Faculty Onboarding Program

Welcome

Welcome to the Paul M. Rady Department of Mechanical Engineering at CU Boulder! This onboarding guide is designed to help you get started with key resources, policies, and support systems. Please review the materials at your own pace. After reviewing, we will schedule an initial meeting to answer any questions you may have.

Onboarding Timeline

The onboarding process includes three key touchpoints:

1. Initial Meeting – After reviewing this guide, we will meet to answer any questions and provide additional support.

2. Mid-Year Check-In – A brief meeting to reflect on your experience and address any ongoing needs.

3. End-of-Year Check-In – A final review of your first year and planning for the next steps in your faculty journey.

Getting Started

Before the start of the first semester

- Administrative and HR Formalities: campus HR onboarding page
    - Access to keys and Buff OneCard
    - Setting up IT Services, including CU-Boulder credentials (IdentiKey), and access to the faculty portal: myCUinfo
    - Submit I-9 documents to I-9 office
    - Understanding payroll and benefits
    - Securing parking and transportation arrangements
- Office Setup
    - Office allocation and setup processes are handled by the Department Chair and Facilities Management Coordinator.
- Mentoring Program
    - All tenure-track and research faculty members hired at the Assistant Professor level and all faculty members hired as Assistant Teaching Professors are assigned two mentors. As part of the onboarding process, the HR & Operations Manager, in consultation with the Chair, selects two mentors for the newly hired faculty. These mentors contact the new hire at the earliest opportunity to establish communication and help with non-administrative matters.

- Course Preparation
  - Identify assigned course
  - Course setup, classroom facilities and equipment
    The course setup, including the classroom, the meeting times, the course sections, and the instructor assignment, is done by the Academic Operations Coordinator. Once the course is in the system, the details can be found at https://classes.colorado.edu/. Note that some classrooms are equipped with classroom capture facilities, which allow for recording lectures and/or running a remote section synchronously through Zoom.
  - Review previously developed materials and available resources
    Associate Chair for Undergraduate Education or the mentor can help identify the faculty who have taught the course in the past. These faculty can assist with providing access to previously developed course materials including previous Canvas implementations which you can edit to your needs.
  - Develop syllabus, and integrate course into Canvas
    In general, faculty are encouraged to consider course updates or improvements in terms of contents, pedagogy and logistics. For core undergraduate courses, instructors should generally follow previously established course contents and learning objectives guidelines. When in doubt, consult with the faculty who have taught the course in the past and with the department's Undergraduate Curriculum Committee via Associate Chair for Undergraduate Education.
- Research Planning
  - Discuss research directions and funding opportunities with mentors and faculty
  - Explore collaboration opportunities
  - Plan student hiring and setup research lab or research resources
- Service Expectations
  - Participate in assigned department committee
  - Participate in department meetings
  - Explore and plan for external service activities
- Get familiar with Department Resources

During the first semester
- Set up lab or other research-specific resources.
  - Meet with the ME Facilities Management Coordinator to understand your space and how to manage it.
  - Create a CU website to advertise your new group to potential students and collaborators. Connect with the ME Content and Communication Specialist, Alexander Servantez (Alexander.Servantez@colorado.edu).
  - Aside from standard personal computers, for computing resources, researchers can either use the free Alpine cluster or twice per year you have the opportunity to purchase a dedicated node in a CU-serviced cluster.

- Purchasing
  - [Financial Guides & Resources](#)
    - Note that there are restrictions on vendors we are allowed to purchase from, especially in relation to [office furniture](#). It is best to reach out to current purchasing agents prior to purchase.
    - Set up a time to visit the [CU Surplus Store](#) to obtain used furniture.
    - Regarding software, first check the [software catalog](#) available at CU Boulder. Software purchases can be initiated via [the request form](#), but the fulfillment usually requires completion of the [Digital Technology Compliance Review Request (Form A)](#).
- Develop research and student hiring plans
  - Meet the ME Graduate Program Chair to understand how and when ME recruits graduate students
  - Do the same for any other program or department from which you might draw students. The timing and mechanisms are different for each program, and this can be helpful to you when building your group.
- Establish relationships with department staff, Chair and Associate Chairs
  - Get familiar with [department organization](#) and the [department staff](#)
  - Review [Department Faculty Handbook](#)

Teaching and Mentorship

- Teaching guidelines
  - Course preparation and delivery
    - We use Canvas at CU. See the [Canvas Instructor Support](#) page to learn how to use Canvas.
    - [Canvas Template Initiative](#)
  - Scheduling classes and reserving rooms
    - Before the start of the semester, the Academic Operations Coordinator will reach out to you to schedule your class and reserve a room.
  - Preparing syllabi, assessments, and course materials
    - In your syllabus, be sure to include the [required syllabus statements](#).
    - Syllabus Best Practices
      - Clearly state and consistently enforce syllabus policies; explain the rationale to students when possible.
      - Consider policies for: communication expectations, technology use, attendance, regrade requests, late work, collaboration, academic integrity, and constructive feedback.
      - See the [Skeleton Syllabus with Policy Options](#) for customizable examples.
        - The department is working toward shared policies for late homework and travel/missed exams—

discussions will continue to occur at department teaching lunches.

- o [Campus Academic Instruction](#) Guidance
    - In particular, pay attention to the new academic calendar with a mid-term reading day in October.
    - Note that the new mid-term reading day effectively shortens the semester to 14 weeks, plan course pacing accordingly.
    - Final Exam Schedule - available in Buff Portal in October; you can also find your assigned time earlier [here](#) based on your meeting pattern.
  - o Please remember to consult the [ME Midterm Calendar](#) when scheduling your exams to avoid conflicts with common Math/Physics/APPM exams and other ME classes. Add your exams once they are scheduled.
  - o Actively engaging students through well-defined learning objectives.
- Student Engagement and Policies
  - o Developing effective assessment policies
  - o Providing timely feedback and maintaining clear communication channels
- Long-term Planning
  - o Creating longer-term teaching goals aligned with the group and department priorities
- Mentoring and Advising Students
  - o Academic advising: guiding students on course selection and academic goals.
  - o Graduate Supervision: supporting graduate students in their research and professional development.
- Campus Resources
  - o Academic calendar overview
  - o Canvas support and resources
  - o Access to the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#)

Research Guidelines

- Planning
  - o How to utilize start-up resources: consult with mentors and faculty
  - o Explore research funding opportunities (e.g. [grants.gov](#))
    - NSF [CAREER Award](#)
    - April / May [ONR Young Investigator Program](#)
    - Feb [DOE Early Career Award](#)
    - [RIO Faculty Funding Opportunities](#)
    - Sign up for [RIO's Bulletin](#) (biweekly research funding opportunity summaries)
  - o Explore department-, college-, campus-level and/or external collaborations and interdisciplinary initiatives
- Proposal Preparations: Utilizing the [Office of Contracts and Grants](#)

- - Explore funding opportunity search mechanisms
    - Services provided by RIO
    - The CEAS research support office
    - Internal seed grants
  - Initiate the process by submitting the online [Proposal Submission Request](#)
  - Work on the budget and other details with the OCG Proposal Analyst
- Campus and Departmental Support Services for Awarded Projects
  - Received an award nomination (congratulations!): email the notification to ocg@colorado.edu for processing and cc your department's finance professional.
  - [OCG Award Management](#)
  - Received a [Speedtype](#) notification via email: congratulations!
  - Spending $
    - Hiring people: department-level [request form](#), supported by the department HR & Payroll Coordinator
    - Purchasing & Travel: please refer to the [Financial Guides and Resources](#).
  - Reporting: it is best to keep track of project reviews and reporting requirements on your own.
  - Project finances, supported by the department's finance professional assigned to you
  - Learn about managing industrial applications of your research through patent filing, entrepreneurial grants and launching of start-up companies: [Venture Partners](#)
- Administrative Matters
  - Disclosure of External Professional Activities ([DEPA](#)) must be current.

Service Responsibilities

- Participation in Departmental Meetings and Committees
- External service opportunities, such as
  - Serve on a grant review panel where you plan to submit proposals (e.g. NSF)
  - Serve on the technical program committee for conferences populated by the faculty in your field

Performance Evaluation and Career Development

- Keep your CV up to date. This is the main resource you mentors and ad-hoc committees will use to prepare evaluations and your reappointment and promotion cases. Pro tip: in the list of publications, highlight the names of the students you are mentoring at CU. You can find more guidance on your CV from CEAS here: [CEAS CV Template Guide for Reviews](#).

- Faculty Report of Professional Activity (FRPA), due by February 1 every year, accessed via CU Resources tab on [myCUinfo](#). Note that you can enter data into this during the year which can save you time in January, particularly for unusual service activities that you may have trouble recalling. Pro tip: Put "FRPA" in the notes of any calendar event like sitting on a PhD committee that you will want to put on your FRPA in January. Then you just search your calendar to remind you of those events. In addition to your CV, your FRPA's are used as the main sources of information about your teaching, research, and service activities in preparation of your evaluations, and your reappointment and promotion cases.
- The Department's Expectations and Evaluation Processes are on the [Faculty & Staff Resources](#) page.

Key Resources

- [CU HR New Employees Portal](#)
  Comprehensive onboarding roadmap including benefits, payroll, and campus systems.
- [Office of Faculty Affairs (OFA) Welcome](#)
  Orientation, teaching support, and faculty development resources.
- [RIO Faculty Development & Workshops](#)
  Workshops and programs to support faculty research and career growth.
- [ME Faculty & Staff Resources](#)
  Department-specific policies, forms, and mentoring resources.