



**INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS**  
**COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY**

## **International Student Survival Guide**

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## **1 Disclaimer**

This document is intended as a resource to help students navigate their CSU journey and is based on the input of many international students at Colorado State University, who know first-hand what it is like to adapt and thrive in a new environment. The document is an updated version of a guide created by international students in the spring of 2021. It has been updated regularly since then, thanks to the valuable feedback received from several graduate international students and from international student advisors. Many thanks to all of them for their valuable comments.

Please use this document as a starting guide to ensure your success at CSU. Please email ([iss@colostate.edu](mailto:iss@colostate.edu)) if you have any questions, feedback, or suggestions. The Survival Guide depends on student input. Wishing you an excellent educational experience at CSU!

## **2 Home department**

The Office of International Programs (OIP), and particularly ISSS, (International Student and Scholar Services) is our home for the purpose of maintaining our immigration status and taking advantage of the opportunities available to us as international students. They have a wonderful website with links to all the resources discussed in this Guide. Please stay tuned to their email and social media communications and updates during your journey at CSU.

## **3 Pre-arrival**

Pre-arrival information is available from the International Students and Scholar Services office (ISSS) in different formats, including email, video, and social media posts.

Important links to pre-arrival information are below. Here is a short pre-arrival video to get started: [col.st/pdbzf](https://col.st/pdbzf)

Here are some tips to help with this first stage of the international student journey:

1. Stay in touch with ISSS [iss@colostate.edu](mailto:iss@colostate.edu). They are your go-to resource. Graduate students should also remain in contact with their academic department and the Graduate School.
2. Check your immigration documents as soon as you receive them and make sure all the information is correct. If you find errors, contact ISSS immediately. You may also want to contact your graduate student group, who can help connect you to the appropriate unit.

3. Get the appropriate financial documents in order. Contact the International Enrollment Center [international@colostate.edu](mailto:international@colostate.edu) if you have questions on what you need.
4. Apply timely for the appropriate visa. Most of us are on an F1 or J1 visa. Check out this video on successfully navigating the visa process: [col.st/yskgj](https://col.st/yskgj)
5. Pack appropriately for life in Colorado. This Pre-Arrival Guide provides helpful information on what to pack: [col.st/shvvc](https://col.st/shvvc)
6. Keep in touch with the graduate coordinators in your department. You can see who the coordinators are on your department's website.
7. Download the Campus Community app: [col.st/ghdqy](https://col.st/ghdqy)

## 4 Resources

### 4.1 Life at CSU

1. **Housing** - Selecting where and whom you live with will be one of the major decisions to make. Below are some resources to help you with this process.

- On-campus housing: [col.st/iayrl](https://col.st/iayrl)
- Off-campus housing: [col.st/xwvjv](https://col.st/xwvjv)
- Student Legal Services: [col.st/eaanc](https://col.st/eaanc)
- CSU International RAMS Facebook page: [col.st/cz2mk](https://col.st/cz2mk)

2. **Food** - Fort Collins is home to several cuisines. Some resources for food are:

- On-campus dining: [col.st/hyqh9](https://col.st/hyqh9)
- Old town restaurants: [col.st/lda66](https://col.st/lda66)
- Grocery stores near campus include Lucky's and Target, which has a foods department. Other shopping places in Fort Collins are King Soopers, Walmart, Sprouts, and Whole Foods, and all are accessible by public transportation. Please contact cultural centers (4.10) if you need any assistance with food options aligned with your ethnic or religious preferences and background.
- CSU has a pantry to combat food insecurity. For hours, visit their website: [col.st/dw2al](https://col.st/dw2al)

### 3. Transportation on Campus and in Fort Collins

- Transportation options around campus and the city can be explored here: [col.st/xtti4](http://col.st/xtti4)
- CSU offers bus services free of charge to full-time students, faculty, and staff at CSU. For bus routes, visit: [col.st/sbj0n](http://col.st/sbj0n) or [col.st/tbv3w](http://col.st/tbv3w)
- Bicycles are an easy and popular mode of transportation through the city of Fort Collins. To see how to rent or purchase and register a bike, and for bike routes on campus, visit: [col.st/tbv3w](http://col.st/tbv3w) or [col.st/xvndj](http://col.st/xvndj)
- You may purchase or lease a car. You will need to have a U.S. driver's license to rent or drive a car. There are driving schools that offer classes. You will have to take a written and a driving test through the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) before getting a license. If you decide to purchase a car, you will need to purchase appropriate car insurance, and if you take the vehicle to campus, you will need to purchase a parking permit.
  - o Permits can be purchased here: [col.st/xvndj](http://col.st/xvndj)
  - o Car rental and taxis services:  
Zipcar: [col.st/i0gte](http://col.st/i0gte)  
Uber, Lyft, and taxis are available in Fort Collins.
- The Police Department at CSU has a free service for students to walk safely to their apartments from dusk to dawn: [col.st/3i3n1](http://col.st/3i3n1)

### 4. Finances and Banking

First National Bank (FNB) and the Canvas Credit Union have branches at the Lory Student Center. During international student orientation, these financial institutions are available to assist new students opening checking and savings accounts.

### 5. RamCard

The university ID is more than an ID. It can also be used to load money and pay for goods and services. During international student orientation, new students can apply for and get their RamCard. Further information about this card is available here: [col.st/bqz30](http://col.st/bqz30)

### 6. Social Security Number

Social Security numbers are only issued by the U.S. government to students who have proof of employment. For further information, please visit our Social Security page: [col.st/p4stm](http://col.st/p4stm)

## 7. Shopping

The Lory Student Center houses the university bookstore as well as multiple food vendors. In addition, there are several large stores and small shops within walking distance of the university campus. Public transportation is also available for students wanting to visit other stores, such as Walmart, Dollar Tree, Costco, Goodwill, and shopping malls not within walking distance from the campus.

## 8. Laundry

Most apartment complexes have laundry facilities with washing machines and dryers in the same building. These may be free or coin operated. Laundry facilities usually have machines to exchange dollar bills for coins, and machines to purchase detergent.

## 9. Phone

AT& T, T-Mobile, MetroPCS are some of the providers available in the area

## 10. Internet services

These are available through several providers, including Xfinity, CenturyLink, EarthLink, and DirectTV.

## 11. Renters insurance

Several companies provide renters' insurance, including Liberty Mutual, Geico, and Allstate.

## 12. Community

There are several ways to meet people during your journey at CSU. ISSS has extensive programming designed to help you meet other students and have fun. Please use our community app, Campus Community, regularly, and check our weekly newsletter and your email and social media for information on activities.

## 4.2 On-campus Resources

1. Student support resources, which provide opportunities to participate in the campus environment, are compiled here: [col.st/lhyvw](http://col.st/lhyvw)
2. The Hub is your one-stop place for support with registration, records, financial aid, bill payment, and on-campus housing and dining services. You can visit them at the Lory Student Center (Room 175) or contact them by email or phone. [col.st/wtus5](http://col.st/wtus5)
3. Check out the graduate mentoring program, as well as graduate student groups and their activities! Resources available to graduate students can be found on the Graduate School website: [col.st/koo11](http://col.st/koo11)
4. International Student and Scholar Services provides many resources, including advising, for international students. [col.st/yzjmf](http://col.st/yzjmf)

5. The Institute for Learning and Teaching (TILT) offers academic support, resources, and tutoring for students. [col.st/rmvnb](https://colostate.edu/rmvnb)
6. CSU's Catalog provides a guide for all colleges and departments at CSU. [col.st/me3o7](https://colostate.edu/me3o7)
7. For information about on-campus employment, visit the Career Center or your academic department directly (for graduate assistantships). Housing and Dining hires a considerable number of international students. Students can also look in specific units, such as the library and on-campus commercial venues. International students are not eligible to work under the federal work study program: [col.st/ptaxk](https://colostate.edu/ptaxk)
8. Students who are finishing their course requirements or starting their thesis or dissertation research should review the information about how to request authorization to under-enroll. This is called a Reduced Credit Load authorization. To get approved, students need to discuss the request with their academic advisor before submitting the request to ISSS. [col.st/gw0q2](https://colostate.edu/gw0q2)
9. CSU Mountain Campus at Pingree Park. A good place to hang out on the weekend! [col.st/je0vd](https://colostate.edu/je0vd)
10. Lory Student Center is a student-centered hub for programs and services. [col.st/gfh8v](https://colostate.edu/gfh8v)
11. Adult Learner and Veteran Services [col.st/lb7gh](https://colostate.edu/lb7gh)
12. The best resources for guidance and assistance about registering for classes are your own academic department or the Academic Support Center if you are an undergraduate student. The International Enrollment Center can also assist new students who need to find out who their academic advisor might be.
13. The academic calendar for CSU, which includes all registration-related deadlines as well as holidays, is found here: [col.st/nuiok](https://colostate.edu/nuiok)
14. For information about payment plans and questions about billing, contact Financial Aid directly at The Hub. Students can access help from Financial Aid by phone, email, and in-person. Campus Police: This is a must place to report any stolen property, and especially the loss of any immigration documents. Please report those to [ISSS@colostate.edu](mailto:ISSS@colostate.edu) as well. [col.st/50aux](https://colostate.edu/50aux)
15. Be careful about scams targeting international students!! If you are the victim of a scam, contact Campus Police and IT. For cyber security information and trainings, we highly recommend [col.st/4kb89](https://colostate.edu/4kb89)
16. International students should be careful about the use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. In addition to the information provided at orientation, you can read about these here: [col.st/487mj](https://colostate.edu/487mj)

### 4.3 Paperwork

1. Graduate students working on thesis or dissertation can check submission deadlines here: [col.st/b5dvl](http://col.st/b5dvl)
2. Taxes: ISSS has partnered with Sprintax for Tax Prep to file Federal Taxes. For State tax, students need to file by themselves. Students in the School of Business volunteer to offer tax assistance to students, and the local library and IRS local office may have tax assistance. Contact them directly for updated information.
3. Internal Revenue Service [col.st/g9onl](http://col.st/g9onl)
4. For Colorado tax information, visit: [col.st/n846d](http://col.st/n846d)
5. Immigration-related paperwork: Visit the Forms Directory for information and instructions on a variety of processes, including work authorization for curricular and optional practical training, program extensions, and travel signatures. [col.st/twje9](http://col.st/twje9)
6. International student advising: For available options, and how to make an appointment when needed, visit [col.st/rmlyr](http://col.st/rmlyr)

## 4.4 Professional Development

1. Workshop series - you will receive several emails about multiple workshops conducted by the Graduate School and academic departments at CSU. Please go over such emails regularly.
2. Individual Development Plan (IDP) [col.st/dnnxt](http://col.st/dnnxt)
3. Program paths and differences: For an MS program, one can take coursework alone or do a project or thesis. Talk to your department to understand the differences and requirements for each. Always think about and communicate clearly what you want to do after graduation and plan your program accordingly.
4. Research: The goal of the research is to make some useful contributions to your field. Conferences provide a wonderful opportunity to meet people in the same field. If you are a research student, always be proactive. Find communities outside of your lab. Plan to participate in workshops and conferences in your field. Plan to do symposium posters and write papers for an appropriate journal. Discuss these plans with your thesis or dissertation advisor. Learn about grant writing. The Graduate School has resources on all of this. Check their mailings for information.
5. The Career Center is available for employment support at [col.st/ptaxk](http://col.st/ptaxk)
6. Alumni Association [col.st/3lmzd](http://col.st/3lmzd)
7. On-campus jobs (checkout Handshake) [col.st/pemns](http://col.st/pemns)
8. Interstride is a special portal and app about employment and international opportunities for international students. As a CSU student, you can create a profile and use the services free of charge. Be sure to check your email for the special events about employment organized by ISSS, including career week. [col.st/x6wvn](http://col.st/x6wvn)
9. Research Integrity and Compliance Review Office [col.st/ovz3o](http://col.st/ovz3o)
10. CSU Ventures - helps with commercialization of research. [col.st/h8nj0](http://col.st/h8nj0)
11. Morgan Library - A must visit place! [lib@colostate.edu](mailto:lib@colostate.edu)
12. CSU Writes [col.st/jookx](http://col.st/jookx)
13. CSU Writing Center offers assistance and support for writing. [col.st/o013j](http://col.st/o013j)
14. Franklin A. Graybill Statistics and Data Science Laboratory [col.st/0ywig](http://col.st/0ywig)
15. Graduate Student Teaching Certification Program [col.st/wsipb](http://col.st/wsipb)

## 4.5 Financial Aid

For tuition deferment and payment plans, visit them in person or schedule an appointment with a financial counselor. [col.st/cu3sg](https://col.st/cu3sg)

## 4.6 In trouble?

1. Student Resolution Center [col.st/a0i7c](https://col.st/a0i7c)
2. Student Case Management [col.st/wh6yo](https://col.st/wh6yo)
3. CSU Police Department [col.st/1o4051p](https://col.st/1o4051p)
4. Student Legal Services [col.st/eaanc](https://col.st/eaanc)

## 4.7 Recreation

1. Campus Recreation [col.st/ho8pk](https://col.st/ho8pk)
2. Moby Arena [col.st/thyu0](https://col.st/thyu0)
3. Canvas Stadium [col.st/mn6dw](https://col.st/mn6dw)

## 4.8 Health Resources

1. Student Health Center [col.st/3m3vg](https://col.st/3m3vg)
2. Student Health Network [col.st/6mufx](https://col.st/6mufx)
3. Mental health is essential to student success and an integral ingredient of graduate school experience. Being an international student can add more stress. PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO UTILIZE THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU. The Student Health Network has a useful list of Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources and tools. [col.st/lceul](https://col.st/lceul)

## 4.9 Student Organizations

1. For a comprehensive list of graduate student organizations, visit: [col.st/5haev](https://col.st/5haev)
2. Graduate Student Council [col.st/6st98](https://col.st/6st98)
3. Associated Students of Colorado State University ASCSU [col.st/gdhks](https://col.st/gdhks)
4. Student Leadership, Involvement & Community Engagement SLICE [col.st/yylmg](https://col.st/yylmg)
5. RamLink [col.st/a3aqa](https://col.st/a3aqa)

## 4.10 Inclusive Excellence

Colorado State University has many resources focused on our Land-Grant mission of access and success.

Links to some resources include:

1. Office of Inclusive Excellence [col.st/3yc68](https://colostate.edu/3yc68)
2. Asian Pacific American Cultural Center [col.st/i5ayh](https://colostate.edu/i5ayh)
3. Black/African American Cultural Center [col.st/e4cso](https://colostate.edu/e4cso)
4. El Centro [col.st/j622x](https://colostate.edu/j622x)
5. Native American Cultural Center [col.st/h6n0z](https://colostate.edu/h6n0z)
6. Pride Resource Center [col.st/630ey](https://colostate.edu/630ey)
7. Survivor Advocacy and Foundational Education Center [col.st/luzn6](https://colostate.edu/luzn6)
8. Student Disability Center [col.st/nvdob](https://colostate.edu/nvdob)
9. Graduate Center for Inclusive Mentoring [col.st/x3n3l](https://colostate.edu/x3n3l)

## 5 Common but not common

The following scenarios may occur. But we want you to know that you are not alone.

1. Scared to ask for help
2. Unconscious bias
3. Loneliness and isolation
4. Feeling overwhelmed with work
5. Struggling to understand the bigger picture
6. Concerns about cultural, racial, sexual, or other differences
7. Conflicts with a roommate, classmate, professors, a significant other, family, etc.
8. Failing to find work after CSU
9. Finally, please visit CSU's "YOU" portal. It is a wonderful portal to connect students with health and wellbeing resources: [col.st/h9zcm](https://colostate.edu/h9zcm)
10. At any time, you can also contact ISSS by emailing [iss@colostate.edu](mailto:iss@colostate.edu). Thank you.