94 (establishes both identity and employment eligibility)
- Permanent Resident Card or Alien Registration Receipt Card (Form I-551)
- DS-2019 if you are a J scholar OR

- H approval notice of you are an H scholar

### See an International Tax Specialist

You are required to make an appointment to see an international tax specialist in the Payroll and Benefits (PBS) office.

What does an international tax specialist do? This office provides "guidance to international employees and to campus departments concerning taxation responsibilities and the legality of salary/independent personal services/honoraria payments under International Revenue Code, Section 1441." Any questions about taxation issues related to payments to international visitors should be directed to the International Tax Specialist. The office of the International Taxation Specialist is located in the Payroll and Benefits Office  
3100 Marine Street, on the third floor.

You must make an appointment to see a tax specialist. You can do so by accessing the online scheduling software through the Payroll and Benefits website: <https://www.cu.edu/pbs/> . Please bring your passport and immigration documents with you.

From campus, you can take a 20-minute walk on the bike path down to Marine Street or take the Stampede shuttle bus. (The Stampede shuttle bus runs Monday through Friday, every ten minutes, and loops through campus to connect main campus to the east campus and the Research Park. You can use your validated EcoPass to ride, or pay the \$2.25 fare. You must have the exact amount of cash.)

Take the following documents with you to your appointment:

- unexpired passport with an unexpired Form I-94 (establishes both identity and employment eligibility)
- Permanent Resident Card or Alien Registration Receipt Card (Form I-551)
- DS2019 if you are a J scholar OR
- H approval notice of you are an H scholar

## Buy Health Insurance

J-1 visa holders, whether or not they are on CU payroll, must have specific insurance coverage as defined in the J visa regulations. **See Section 6 Health Care and Health Insurance and Section 7 Immigration Regulations for J Visa Holders** for information about the health insurance requirements. This coverage must be in effect from the J-1 program start date through the J-1 program end date for the J-1 scholar and any accompanying J-2 dependents.

If you are on University payroll, you should be eligible for University insurance, depending on your appointment level. If you are a J-1 visa holder and you apply for group health insurance through the University, you should ask the Benefits counselor for help selecting a policy that meets the J-1 requirements. Please note that if you want to sign up for CU's health insurance, you must sign up for this benefit within 30 days of your employment start date. If you have questions about coverage, check with Payroll and Benefit Services at 303-860-4200 or: <https://www.cu.edu/pbs/> .

It may be helpful to attend a new employee meeting for an explanation of these benefits. Payroll and Benefits Services is located in Denver. However, representatives from Payroll and Benefit Services do come to Boulder once a week. To schedule an appointment, contact PBS at (303) 860-4200 or via e-mail at [pbs@cu.edu](mailto:pbs@cu.edu) .

## Get a Social Security Number (SSN)

*(if you do not already have one)*

You cannot be paid by the University for the work you do at CU Boulder until you have a Social Security Number (SSN). You will apply for a Social Security number through the Social Security Administration's Louisville office, but you should wait at least 48 hours after you have checked in with ISSS. The Social Security Administration will

verify the information in your application by comparing it with your immigration documents and with the information in the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) database. Generally, you will receive your Social Security Number in about three weeks after you apply.

The Social Security Administration office is located in Louisville, CO, so it is too far to walk.

**Address:** 480 West Dahlia Street, Louisville, Colorado 80027

**Step 1:** Walk from the University of Colorado Boulder to Broadway & 20th Street

**Step 2:** Take the RTD Bus named FF2 – Union Station Express. It will depart from the west side of Broadway & 20th street

**Step 3:** Arrive at U.S. 36 & McCaslin Boulevard Station, Gate A

- The previous stop is U.S. 36 & Table Mesa Station Gate A.
- If you reach Park Avenue West & Wewatta Street, you have gone too far.

**Step 4:** Walk from U.S. 36 & McCaslin Boulevard Station Gate A to the Louisville Social Security Administration Office. This is about a 1.1 mile walk.

Take the following documents with you:

- your valid passport
- I-94
- Social Security letter from ISSS
- DS2019 if you are a J scholar OR
- H approval notice if you are an H scholar
- one additional form of photo ID, such as your Visitor/Guest Card.

If you do not get your Social Security number within 30 days from the date you applied, you can get a temporary number, which requires an appointment with the International Tax Specialist.

## Section 2

## About Us

### The University of Colorado

was founded in 1876, and its doors opened in 1887. The building fondly called “Old Main” housed 44 students, two faculty members (one of whom served as the president), and all of the classrooms and laboratories. The president and his family lived in the basement and the students lived on the second and third floors. We suggest you visit the Heritage Center on the top floor of Old Main, a wonderful history museum where you will find pictures and displays of the early days of Boulder and the University. In the old photographs, you’ll see that Old Main used to sit by itself on the lonely prairie, with literally no trees or buildings around it.

Today, CU Boulder’s enrollment is approximately 30,000. Also in the University of Colorado system are the University of Colorado Denver, including the Denver Campus and the Anschutz Medical Campus, which includes the Schools/Colleges of Dental Medicine, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Public Health and the University of Colorado Hospital and Children’s Hospital Colorado; and the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs.

The Board of Regents determines the general policies of the University. There are nine Colorado citizens who serve on the Board and are elected in general statewide elections. The president of the University is chosen by the Board of Regents. Each campus has a head administrator, called the Chancellor. He or she appoints their vice chancellors and other administrators who run each campus. Administrative offices for CU Boulder are located in Regent Hall.

Explore these websites for fun: <http://www.colorado.edu/about> and <http://www.colorado.edu/audience/students>

## Boulder

is truly “the West.” Baseline Road, the main east-west road through the southern part of Boulder, heads east toward Lafayette and Interstate 25, and lies along the 40 degrees N parallel of latitude. The Great Plains spread east of Boulder for thousands of miles. They are 1,646 m (5,400 feet) above sea level at Boulder and descend to less than 305 m. (1,000 feet) at the Mississippi River. To the west, the front range of the Rocky Mountains rises to peaks, some of which are more than 3,962 m (13,000 feet) above sea level. Mountain peaks near Boulder rise to as much as 4,267 m. (14,000 feet). Boulder’s most identifiable geological feature is the Flatirons, which are flanks of flat sandstone and shale rocks that form the “face” of the mountains.

Three tribes of Native American Plains Indians once lived in the Boulder region: the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute. These tribes lived a nomadic life, following and depending upon the bison and antelope herds for food, clothing, and shelter.

In the mid 1800s, mining and agriculture were the primary draws to Boulder County. The first settlements were actually in the area we know now as Valmont, then a “competitive” town. However, by 1858, gold prospectors from the eastern part of the United States decided that Boulder Canyon looked like a good place to mine for gold. Gold was discovered at the mouth of Boulder Canyon in 1859. With the discovery of gold came growth as storekeepers, farmers, and innkeepers set up businesses. Churches, schools, newspapers, and stage-stops soon followed. In 1861, Colorado became a territory, and Boulder County was formed in 1862. The town of Boulder was incorporated in 1871.

The invisible “line” that follows the tops of the mountains of the Rocky Mountains is called the Continental Divide. Water from the eastern slope of the divide flows into the Gulf of Mexico via the Mississippi River; water on the western slope flows into the Gulf of California via the Colorado River. The Colorado River water management system has a series of manmade dams in Colorado, Nevada, Arizona, and California that form lakes for drinking water and irrigation. Almost all of the water that flows west gets used up before it flows into the Gulf of California. Boulder tap water is safe to drink. However, water from mountain streams and ditches is NOT safe to drink, even if it looks clear.

Boulder enjoys a relatively mild climate, even though it is a mile high and sits close to the Front Range. During the summer months, temperatures average a high of 85 degrees F (29 degrees C). Fall is generally mild, but we may see colder temperatures and snow as early as October. From December through March, daytime high temperatures average from 35 degrees F (2 degrees C) to 65 degrees F (18 degrees C), and evening temperatures may get down to zero F or below ( 18 degrees C). Once or twice in the winter we might get a heavy snow of several inches or more, but generally our snowstorms are light and melt within a day or two. Spring temperatures are unpredictable; it is not uncommon to have snow, rain and thunderstorms, or very hot weather.

Precipitation averages 20-46 cm. (15 to 18 inches) per year. Much of this moisture comes in heavy spring snows and summer rain. Because the Boulder area doesn’t get a lot of precipitation, Boulder area residents are asked to use water wisely and to conserve it. Rain or snow that falls in the mountains above Boulder is shared with surrounding communities, and even other states.

No matter what season it is, sightseeing in Colorado is spectacular. If you go to the mountains, particularly on the weekend, allow plenty of time to get to your destination. Traffic is heavy through the mountain corridors – stop-and-go traffic is not uncommon. During the winter months, driving can be dangerous, particularly in the mountains, because of snow and ice on the roads. Be sure to check local weather advisories before traveling in the mountains.

Boulder has what is called a council-manager form of government. A city charter established the government’s authority. The council is the policy making body of the city government. It determines budgets, taxes, laws for public safety and general welfare. There are nine members, and the council elects one of its members to act as the mayor. The city manager, who carries out the policies set by the city council, is appointed by the council.

The population of the city of Boulder today is about 108,090 (2016 data).

## International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

International Student and Scholar Services is the CU Boulder office that bears the overall responsibility for international students once they have been admitted to CU Boulder and the office through which departments bring visiting international scholars and researchers to CU Boulder. We serve as host to students and faculty from abroad, and

*“encourage their success at CU Boulder by providing programs of counseling, assistance, and logistical support.”*

We provide service to approximately 3,000 international students from about 85 countries, and to 800 international scholars.

## Section 3

## Living in Boulder

### Housing

ISSS is not able to make housing arrangements for you. Ask for help and guidance from a staff member or colleague in your department if you need it.

The demand for rental properties in Boulder is high, so finding a place to live that is both reasonably priced and suits your needs will take time. If you haven't yet found a place to live in Boulder, the information below will be helpful. If you are settled in your new accommodations, congratulations! ISSS publishes a Renter's Guide, which you may have, free of charge, to aid in your search.

On-campus housing options are University Family Housing and Bear Creek Apartments at Williams Village.

#### **University Graduate and Family Housing**

Family Housing Office  
1350 20TH STREET  
BOULDER CO 80302-0061  
<http://housing.colorado.edu/>  
Phone: (303) 492-6384

All Graduate and Family Housing apartments are within a 15 minute walk to campus. Some complexes are along Boulder Creek to the north and east; one complex is close to the Engineering Center. Graduate and Family Housing's priority is to provide housing for families, married couples, and single parents; there are a limited number of units for graduate students and for CU Boulder staff, faculty, and visiting scholars. There are studio, one-, two-, and three-bedroom units, either furnished or unfurnished. The on-site staff at the Family Housing Office manages the apartments, assigns all leases, and collects rent.

#### **Bear Creek Apartments at Williams Village**

3275 Apache Road, Boulder, CO 80303  
<http://housing.colorado.edu/residences/apartments/bear-creek>

Bear Creek Apartments are located by the Williams Village dormitories south and east of campus. Apartment types range from single efficiency units to four bedroom units with two baths. Each building has study lounges, business centers, assigned parking, laundry facilities, high-speed internet services, satellite television, utilities, and furnishings. It is about a 25 minute walk to campus from Bear Creek. The BuffBus that serves Williams Village students also serves residents of Bear Creek Apartments.

Bear Creek Apartments can be leased for either nine months or 12 months, so if your appointment is for less than nine months, Bear Creek Apartments may not be a good option for you.

## Off-Campus Housing and Neighborhood Relations

<http://ocss.colorado.edu/>

Phone: (303) 492-7053

Room 313 in the UMC (University Memorial Center)

If you have decided to look for a room, apartment, or house away from campus, the Off-Campus Housing and Neighborhood Relations office has information about rental properties and can help you find what you are looking for. The office also publishes a handbook about renting property in Boulder.

**Housing Helpers** is a private relocation company that offers services to people looking to permanently move to Boulder County, but will also help people who want to rent property for a short time. Most of their services are free, but be sure to ask just in case. See <http://www.housinghelpers.com> .

The classified advertising section of the **Daily Camera**, <http://www.dailycamera.com/> , Boulder's local newspaper, also lists property for rent.

Many **property owners** will choose to have a real estate management company manage (show property, draw up leases, collect rent, etc.), their properties for them. You can find a list of real estate companies in the Yellow Pages of the telephone book or online <http://www.yellowpages.com/> or DexKnows Online Directory <http://www.dexknows.com/> . Commercial real estate companies generally charge a fee for their services.

If you are here by yourself for a short time, sharing an apartment or home with roommate(s) may be an option for you. It is recommended to interview prospective roommates to make sure you are comfortable with them and understand the arrangements before you sign a lease or roommate agreement. Detailed information about having a roommate is in the *Renter's Guide*.

### Buying insurance on your rental property

You should consider buying renter's insurance, which covers the replacement of your property if it is damaged or stolen. At \$15 to \$25 per month, renter's insurance is a bargain compared to what it would cost you to replace your household goods and personal belongings in the event of a fire or flood. Look under "insurance" in the yellow pages of the phone book to find an agent who can help you purchase renter's insurance.

## Telephone Service

Colorado has ten-digit dialing. In other words, you have to dial the area code (303, 719, 720, or 970) before you dial the number, even if it is not long distance. For example, if you want to call an advisor at ISSS, you would dial: 303-492-8057. To dial a long-distance number or a toll-free number from a landline, you will have to dial a "1" first, then the ten-digit number or 800 number. For example: 1-800-555-5555. From a cell phone, just dial the ten-digit number.

If you are calling an on-campus number from another on-campus telephone, you only need to dial the last five digits of the phone number. For example, to call ISSS from an on-campus phone, you would dial 2-8057.

## Emergency Service

The universal telephone number for emergencies throughout the United States is 9-1-1; you do not have to dial an area code or a telephone number. When you dial 9-1-1, the system directs your call to a public safety dispatch center (a fire department, police station or sheriff's department). A dispatcher will answer your call. After you have clearly stated your location and what help is needed and you have followed all directions given to you by the dispatcher, an ambulance and fire truck are directed to your location.

This number is strictly for LIFE-THREATENING emergencies (fire, car accident, a serious fall when someone is unconscious or bleeding, showing symptoms of a heart attack, or if someone is breaking into your house). While there is no charge for dialing 9-1-1 to get help, there will be charges for ambulance transportation. You can dial

9-1-1 from a pay telephone without having to deposit a coin. If you call 9-1-1 from a landline, the dispatcher will know your exact location. If you call from a cell phone, the dispatcher can usually determine approximately where you are, but you should be prepared to tell your exact location.

The CU Boulder campus police telephone number for a non-emergency is (303) 492-6666;  
<http://www.colorado.edu/police/>

## Cellular or Mobile Devices

Most visiting scholars choose to purchase a mobile communication device. Cellular or mobile phone companies offer a variety of kinds of services. Some plans include a free device but require one- or two-year-long contracts, which involve a credit check, a Social Security number, substantial deposit, and a credit history. Breaking a year-long contract can involve a “de-activation” fee. Since it is likely that you will not have a credit history in the U.S., your choices for these kinds of service plans may be limited.

Another option is to get a pre-paid cell phone plan without a year-long contract and buy increments of minutes or text messages which must be used within a certain period of time. Major wireless providers may offer pre-paid cell phone plans; discount department stores and supermarkets also sell phones with pre-paid plans.

Cellular or mobile phone companies and services are constantly changing, so any information included in this Handbook would be quickly out of date. Currently, AT&T, Cricket, Sprint, T-Mobile, TracFone, and Verizon are some of the providers. Be sure to compare various plans and to read the fine print so that you know the advantages and disadvantages of each. To see what is available, search for wireless telephone service providers in Boulder. If you buy a phone directly from a service provider’s store, a sales person can answer your questions and help you learn how to operate the device. If you buy from the internet, you may be on your own.

## Arrange for Landline Telephone Service

Local telephone companies provide local and regional telecommunication services; long-distance companies provide national and international services.

If you decide to arrange for landline service, go to <http://www.centurylink.com> or call CenturyLink at 1-866-642-0444. New customers will generally pay a one-time installation charge, as well as a deposit that is usually refunded with interest after 12 months if your bills are paid on time. Do not forget to have your telephone service disconnected or transferred to your new address when you move. There is no charge for disconnecting telephone service, but make sure you let the phone company know at least two weeks before you want to have your phone disconnected.

You may also be able to set up cable or internet based telephone service through providers such as Comcast, Vonage, and Skype. Some companies, such as Century Link and Comcast offer “bundled” communication services, combining telephone, internet, and/or cable television service at a discount when you buy more than one service. Be sure to ask questions so you can understand the pros and cons of each provider’s services.

As mobile phones have become widespread, it is increasingly difficult to find a pay phone. If you do locate one, you can use pay phones for local calls, and most allow you to make local and long-distance calls without coins by using a credit card or any of a wide variety of calling cards. You can make long-distance calls from any pay phone in the United States.

## Mail

The United States Postal Service (USPS) provides mail service in the United States. It is a self-supporting government enterprise that receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. First class mail is delivered by the post office to your home address or post office box, Monday through Saturday. Unlike postal services in many countries, the USPS does not offer long-distance telephone service or savings accounts.

Services like United Parcel Service, Federal Express, and DHL Worldwide compete with the USPS for express mail and package delivery, but are run by private companies:

- United Parcel Service (UPS): <http://www.ups.com>.
- Federal Express (FedEx): <http://www.fedex.com/us>.
- DHL Worldwide: <http://www.dhl.com/splash.html>.

Here is a list of post offices in the Boulder area. All of the post offices have the same 800 number: 1-800-275-8777, and individual fax numbers.

<b>Main Post office</b>	1905 15th Street, downtown (the corner of 15th Street and Walnut) Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Fax: 303-786-8756
<b>Flatirons</b>	1860 38th Street Hours vary Fax: 303-447-1109
<b>Valmont</b>	2995 55th Street Monday through Friday from 8 a.m to 6:30 p.m. Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 2:20 p.m. Fax: 720-564-6486
<b>High Mar</b>	4985 Moorhead Avenue Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Fax: (303) 499-4790

In addition, a number of retail stores provide some postal services. The Post Office has quite a comprehensive internet site: <http://www.usps.gov> with many services available online. The USPS suggests that you never send cash through the mail.

CU Boulder's campus mail system distributes inter-campus mail to Boulder campus addresses and to affiliate offices in Denver and Aurora without the need for postage. You will be able to receive and send campus mail by using your department's campus box. Ask your departmental secretary for instructions.

## Child Care

It is a challenge to balance work/research responsibilities with the demands of raising a family. CU Boulder has made a commitment to help families find reasonably priced, quality child care. Please see the Human Resources website for information about childcare services offered in the surrounding area:

<https://www.colorado.edu/hr/boulder-and-beyond/childcare>

## Being Safe

Boulder is considered to be a safe city in which to live; campus is also quite safe, but we are not immune from crime. Following a few precautions will minimize the chances of becoming a victim. Safety is an important topic for us at ISSS, so we encourage you to read about safety at <http://police.colorado.edu/crime-prevention-and-safety> .

## NightRide

If you are working late, not feeling well, or do not feel safe walking alone, you may want to call CU NightRide. The volunteers who run this program are dedicated to meeting the safety needs of students, faculty, and staff by providing free night-time transportation anywhere within Boulder. Clients will be asked to show a CU identification card to use the program; however, if you do not have a Buff OneCard or Visitor/Guest Card, you may ride at the

driver's discretion. CU NightRide runs regularly throughout the year, but does not operate during school breaks, bad weather, or holidays. Since their schedule changes, look at their website for current and contact information: <https://www.colorado.edu/umc/cunightride>.

### **Lock Up!**

Always keep your apartment doors locked, even when you are at home or just stepping out for a short time. Burglary and theft are the two most common crimes in Boulder. Backpacks, laptops and bicycles are frequent targets of thieves. Don't leave your personal belongings unattended. Attach your bicycle to a bike rack, and lock it with a sturdy lock.

### **Social Responsibility**

A detailed discussion about discrimination, sexual assault, and date rape is under Section 10, Social Life & the U.S.

## **Transportation**

You can get around Boulder easily by walking, riding a bicycle, or taking a bus. A centrally located downtown area is convenient to restaurants, shopping, movies, and the library. There is an extensive network of walking and bike paths in, through, and around Boulder, the most popular of which is the Boulder Creek Path. View trail maps and guides by visiting the City of Boulder's internet site at <http://www.bouldercolorado.gov> and click on Visitor and then "GO Boulder" for a wealth of information on trail and transportation options.

### **Walking**

You are a pedestrian if you are "standing, walking, or using a wheelchair on public streets, highways, and private property." Because Boulder is a pedestrian-friendly city, pedestrians have the right of way at crosswalks and intersections, whether they are marked or not. However, everybody moves so fast that pedestrian traffic and vehicle traffic often vie for right of way. Colorado law states:

- Never walk across a freeway or expressway.
- Do not leave the curb or sidewalk so suddenly that an approaching vehicle (or traffic) cannot yield (stop in time) before hitting you. If you cause an accident by stepping off the curb onto the street, you will be the one to suffer. Pedestrians do not have the right to impede the flow of traffic.

Traffic is heavy in Boulder and around campus, particularly on Regent Drive and on Broadway. It is safer to cross at visibly-marked crosswalks with walk lights.

- Pay attention to "walk" and "don't walk" signals at intersections. A steady "don't walk" (red hand) is DO NOT CROSS. A steady "walk" (white person walking) means it is safe to walk. A flashing "walk" (flashing red hand) is CLEAR THE INTERSECTION. Drivers have the right of way when they have a green light and pedestrians cannot legally cross.

### **Bicycling**

The mild weather and lots of sunny days makes riding a bicycle a pleasure. Bicycles are considered "vehicles" under state law, so bicyclists follow the same rules as car drivers do.

The CU Boulder Bicycle Program encourages people to ride a bike to work and for fun. CU Boulder offers free short-term and inexpensive semester-long bicycle rentals. If you ride your bike to campus, please note that it is a requirement that it be registered. You should understand the rules and regulations governing bicycles on paths and roadways. For information about these and other bicycle-related issues, see <http://ecenter.colorado.edu/transportation/bike>.

### **Riding the Bus**

The RTD (Regional Transport District) bus and light rail system includes the Skip, Jump, Dash, Stampede, and numbered routes that go through Boulder and to almost all the cities around Boulder and the Front Range area. The Hop, which is run by Go Boulder, loops around University Hill, campus, downtown Boulder, and the Twenty Ninth Street shopping mall. The buses run regularly and often, and most routes run late at night. The RTD bus terminal is at Walnut and 14th Streets. For route and schedule information, call the RTD customer service at (303) 299-6000 or visit the following website: <http://www.rtd-denver.com/>.

You can use your Buff OneCard (a Visitor/Guest Card will not work) to ride the bus for free (except that there is a small additional fee to ride the SkyRide to DIA). Otherwise, the local one-way fare is \$2.25 (subject to increase). Monthly passes can be purchased at the main bus terminal or online at the RTD website. All buses have bike racks.

### **Driving a Car**

If you plan to drive and own a car while you are in Colorado, please refer to the flier entitled "What international visitors to the University of Colorado Boulder need to know about driving and owning a car in Colorado." One is included in your check-in folder. You may be interested in joining the CarShare program, which allows you to borrow a car for a fee. See <http://www.colorado.edu/parking/index.html>

### **Parking**

Parking space is limited at CU Boulder, and permits can be expensive. For details regarding on-campus parking, see: <http://www.colorado.edu/parking/index.html>. Downtown parking has electronically-metered spaces, meaning that you have to put money or a credit card into a kiosk in order to park without penalty.

## Section 4

## University Services

### Computing Facilities

Your department will probably provide a work station for you, and your departmental liaison will help you get what you need as far as internet and e-mail access, etc. If you have a question or concern that your sponsor cannot help you with, contact Information Technology Services, the on-campus department that provides services for students, faculty, and staff. Their website is <http://www.colorado.edu/ITS/>. Their quick links will address nearly every computer question you have.

The Anderson Language Technology Center (ALTEC) provides computers which enable students to do word processing in foreign languages. Its facilities offer state-of-the-art multi-media classrooms, and a library of films from around the world. ALTEC is located on the first floor of Hellems, south of the Norlin Quad. <http://altec.colorado.edu/>.

### Legal Assistance

#### **Public Defender's Office**

<http://www.state.co.us/defenders/index.html>

This organization, run by the State of Colorado, provides "reasonable and effective criminal defense representation for indigent individuals who are charged with the commission of a crime in Colorado."

#### **American Immigration Lawyers Association**

<https://www.aila.org/>

"The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) is the national association of more than 15,000 attorneys and law professors who practice and teach immigration law. AILA member attorneys represent U.S. families seeking permanent residence for close family members, as well as U.S. businesses seeking talent from the global marketplace. AILA members also represent foreign students, entertainers, athletes, and asylum seekers, often on a pro bono basis. Founded in 1946, AILA is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that provides continuing legal education, information, professional services, and expertise through its 39 chapters and over 50 national committees." (<https://www.aila.org/about>)

### Recycling

<http://recycling.colorado.edu/recycling/>

Environmental issues are becoming more and more urgent worldwide. CU Boulder is putting forth a great deal of effort to keep the environment clean and cut down waste. CU Recycling is proud to be one of the oldest and nationally-recognized campus recycling programs in the country. Blue recycling bins are placed all around campus, and offices and classrooms have desk-side recycling bins for office pack and newspaper. The Student

Union, Facilities Management, and the Environmental Center have created a partnership to collect recyclable products. Boulder's EcoCycle has curbside pick-up for paper, aluminum, and glass.

## Recreation Center

<http://www.colorado.edu/sacs/rec-center/>

Visiting international scholars can join CU's Student Recreation Center. It is convenient from nearly every office on campus. If you're interested, you will have to show your Buff OneCard or Guest Card to buy a membership.

## Continuing Education & English Language Classes

<https://ce.colorado.edu/resources/topics/tuition-and-fees-general-info/>

Scholars can take classes for a discount through Continuing Education or the International English Center (IEC). University of Colorado faculty, staff, professional researchers must be employed at least half-time and are required to provide a printed copy of their "job list" from Peoplesoft or some equivalent form of documentation when requesting a discount. Verification from the hosting department may be required to receive tuition discounts. Dependents of scholars may also be eligible for a discount if the scholar is eligible.

## Section 5

## Finances

The **American money** system is based on the dollar (\$1), on which all paper money (bills) and coins are dependent. "Cash" is the term used for dollar bills and coins. There 100 cents (or pennies) in a dollar. Coins are fractions of a dollar. A five-cent piece is known as a nickel, a ten-cent piece is a dime, and the twenty five-cent piece is a quarter. Dollar bills of all value are the same size and color. The numerical value of each bill is shown in all four corners.

The quarter is the most useful coin, because it can be used in almost any coin-operated machine, such as a washer and dryer in a Laundromat, a pay phone, video games, and in vending machines dispensing food, drinks, stamps, tickets, newspapers and the like. Vending machines will usually take small bills, such as ones, fives and tens, but the change you get back will be in coins.

Debit or credit/charge cards are one of the most common ways to pay, even for buying small items. They are convenient and safe to use and easier to carry than cash. Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) are popular and a convenient way to access cash, but getting cash from an ATM generally costs a fee unless the ATM belongs to your bank. You can also write a check, and that is discussed in the section below called "Opening a Bank Account."

## Transferring Funds to the United States

We hope that you brought enough money to meet the initial costs of travel to campus and at least one month's expenses. Do not carry large amounts of cash. If you need to transfer large amounts of money for your expenses, check with your bank to discuss the options that best suit your situation. You should learn whether or not your country has restrictions on sending money abroad.

The best ways to carry or transfer money are:

- a "wire transfer" from your bank at home to your U.S. bank. Your money is usually available fastest with this method, but your bank at home and the bank in the U.S. may each charge a fee for the transfer, so it could be the most expensive way.
- a bank check (also called a cashier's check) drawn on a U.S. bank in U.S. dollars.
- traveler's checks (in U.S. dollars). Using traveler's checks is a safe way to carry money but is not as common as it was in the past. Not all U.S. merchants accept traveler's checks.

Checks in U.S. dollars drawn on a foreign bank and checks in a foreign currency drawn on a foreign bank may take much longer to "clear" than do checks in U.S. dollars drawn on U.S. banks. Remember that until a check clears, you may not have access to your money.

## Opening a Bank Account

If you have not already done so, you may want to open a bank account at a local bank or credit union. It is sometimes possible to set up an account from abroad, and some international financial institutions allow you to write U.S. dollar checks on funds deposited abroad. However, some local banks in the U.S. will want you to come in personally to set up your account. When you do so, take your CU identification, your passport, and the funds you wish to deposit. Most banks require a Social Security Number (SSN) to open an account, although there are four banks in Boulder that do not: Chase, FirstBank, US Bank and Wells Fargo.

Banks offer many different financial services. You may wish to compare the services and fees of several banks before choosing one. Banks are competing for your business, so don't be shy about asking questions.

**Elevations, the CU Credit Union**, offers free checking, savings accounts, and numerous other services. It is convenient because a branch is located in the University Memorial Center, and you can use your Buff OneCard to access cash from the ATM. To open an account, you must either show your Social Security Number or show that you have applied for one. See <https://www.elevationscu.com/> or call (303) 443-4672 for details.

A **checking account** will allow you to write checks for purchases and to pay bills. Most service providers and local retailers will accept a personal check drawn on any U.S. bank, as long as you can show appropriate identification, such as a passport, Buff OneCard, or driver's license. Using checks makes it is easy to keep records of your purchases and payments. At most banks you need not keep a substantial sum or "balance" in the account - just enough to cover your checks and any fees the bank charges to maintain the account. Many banks offer "overdraft protection," which allows you to write a check that exceeds your balance with the understanding that you will pay interest on the overdrawn amount. There are fees involved, though, so you should ask how much overdraft charges are before you do so. Finally, checking accounts have the advantage of providing you with immediate access to your funds. If you have to mail payment, mailing a check is safer than mailing cash. It is not recommended to mail cash.

A **debit card**, also known as a check card, allows you to withdraw or deposit money to your bank account using an ATM, and to make purchases at stores without writing a check.

**Savings accounts** earn interest on the balance in the account. If you plan to bring money for your entire stay, you may want your money earn interest. You can withdraw money from an ordinary savings account, but you cannot do so by writing a check unless the account is set up this way. Many visitors open a savings account and a checking account at the same bank so that they can transfer money from the interest-bearing savings account into their checking account as needed.

**Certificates of deposit (CD's)** may pay higher rates of interest than savings accounts, but your deposits must be made in certain amounts (usually in increments of \$1,000 or more) and must remain in the bank for a specified period of time (usually a minimum of three months) before you can use them. The penalties for withdrawing money before the specified time has elapsed can be quite substantial. A CD account may make sense if you bring money that you will not need right away.

**Other Banking Services:** A safe deposit box, available at most banks, is a good place to store valuable possessions such as the airline ticket for your flight home, expensive jewelry, foreign currency, a car title, and any important documents you brought with you. Banks generally charge a fee for this service.

## Section 6

## Health Care and Health Insurance

Medical care is not paid for by the United States government, and it is expensive if you don't have insurance. A catastrophic illness or car accident could mean a financial crisis that would make it difficult to reach your goals. When you receive medical care, you are responsible for paying the bill, regardless of whether or not you have insurance, and you are responsible for paying any costs that are not covered by your insurance company.

J-1 Exchange visitors are required, by U.S. federal immigration regulations, to carry medical insurance, repatriation insurance and medical evacuation insurance for themselves and their accompanying J-2 family members. For updates and details: [http://www.colorado.edu/oie/iss/j1\\_insurance.html](http://www.colorado.edu/oie/iss/j1_insurance.html) .

Exchange visitor professors and research scholars who are employed by the University of Colorado Boulder may qualify for the health insurance offered by the University. If you are on University payroll, you may be eligible for University insurance, depending on your appointment level. If you want to sign up for CU's health insurance, you must sign up for this benefit within 31 days of being hired. If you have questions about coverage, check with Payroll and Benefit Services at 303-860-4200 or: <http://www.cu.edu/pbs>. Please note that the University does not offer medical evacuation or repatriation insurance, so you will have to purchase these even if you are covered by University health insurance.

Options for medical insurance are many and can be difficult to understand. If you are not going to purchase CU group medical insurance, you may want to look into a provider on the list of independent providers that ISSS has compiled. The list is available at <http://www.colorado.edu/oie/iss/formsandhandouts.html> under J Scholars/Professors, entitled "J-1 Insurance Resources List. You may also want to ask your sponsoring faculty member for help. You need not subscribe to a new policy if you have adequate health insurance coverage through your home country or sponsoring agency that will pay your medical claims while in the U.S.

You can use your insurance coverage for medical treatment at various clinics, but depending on your health insurance plan, you may have coverage only at certain facilities. Some clinics may not be accepting new patients. It is wise to find a clinic when you first arrive so that you know you have a place to go for treatment. For consistent medical care, choose one clinic and use it throughout your stay.

If you purchase your own health insurance, be sure ask your insurance company the following questions:

- What are the exclusions in my policy? What kind of medical procedures will or will not be covered?
- What will the co-payment be, if applicable? Or, what percentage of the doctor's fees will I be responsible for?
- How do I submit a medical bill?
- How do I contact my insurance company?
- I need to show documentation of my insurance coverage. Will I receive an insurance card or another document that I can carry with me during my time in the US so that I can receive treatment?

Remember that medical insurance almost never covers one-hundred percent of all expenses. The best policies cover only 80 to 90 percent and may not always cover prescription medications, dental care, eye care, pre-existing conditions, or doctor's visits to the home. Read the policy carefully and if you don't understand it, ask someone at the insurance company to explain it to you.

## Health Care Facilities

There is one hospital serving the immediate Boulder area:

- Boulder Community Foothills Hospital located at Foothills Parkway and Arapahoe Avenue (4747 Arapahoe Avenue, Boulder; 720-854-7010).

In Lafayette:

- Exempla Good Samaritan Medical Center is located at 200 Exempla Circle, Lafayette, at Highway 287 and Dillon Road (303-689-4000) "Good Sam" is attached to the Kaiser Permanente primary care insurance group.

In Louisville:

- Avista Adventist Hospital is located at 100 Health Park Drive, Louisville, just off Highway 36 on the south side of town (303-673-1000). Although it is a Seventh Day Adventist Hospital, people of all faiths are served.

In Longmont:

- Longmont United Hospital is located at 1950 Mountain View Avenue, Longmont, the intersection of Hover and Mountain View Avenue (303-651-5111; 970-532-4809).

There are six Urgent Care facilities in Boulder County that are open evenings and weekends:

- Boulder Medical Center, North Broadway and Balsam (2750 Broadway, Boulder; 303-440-3000)
- Rocky Mountain Urgent Care, Baseline Road and Foothills Parkway (4800 Baseline Road, Suite D106, Boulder, 303-499-4800) and at 1551 Professional Lane, Longmont; 720-494-4747);
- Community Medical Center in Lafayette at 1000 West South Boulder Road (the intersection of US 287 and South Boulder Road; 303-666-4357); and
- the Longmont Clinic at the Longmont United Hospital (1925 West Mountain View Ave., Longmont; 720-494-3136).
- NextCare Urgent Care (at 2144 N Main Street, Suite 8, Longmont; 888-381-4858)

If you are not feeling well, do not hesitate to get help. If your condition is not life-threatening, go to Wardenburg or contact your primary care physician to schedule an appointment.

If you have a sore throat, cut or laceration, ear infection, broken bone, eye injury, animal bite, or abdominal pain in the evening or on a weekend, you can go to an urgent care center. You do not need an appointment. Urgent care centers are generally open from the morning until the evening at 8:00 or 9:00 p.m., but hours vary, so it is best to call ahead.

If you absolutely have an emergency, such as chest pain, severe bleeding, loss of vision, or if you have been in an accident and you think your condition is life-threatening, go to the emergency room of any of the above-named hospitals OR dial 9-1-1 if you can't get yourself there. Dialing 9-1-1 alerts an emergency service that dispatches an ambulance to your location. The ambulance will take you to the nearest emergency room. Do not use this service unless it is truly a life-or-death situation. You can go to an emergency room without calling 9-1-1, but again, your condition should be perceived as life-threatening. Emergency room care and ambulance services are expensive. If you go to an emergency room to get treatment or you take an ambulance to a hospital for a condition that does not threaten your life, your insurance will likely not cover your expenses, and you will be responsible for paying the bill in full.

The time you spend with your health-care providers may seem brief and impersonal, but they are simply trying to be efficient and thorough. You may be asked, more than once, about your family's medical history and your own health, medicines and supplements that you take, your sexual activity, and the symptoms of the problem that landed you there in the first place. American physicians expect their patients to participate in making decisions about their health care, so you are encouraged to ask about your diagnosis, treatment options, medications, and costs. Because the staff at any health care facility moves quickly to treat many, many patients, you may not understand what is going on around you. Remind the medical staff that you need them to talk slowly, to repeat if you don't understand, or to write something down. Take a friend or co-worker along to translate if you need to.

### **Useful terms**

*Premium:* The cost of coverage for the specified period

*Exclusions:* Items not covered. In some cases maternity costs, mental-health care, dental, and vision are not covered.

*Limits:* The highest maximum payment the insurer will make OR the kind of services a policy will cover

*Deductible:* The annual amount you must pay before insurance coverage begins

*Co-payment:* The percentage of a bill for which you are responsible, even after you meet your deductible amount

*Primary Care Physician (PCP):* The doctor you choose to provide your care.

## [Section 7 Immigration Regulations for J Visa Holders](#)

\*\*\*If you are an H visa holder, skip Section 7 and move on to Section 8.\*\*\*

## The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, or SEVIS

SEVIS is an acronym for the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. It is an internet-based system that allows universities and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to exchange data on the visa status of international students and J scholars and their J dependents (known as exchange visitors) who live in the United States. It keeps an electronic record of your entry into the United States and your departure from the United States. As an institution, we are responsible for making sure that our records are updated and correct. U.S. embassies and consulates also have access to SEVIS.

As a J visa holder, information about you has to be reported to SEVIS. This information includes:

- your actual physical address (no post office boxes or campus addresses allowed), and any changes in your address;
- whether or not you have been authorized for employment;
- your intent to transfer to a different sponsor;
- any change in your funding or program dates.

All these things affect your lawful nonimmigrant status here in the United States. If you lose your J status, we must report to SEVIS that you are out of status. This means that your immigration documents will be cancelled, and you may have to leave the country before the end of your program. You could also be subject to arrest or deportation.

You can see the importance of maintaining your lawful status. You can maintain your lawful status by:

- reporting to ISSS when you begin your program in the U.S.;
- getting permission to work BEFORE you begin employment and BEFORE any incidental employment;
- completing all transfers and extensions in a timely manner;
- talking to an advisor in ISSS when you are ending your program;
- asking for an extension in a timely manner, if you need one;
- updating your address; and
- maintaining your insurance coverage.

## Major Reporting Requirements

As an exchange visitor, you need to know your obligations under the Exchange Visitor Program regulations. With the help of an international scholar advisor, you can keep abreast of any changes in the regulations. Listed below are brief descriptions of major requirements of these regulations and how you can follow them.

### Address Changes

If you move, please contact an advisor in ISSS within ten days to report your address change. ISSS is required to forward this information to the U.S. government through the SEVIS database. If you are being paid by the University of Colorado, you also need to update your address with your department's payroll liaison.

### J Program Provisions

Exchange visitors come to the United States to participate in a specific program category such as professor, research scholar, short-term scholar, or student intern. Exchange visitors are required to engage only in the category and field of activity listed on the Form DS-2019. For example, if your DS2019 says "Visiting research scholar in the Department of Chemistry," you will be compensated and have permission for this activity only. Compensation for such activities may be accepted only when permitted by the regulations and authorized by ISSS.

## Incidental Employment Outside CU Boulder

The J exchange program allows J-1 Professors, Research scholars and Short-term Scholars (but not Student Interns) on the University's J documents to participate in consultations or lectures for remuneration outside of the University of Colorado Boulder, provided that the opportunity:

1. is incidental to your program at the University of Colorado Boulder;
2. is directly related to your program objectives; and
3. does not delay the completion of your exchange program.

Exchange visitors who would like to participate in this must first obtain prior approval from an advisor in ISSS. More details on this can be found at: <https://www.colorado.edu/iss/content/j-1-request-permission-engage-occasional-lectures-or-consultation-pdf>.

## Insurance Requirement

See **Section 6, Health Care and Health Insurance**. The J program requires all exchange visitors to have adequate health insurance coverage for each J-1 participant and their J-2 family members for the entire duration of their J exchange program in the United States, as outlined in 22 CFR 514.14. More specifics about the health insurance requirement can be found at our website: <https://www.colorado.edu/iss/content/j-1-insurance-resource-list-pdf>.

Failure to have adequate health insurance coverage for the J1 and/or the J2 dependents will mean that we will have to terminate your J program. Please make sure you are fully enrolled in a health insurance plan that meets the specifications set by the US Department of State.

## Two-year Home-country Physical Presence Requirement

Certain Exchange Visitor Program participants and family members must return home for at least two years after completion of their educational or cultural program before they can change or adjust to certain U.S. nonimmigrant or immigrant statuses. This requirement applies to J-1 visitors whose:

1. exchange visitor program has been financed to some extent by the U.S. Government or the government of their home country;
2. skills are needed by their home country as indicated in the Exchange Visitor Skills List; or
3. purpose in coming to the United States is to receive graduate medical education or training.

Grounds for applying for a waiver of this requirement are limited. For more details on this rule, see <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange.html>.

Being subject to the two-year home residency rule means that you cannot apply for a change of status within the U.S.; nor are you eligible for H1b status, permanent residency, or L status, unless you have either fulfilled the two-year requirement or obtained a waiver. Talk to an advisor about what this means if you have questions.

## Transfers and Extensions

Exchange visitors may transfer from one sponsor to another only if they are released by the first sponsor as required by the regulations. An exchange visitor's program may be extended at the sponsor's discretion (up to five years for those in the professor or research scholar categories, or for up to 6 months for short-term scholars or up to 12 months for student interns) provided that proof of sufficient funding for living expenses is available for the additional time. If you have family members in the U.S., you must also show evidence of enough support for them. Contact your department and ISSS at least four weeks before your current DS-2019 expires.

## Maintaining Status

An exchange visitor's J program is subject to termination if the regulations for their program and category are not followed. First and most importantly, exchange visitors are required to have a valid (unexpired) Form DS-2019. Also, an exchange visitor is subject to termination as a participant in the exchange visitor program if he/she willfully fails to maintain the insurance coverage required under the regulations, engages in unauthorized employment, or fails to pursue the activities permitted under his/her program and category.

## Travel Outside the United States

Before traveling outside the United States, see an adviser at ISSS. Bring your passport, DS-2019, and I-94 (small white arrival card usually stapled to your passport). ISSS will sign your DS-2019 so that you will be able to re-enter the United States. Each signature is valid for multiple entries for up to six months. You will need the following in order to re-enter the US:

1. a valid passport;
2. a valid J-1 visa in your passport; and
3. a signed DS-2019 with a signature not older than six months.

If your J1 visa has expired, you will need to obtain a new visa abroad. We suggest that you carry with you a letter from your department explaining the nature of your research. This could be helpful in case the Consular Officer has to decide if you are subject to visa security checks.

All visa applicants must have an interview to obtain a visa. You should check the website for the embassy/consulate at which you will be applying for a new visa for information about visa appointments and application forms. See <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange.html> for the website of the embassy/consulate where you will be applying for your visa and for information about scheduling an interview.

To find out how long it may take to get your visa, you can check the following website for approximate processing times for a visa in the different consulates/embassies: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange.html>.

## Termination of your J program at CU Boulder

Please inform ISSS if you are terminating or completing your program at CU Boulder. Please use the “Leaving Your University of Colorado J Program” form, which was provided in your packet at check-in and is also available at <https://www.colorado.edu/issc/forms-handouts/j-scholar-forms>. ISSS has to report the end date of your program in SEVIS.

## J-2 Employment

J-2 Dependents must apply for and be in possession of an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from the USCIS prior to engaging in employment. The process may take two to four months and costs \$380. Please visit ISSS for additional information or see the “J-2 Work Permission” handout at <https://www.colorado.edu/issc/forms-handouts/j-scholar-forms>.

## Save All Your Documents

It is important for you to keep all the DS-2019s that have ever been issued to you. This serves two purposes: You will have a good record of your time in the U.S.; and in case you lose your documents, you will have a copy of them. International Student and Scholar Services keep electronic records of your documents for three years only; then they are destroyed.

## Additional Information

For updated and additional information, see the ISSS website: <https://www.colorado.edu/issc/scholar-resources> or the Department of State’s Exchange Visitor Program website: <http://j1visa.state.gov/>

The Exchange Visitor Program at the U.S. Department of State is available to take your concerns and feedback regarding the J exchange visitor program. They can be reached by e-mail: [JVISAS@STATE.GOV](mailto:JVISAS@STATE.GOV).

## Section 8 Immigration Regulations for H Visa Holders

*\*\*\*If you are a J visa holder, you can skip this section.\*\*\**

H visa/status holders should keep the following in mind while they are here under H status at the University of Colorado Boulder:

### Employment

H visas are employer specific. If you are working on an H visa which was filed by the University of Colorado Boulder, you can only work at CU Boulder. If you want to work for a different employer, that other employer must file an H for you. If you are invited to give a talk/seminar, note that it is possible for the inviting institution to reimburse you for your expenses. However, they cannot compensate you for your time/expertise if they did not file an H for you.

### Terms of the H visa

When ISSS files an H, ISSS must indicate what the scholar's pay, title and job duties are. If there are any substantial changes in your title, job duties, or percentage of appointment (e.g. dropping from a 100 percent employment to 50 percent), ISSS must file an amended H petition to notify the federal government of these changes prior to the changes' taking place. Please contact ISSS if there are any substantial changes to your position so that ISSS can file the H amendment in a timely manner.

### Extensions

Please pay attention to your H approval dates; Hs are date specific, so you can only work up until the date listed on the H Approval Notice. If you will continue your employment at CU Boulder and need an extension of your H-1B status filed, please provide the documents needed for the extension. All documents required for an extension can be found at: [www.colorado.edu/oie/iss/h1bstatus.html](http://www.colorado.edu/oie/iss/h1bstatus.html) . Please note, your department also bears responsibility for filing the H-1B extension.

Please be sure to submit the paperwork for the extension to ISSS at least three months before your current H-1B status expires. Once you submit the paperwork to us, it could take another month before ISSS can file the extension, depending on how long it takes for us to get a Prevailing Wage Determination from the US Department of Labor. Once filed, the processing time for approval could take anywhere from two to four months, so it is prudent to get your documents in to ISSS earlier rather than later.

Extensions may be filed as early as six months prior to the expiration date.

### Address Changes

All H status holders must file an address change to notify the US government of their new address within 10 days of moving. If you will be moving, report your address change on Form AR-11, which you can download from [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) . Instructions on where to send the completed AR-11 are listed on the instruction form. You can also file the form AR-11 online. You will also need to inform your department's payroll liaison of your address change.

### Travel

If you must travel outside the U.S. and will return to continue working at CU Boulder, you must make sure you have the following with you on your return to the U.S.:

1. a valid passport;

2. a valid H visa (citizens of Canada are excepted from the visa requirement);
3. the original H approval notice;
4. a copy of the H petition and Labor Condition Application (LCA). These documents are provided to you by ISSS when your approval notice arrives.

If you need to obtain a new visa abroad, it is advisable for you to carry with you a letter from your department explaining the nature of your research and stating the work you do is the same as that described in the H-1B petition. This could be beneficial in case the Consular Officer has to decide if you are subject to visa security checks.

All visa applicants must have an interview to obtain a visa. You should check the website for the embassy/consulate where you will be applying for a new visa for information about visa appointments and application forms. See <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html> for the website of the embassy/consulate where you will be applying and for information about scheduling an interview.

To find out how long it may take to get your visa, you can check the following website for approximate processing times for a visa in the different consulate/embassies: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html>.

## Terminating your employment at CU Boulder

If you terminate your employment at CU Boulder, whether it is to go work for another employer or to return home, please inform ISSS. ISSS must notify the US Department of Labor and United States Citizenship and Immigration Services of the termination of your H-1B employment.

## Dependents

Dependents of the H1 status holder will have H4 status. Please note that if your dependents have H4 status, they cannot obtain work permission and cannot work, unless they are able to apply for their own independent immigration status that allows them to get work permission.

## Save All your Documents

It is important for you to keep all of your immigration documents. This serves two purposes: you will have a good record of your time in the U.S.; and in case you lose your documents, you will have a copy of them. International Student and Scholar Services keeps electronic and paper records of your documents for three years only; then they are destroyed.

## Additional Information

For additional information, see the ISSS website: <https://www.colorado.edu/iss/scholar-resources>.

## Section 9

## Income Tax Requirements

<http://www.irs.gov/>

Income tax is a tax levied on annual income.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is a bureau of the United States Department of the Treasury. Their responsibility is to help people understand and meet their tax responsibilities by applying the tax law "with integrity and fairness to all." Its authority comes from Congress; the Secretary of the Treasury has full power to administer and enforce IRS law.

Everyone in the United States, citizen or non-citizen, is responsible each year for submitting a complete and accurate income-tax statement to the IRS. This is called "filing a tax return." Tax returns have to be filed by April 15 every year for the previous year's income.

International visiting scholars have federal income-tax obligations, and this section give you some basic information regarding your responsibilities. It should not, however, be considered individual tax advice. For more details, consult the ISSS website under scholar information as follows: <https://www.colorado.edu/issss/student-resources/current-students/information-all-international-students/income-tax-obligations>.

A staff member in Payroll and Benefits or a professional tax preparer will help you determine if a tax treaty exists between your home country and the United States.

## Your Responsibility under International Visitor Tax Laws

In many countries, the government assesses and collects from individuals the tax they owe. In the United States, just the opposite is true. It is each individual's personal responsibility to meet his or her tax obligations. You are responsible for helping your employer estimate how much of your income should be "withheld" (or deducted) from your wages for the purpose of paying taxes. Your employer must file a form W-4, and pays the estimated amount directly to the U.S. Treasury on your behalf. In your annual tax return, you must reconcile your account with the government to verify that you paid the right amount over the course of the year. If you paid too much, you may claim a refund, which will be paid promptly unless the government disagrees with your calculations.

US tax laws are complex, so some international visitors choose to ignore their income tax obligation. Be aware, however, that with today's technology, the amount of information shared between the IRS and the Department of Homeland Security is increasing, and you can be penalized for not filing correctly and on time.

Two classifications, resident and non-resident, determine how much income is taxed. For immigration purposes, the term "resident" is an individual who, though not a citizen of the United States, has the right to reside here. When the IRS uses the term "resident" it means something different. A resident is an individual who has spent enough time in the United States to be taxed as a US citizen or permanent resident, even though she/he may be a nonimmigrant, such as an international scholar in J or H status.

## Reporting Requirements for J-2 Dependents

J-2 dependents, regardless of age, are expected to file an annual tax form even if they have no income from a US source on IRS form 8843. A J-2 dependent with permission to work in the United States is taxed on his or her earnings, and will have to file a tax return.

## Social Security Tax

Visitors often have questions about payment of a U.S. tax called "Social Security tax", or "FICA." FICA is an additional tax on earnings that provides benefits to retired workers. Most J scholars are not subject to this tax, but J-2 dependents with work permission are. You can get more information about this tax from Payroll and Benefit Services.

## Sources of Help for Preparing your Tax Return

There are a number of sources you can turn to for help with filing your tax return. You can contact a professional tax preparer. ISSS recommends that you ask the preparer if he/she has experience with tax returns for non-US residents. Other sources are the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), which can be contacted at 1-800-829-1040 or <http://www.irs.gov/>.

You may be able to use a software program specifically designed to help temporary visitors to the U.S file their federal tax returns. One example of this kind of software is GLACIER, which is an online software program. Please note that most commercially available software has not been programmed with appropriate tax filing information for temporary visitors to the U.S., so you should not buy software unless you are sure it will work for your situation.

Please don't ask an ISSS advisor for advice on filing your taxes. We are experts at many things, but taxes are not one of them.

## Useful terms

<i>Alien:</i>	A term used by the Internal Revenue Service to denote an individual who is not a citizen of the United States.
<i>Exempt Individual:</i>	A person not subject to the Substantial Presence Test (see below), which determines if an individual files as a resident or a non-resident. Many visitors misunderstand the term to mean that they are not required to file a tax return and/or pay taxes.
<i>Non-immigrant:</i>	An individual with a permanent residence abroad who is in the United States temporarily, as in the case of an international scholar.
<i>Non-resident:</i>	An individual in the United States temporarily (usually less than six years). Although required to file an annual federal income-tax return, nonresident aliens pay tax only on income from U.S. sources.
<i>Resident:</i>	An individual who is a U.S. citizen, a U.S. permanent resident, or a nonimmigrant who has been in the United States long enough to be considered a resident for tax purposes.
<i>Social Security:</i>	A term used to describe an agency, a card, and two types of taxes. The Social Security Administration (SSA) is an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The card bears a unique nine-digit identification number and is issued to qualified individuals primarily to determine eligibility for social benefits earned through various forms of employment. The Social Security Number is also used by the IRS for data collection and record keeping. The taxes, known as FICA (Federal Insurance Contribution Act) and Medicare, are withheld by employers from workers' wages and paid to the federal government for redistribution to workers after their retirement.
<i>Substantial Presence Test:</i>	A formula devised by the IRS to determine whether an alien is a resident or non-resident for tax purposes in a given year. F and J students and scholars follow different rules in regards to when they are required to count their days of presence in the United States towards this test. Individuals should keep their substantial presence test updated with the International Taxation Office to ensure correct tax withholding.
<i>Tax Treaty:</i>	An agreement between the United States and another country to determine how the country's nationals will be taxed when temporarily in the United States. A treaty can confer certain tax benefits. A note of caution, however, tax treaties are very specific. Not all residents of a tax-treaty country will qualify for tax benefits.
<i>Taxpayer ID Or Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN):</i>	Individuals who are not eligible for a Social Security number (routinely issued only to U.S. citizens, U.S. permanent residents, and nonimmigrants authorized to work) receive from the IRS a unique nine-digit number for tax purposes.
<i>Withholding:</i>	Deduction taken from an individual's salary for purposes of meeting that individual's income-tax obligation. Amounts are deducted by the employer and paid directly to the U.S. Treasury on the individual's behalf.

## Forms and Publications

<https://www.irs.gov/forms-instructions>

IRS Publication 519 "US Tax Guide for Aliens" under Forms and Publications provides a lot of useful information.

1-800-829-1040: to call for general tax information. (ask for Technical division).

1-800-829-3676: to order forms or publications

## Section 10

## Social Life in the U.S.

The content below includes information about relationships, safety, and programs for international visitors.

### Greetings

Friends and acquaintances can be called by their first names. As a show of respect, an older person and professional people (doctors or your professors, for example), should be called by their title and last name (Mr./Ms. Doe, Doctor Jones or Professor Smith). Some older people prefer to be called by their first name, and

they may give you permission to do so, especially if they know you are from a culture where elders are never called by their first name.

A "hi" (less formal) or "hello", "good morning," or "good evening" (a little more formal) are standard greetings. People say, "Hi!" or "How are you?" or slang "How's it going?" or "What's up?" and then may not wait for a response. This is more of a greeting than a question. You can acknowledge them by simply waving or responding with an in-kind "hello" or "I'm fine, thanks."

People usually shake hands when meeting for the first time; it is not necessary to shake hands with people you already know. If it is inappropriate in your culture to shake hands, do not feel like you are obligated to do so.

## Invitations

If an acquaintance or someone you are not really very close to invites you to get together or "hang out," they will probably ask you in person or by e-mail. If you say yes, they will expect you to show up, but will understand if you don't. However, if you have accepted a formal invitation, you are expected to show up at the date and time on which you agreed. If you find that you cannot attend after accepting the invitation, let the invitee know as quickly as possible. It is considered impolite if you call a few hours before the scheduled time to cancel, especially if you don't really have a good reason to do so. If you have been invited to spend time with someone and you don't want to, just politely decline.

If you would like to visit someone you don't know very well at their home, it is polite to call first. "Drop in" on close friends only.

## Friendship

Americans generally have a group of really close friends - people they trust, confide in, and share good times and bad times with. Classmates and colleagues are casual friends, or acquaintances. As is probably true in your own culture, how and if a friendship develops is up to you.

Initially, you will have to make an effort to meet people. You may find that you have more in common with other international visitors than with Americans, and some of your strongest friendships may be made with other internationals.

## Dating

If you like someone and would like to spend some time with them, it's ok to ask them on a date! If you are from different cultures, try and set some mutually-agreed upon guidelines to avoid potential misunderstandings; and remember to talk about these differences so that you appreciate and enjoy each other. Don't base your perception of relationships on what you see in American movies or on television! They don't accurately portray what dating and relationships are like here.

Beware of mixing alcohol and dating, particularly in a cross cultural setting. Alcohol impairs judgment and behavioral cues can be misread and confused.

## Gender Roles

Gender roles in the U.S., have no clear definition. It is common for both men and women to work outside the home and have more equality in their relationships. However, in some areas of life, men's and women's roles still prescribe to more traditional gender roles. If you come from a society where roles are clearly defined by gender, the dynamics of a male/female relationship in the U.S. may take some time to understand.

The CU Center for Inclusion and Social Change offers general support for the GLBTQ community, networking, a resource library and a gathering place. Please refer to their website for more details:

<https://www.colorado.edu/gsc/>.

## Sexual Assault, and Sexual Harassment

It is a sad fact that one in four women and one in twelve men will be sexually assaulted during their lifetime, and that 80 percent of them will know who attacked them. Ninety percent of sexual assaults on campus involve alcohol.

Sexual assault is “any sexual contact or attention committed by force, threats, bribes, manipulation, pressure, tricks, or violence.” It includes rape and attempted rape, child molestation, incest, and sexual harassment. Sexual assault is a terrifying and often brutal crime, the effects of which are shared by the victims and the people who love them, even if they are miles away. Date rape, or acquaintance rape, is “forced sexual activity” by someone the victims knows. Sexual assault is never a victim’s fault; no one ever “asks for” or deserves it.

If the person you are with appears interested in a sexual relationship and you are not, it is very important that you say so, clearly and forcefully. And if someone is telling you no, take them seriously: they are not interested. Listen. No means no! Sexual assault in the U.S. is a very serious crime with serious consequences.

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual attention. It can involve intimidation, threats, coercion, or promises. Harassment may occur between members of the same or opposite gender and between any combinations of members in the campus community: students, faculty, staff, and administrators. It generally occurs when one person, the harasser, holds a position of real or perceived authority over the other individual. Harassment can occur anywhere on campus, including the classroom, the workplace, or a residence hall.

Examples might be:

- unwelcome physical contact
- persistent pressure for dates or sexual favors
- sexually explicit visual material (calendars, posters, cards, software, websites, or e-mail)
- promises or rewards (a better grade, a promotion) in return for sexual favors
- persistent suggestive comments about physical appearance or clothing
- use or display of sexually offensive or degrading pictures or reading material not legitimately related to the subject matter of a course
- persistent sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions

Sexual harassment issues have been addressed by the University administration, and they have set clear policies that every member of the campus community must follow.

<http://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/>.

## Alcohol, Smoking, and Illegal Drugs

<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/alcohol> and <http://www.colorado.edu/aod/>

U.S. laws concerning the sale and consumption of alcohol may seem either liberal or conservative, depending on where you have lived before coming to the U.S. In the United States, it is illegal to purchase or drink alcohol, including beer and wine, until you reach the age of 21. It is also against the law to buy alcohol for someone under the age of 21.

Heed the warning about drinking and driving – IT IS ILLEGAL. You will be in serious trouble if you are over the “legal limit” while driving. Driving includes operating any vehicle, even a bicycle. A driver in Colorado is presumed to be “under the influence” if their blood alcohol content (BAC) is 0.08. Colorado has set a lower limit of 0.05 BAC where a driver is presumed to be “driving while ability impaired.” Either one of these will get you into big trouble. You will be subject to the possibility of a fine, jail time, or deportation. If you are involved in an accident while intoxicated, you could hurt or kill yourself or somebody else.

<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/no-smoking-policy>

Do you smoke? By Colorado law, public buildings are “smoke free,” meaning that you cannot smoke in any part of the building. Some buildings may have spaces designated for smokers, but all restaurants are smoke free. If

you are a guest in someone's home, always ask permission before you smoke. Even if you are in your own room, it is polite to ask your guests if anyone objects to your smoking before you reach for a cigarette. Smoking is not permitted in campus offices, classrooms, or in any public building. Only those older than 18 years of age may purchase tobacco products.

The manufacture, use, possession, or sale of illegal drugs or narcotics like marijuana, hashish, amphetamines, hallucinogens, barbiturates, cocaine, heroin, and a whole host of others, are serious offenses under Colorado, federal, and immigration law. If you are caught dealing or using illegal drugs, you will be in serious trouble with the law and the possibility of prison or deportation is very real. Recently the State of Colorado passed a law allowing medical use of marijuana for certain people. Please note that this is a Colorado law only and does not apply in other U.S. states. Medical marijuana use is also not allowed in all cities or towns in Colorado. In addition, such use may still be considered illegal under federal law as well as under U.S. immigration law.

## Participating in Campus Life

International scholars and their families are invited to participate in any of the offerings listed below. Ask an international scholar advisor, your departmental liaison, or colleagues about ways to get involved, if you choose.

**International Coffee Hour:** Where cultures meet! International Coffee Hour offers lots of fun, good conversation, and free refreshments in an informal setting. Join students, faculty, and staff for free refreshments on Friday afternoons, from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., during the fall and spring semesters when classes are in session, in the UMC food court area across from Baby Doe's. Friends and family members are welcome.

**Wednesdays at Somewhere** is a weekly dinner planned by a student group called CU International that takes place in a different restaurant each week. Participants do not need to make a reservation but just show up and join the group. Each person pays for their own dinner. Friends and family members are welcome! For each week's location, check the CU International website <http://internationalcu.com/>, email them at [cuinternational@colorado.edu](mailto:cuinternational@colorado.edu) or check the ISSS Facebook fan page <http://www.facebook.com/ISSSCU>.

### International Festival

Each April, CU Boulder students host an international festival for the campus and Boulder communities: <https://www.colorado.edu/event/ifest/>. The International Festival is highly successful and has grown every year since it began. In a carnival-like atmosphere, international students display items from their home countries, serve food, and perform dances, songs, plays, and martial arts. The International Festival is usually held on the Saturday following the Conference on World Affairs.

## Practicing Your Religion

The United States is a multicultural society founded on tolerance and mutual respect; you should feel free to practice your religion. Organized religious groups of many denominations are found at CU Boulder and the community at large.

For a list of religious organizations on campus and how to choose a group, see the link for Student Organizations and search for your specific religion: <https://www.colorado.edu/involvement/organizations>.

How Americans worship (or choose not to practice any religion at all), is a very personal choice. Some people practice and talk about their religion openly; others practice quietly and keep it to themselves. Still others are exceedingly passionate about their beliefs. They may try to convince you that your religion is wrong or try to convert you to a religion other than your own. This is offensive and an invasion of your privacy. If you feel pushed into a situation that threatens your beliefs, politely but firmly tell them you are not interested.

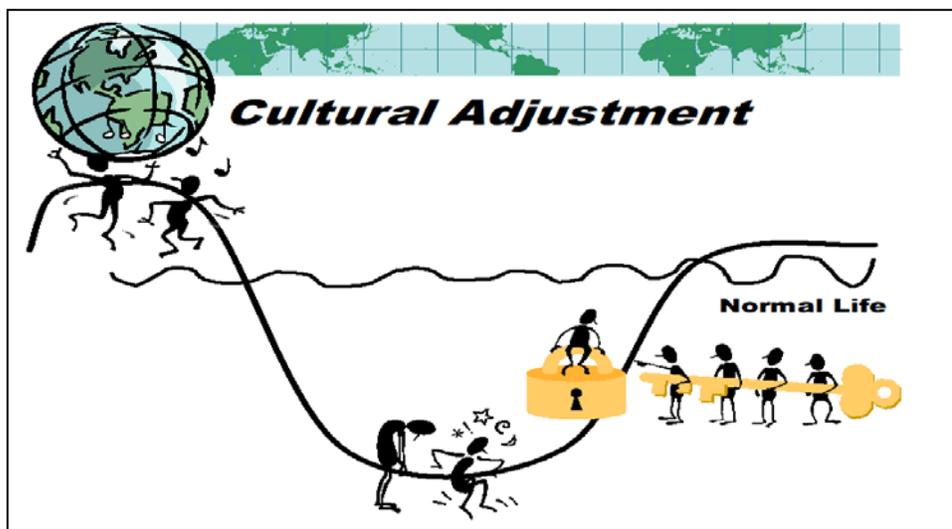
As you settle down to living in the United States, you may find yourself experiencing some challenges that come from adjusting to life in a new culture. This is sometimes called “culture shock” or “cultural adjustment.” What is important for you is to understand that this is a normal part of adjusting to living in a different country with different cultural ways of behaving.

Just as you brought clothes and other personal items with you to the United States, you will also carry invisible “cultural baggage.” Cultural baggage contains the values that are important to you and the patterns of behavior that are customary in your culture. The more you know about your personal values and how they are derived from your culture, the better prepared you will be to see and understand the cultural differences you will encounter in the U.S.

There are different stages in the cultural adjustment process that will be helpful for you to understand:

1. **The Honeymoon Stage.** This is usually the initial phase, where you are excited about your opportunity to work in a U.S. university, arriving in a new place, meeting new people. Most visitors find it to be exhilarating, a time of new experiences, sights, sounds, and activities. With so much to learn and absorb in the new culture, the initial period of settling in often seems like an adventure. During this time, you will tend to look for and identify similarities between your home culture and your host culture. You will find that people really are friendly and helpful. The procedures are different, but there are patterns, things that you can learn and depend on. You may classify other aspects of the culture that seem unusual or even unattractive as curious, interesting, or “quaint.” There will be many opportunities to meet people off campus; such opportunities can be rewarding, but they also present an expanded array of cultural puzzles.
2. **The Uncomfortable Stage.** This is the point where you start to notice how things are different from what you are used to. People don’t behave as they ‘normally’ do back home, and you are not quite sure you understand what people mean because they are using ‘slang’ words you are not familiar with. This stage is characterized by feelings of frustration, anxiety, homesickness, feelings of tiredness, depression. Some people may start avoiding meeting Americans, complain frequently, or tend to only hang out with people of their own nationality. Things don’t seem as fun as they did in the first stage.
3. **The Adjustment Stage.** This is the point where you start to work through the second stage; you adapt and make changes in your behavior or attitudes, which allow you to deal more effectively with the challenges faced in the new culture. Things start to feel more normal because you are becoming more familiar with the culture and ways of behavior.

These stages of cultural adjustment are sometimes shown as a cultural adjustment curve:



**Coping with Cultural Adjustment:**

The most effective way to combat culture shock is to step back from an event that has bothered you, assess it, and search for an appropriate explanation and response. Try the following:

- Observe how others are acting in the same situation
- Describe the situation, what it means to you, and your response to it
- Ask a local resident or someone with extensive experience how they would have handled the situation and what it means in the host culture
- Plan how you might act in this or similar situations in the future
- Test the new behavior and evaluate how well it works
- Decide how you can apply what you have learned the next time you find yourself in a similar situation

Throughout the period of cultural adaptation, take good care of yourself. Read a book or rent a video in your home language, take a short trip if possible, exercise and get plenty of rest, write an email or telephone home, eat good food, and do things you enjoy with friends. Take special notice of things you enjoy about living in the host culture.

Although it can be disconcerting and a little scary, the “shock” gradually eases as you begin to understand the new culture. It is useful to realize that often the reactions and perceptions of others toward you - and you toward them - are not personal evaluations but are based on a clash of cultural values. The more skilled you become in recognizing how and when cultural values and behaviors are likely to come in conflict, the easier it becomes to make adjustments that can help you avoid serious difficulties.

**"Will I Lose My Own Culture?"**

Sometimes visitors worry about “losing their culture” if they become too well adapted to the host culture. Don't worry! It is virtually impossible to lose the culture in which you were raised. In fact, learning about the new culture often increases your appreciation for and understanding of your own culture. Don't resist the opportunity to become bicultural, able to function competently in two cultural environments.

As you increase your abilities to manage and understand the new social system, practices that recently seemed so strange will become less puzzling. Eventually you will adapt sufficiently to relax and fully enjoy the experience. And you will recover your sense of humor!