COLORADO COLLEGE

International Student Pre-Arrival Guide

Colorado College
Center for Global Education & Field Study
14 East Cache la Poudre Street
Colorado Springs, CO. 80903-3294
+1-719-389-6281
https://www.coloradocollege.edu/offices/globalandfieldstudy/

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PRE-ARRIVAL GUIDE

FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Welcome to Colorado College

We look forward to welcoming you to the Colorado College (CC) community! At CC, we value your presence on-campus and recognize that your experiences and perspectives contribute to the learning both in and out of the classroom and in the Colorado Springs community. Many resources await you at CC: intellectual, cultural and social. What you gain from this experience is only limited by your own motivation.

We have designed the Pre-Arrival Guide to help you obtain your student visa and prepare you for your arrival in the United States, in Colorado Springs, CO, and at Colorado College. Please read the handbook carefully and be sure to let us know if you have any questions.

Our office, ISSS (Int'l Student & Scholar Services), serves as a resource center for all international students. For new students, we hold a special International Student Orientation (ISO) program just prior to the New Student Orientation (NSO) program and the start of classes. We also provide support services and immigration advising to all international students during their program of study at Colorado College. Our office is located on the 2nd Floor of Armstrong Hall and we are available to answer your questions on anything from immigration regulations to life in the United States and at Colorado College.

We wish you a safe journey to Colorado and look forward to meeting you this fall!

Sincerely,

Donna Beziou
International Student & Scholar Specialist
dbeziou@coloradocollege.edu
Office: +1-719-227-8282

Marlene Arnold
Asst. Dir of Int'l Student & Scholar Services
marnold@coloradocollege.edu
Office: +1-719-389-6281

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>>STEP 1: PAY MANDATORY SEVIS FEE

The SEVIS fee is a mandatory government fee that must be paid by students and exchange visitors before applying for an F-1 or J-1 visa. You may pay the fee after you have received your I-20 or DS-2019 from Colorado College. The fee can be paid by credit card, US check, money order, foreign draft by mail, or Western Union. We recommend that students pay the fee online. You may do so by visiting http://www.FMJfee.com, completing the online Form I-901, and charging the fee to a credit or debit card. The system accepts Visa, Mastercard, and American Express credit cards. For instructions on paying the fee through the mail, please visit http://www.ice.gov.sevis/i901/ The SEVIS fee must be paid at least three business days prior to your visa interview.

>> STEP 2: APPLY FOR AN F-1 VISA

You have received your I-20 from Colorado College and paid your SEVIS fee. You are now ready to apply for an F-1 visa. The U.S. Department of State issues visas at U.S. Embassies and Consulates and has detailed information on their website explaining the requirements for applying for an F-1 visa. You are eligible to apply for a visa up to 120 days before the Program Start Date listed on your I-20 Form. Please note, wait times for visa appointments differ, so please plan accordingly based on the embassy or consulate where you will apply. You can find the average visa wait times on the State Department's website.

Here are five things to prepare for in your visa interview:

1. You must show proof of your acceptance to an SEVP-certified school. Your Form I-20 and school acceptance letter from CC will verify your acceptance.
2. You must show that you have the financial ability to pay for school costs plus living expenses (in the amount shown on your Form I-20 that you received from CC). For the interview, bring copies of the financial documents (such as bank statements, financial aid award letters, etc.) you provided to CC in order to be issued your Form I-20. You must also bring your SEVIS fee receipt to prove that you have paid your SEVIS fee.
3. For an F-1 student visa, you should be ready to show you are prepared for the academic program in which you plan to enroll. To do this, the Department of States suggests that you bring copies of any standardized test scores or academic transcripts that you provided to CC in your student application.
4. You may be asked to confirm that your stay in the U.S. is temporary (i.e. you are not permanently immigrating to the U.S.)
5. The interviewing official may be interested to know how you intend to use the education you receive in the US when you return home.

Visas are given at the discretion of the issuing officer. Colorado College cannot intervene in the decision. **IN CASE OF VISA DENIAL**: Do not engage the consular official in an argument. Ask the officer for the reason for the denial in writing and a list of documents he/she would suggest you bring in order to overcome the refusal.

CANADIAN STUDENTS: If you are a citizen of Canada, you do not need a visa; however, you will need to show the SEVIS fee payment receipt, financial documents, passport, and a valid I-20 document at the U.S. port of entry to be admitted to the U.S. as an F-1 student.

>>STEP 3: NEW STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS

In June, you will receive via email with your Colorado College email address, username, password, and student ID number. You will need this information to submit forms throughout the summer. The CC Bound website is an online orientation website that holds most of the information needed for you to begin your life at CC, including information on the New Student Orientation (NSO). You should review the information on CC Bound on a regular basis prior to your arrival to campus. Please read everything carefully and return all forms to the specified office(s) by the due dates. Information will include:

- Information on how to select and register for classes (for degree seeking students only).
- Immunization forms
- Student health insurance information
- Housing information and form
- Details on the meal plan and bookstore
- Account information

>>STEP 4: TRAVEL PLANS

International students are expected to arrive at CC on the scheduled arrival date for their orientation program (Global Scholars Program or International Student Orientation). Click here for all arrival options on getting to Colorado Springs. You are not allowed to enter the United States no more than 30 days before the start date listed on your I-20 form. **DO NOT** enter the United States on a B-2 tourist visa or visa waiver. These visas are not acceptable for the purpose of full-time studies in the United States.

PLEASE NOTE: If you plan to arrive before the official arrival date for your program, you will need to make your own local housing arrangements. Information about local hotels and motels can be found here.

Carry the following documents with you on the plane (Do ***NOT*** pack in your checked luggage):

- Passport with your F-1 visa
- Form I-20
- SEVIS fee receipt notice
- Evidence of financial resources
- Evidence of Student status such as letter of admission

Inform the immigration officer at the port of entry that you will be a student in the United States to ensure that you are admitted in the US with student status.

>> STEP 5: PREPARING TO LEAVE HOME

What to Bring or Not to Bring?

Two of the biggest concerns for any college student are what to bring and what not to bring. When packing, please consider the following recommendations of past students:

For Your Room:
Bring anything that will make your new room your home for the next year...music from home, a small CD player, posters, and pictures of family and friends. **The college provides a free linen packet for international students that includes sheets, blankets and towels. You are allowed to use this service until you can buy your own linens (or for the entire year, if you desire).**

Cultural Items From Your Country:
Having some items from home can help to "break the ice" by providing you with something to share and talk about with your roommate, your classmates, and your new friends. Posters, colorful calendars, books, slides, videos, clothes, country flag, pictures and maps are all things to think about bringing. There will also be opportunities for you to share information about your culture and country with the CC community and with other schools and organizations in Colorado Springs.

Clothing:
As on most campuses in the United States, anything goes when it comes to clothing! Students at CC are very casual and wear everything from old, torn jeans to nice slacks and skirts. The clothes of choice for most students are jeans and a T-shirt. Popular shoes include sandals, boots, running shoes, and hiking shoes.

Be aware that Colorado weather varies greatly from summer to winter. You should pack shorts for nice weather, and heavy sweaters for the colder months. You will need lighter clothing for the first couple of months, and a warm coat, hat, scarf, and gloves for winter. If you do not have clothes for winter, there are several places in Colorado Springs where you can buy them for reasonable prices. If you like outdoor or sporting events, don't forget to bring clothing appropriate for these activities. There is a pool on campus, so you'll want to bring a swimsuit, too.

Food and Meals
Food is different in the United States, and although there are many international dishes and numerous restaurants available, it may take a short adjustment period to get used to our food. Typical meals in the dining hall include spaghetti or other pastas, hamburgers, salads, vegetable stir-fry, sandwiches, pizza, burritos and other Southwestern food. There are plenty of vegetarian and limited vegan options at every meal. People in the U.S. tend to eat a light breakfast and lunch and then save their largest meal for dinner. Dinner is eaten earlier than in many other countries, usually between 5:30 and 6:30 p.m.

If you want to cook traditional dishes from home, you may want to bring some supplies from with you (e.g., spices, etc.). Although there are some ethnic grocery stores in Colorado Springs, it can be difficult to obtain some traditional items. You will quickly learn that most Colorado College students love to try food from various countries. Therefore, we suggest and hope that you'll bring recipes!

A note on computers:
Colorado College provides the use of computer equipment free of charge. Computers are available all over campus including Tutt Library, Barnes Science Center, the Worner Center, and in large residence halls. If you already own a laptop, you will probably want to bring it with you--- but make sure it is insured against damage and theft! If you wish to purchase a computer you may want to wait until you arrive on campus. Lots of additional information about computing at Colorado College may be found at the Office of Information Technology website.

>>STEP 6: PREPARE YOUR FINANCES

Money and Banking

Before you leave home, check with your local bank to learn more about your country's regulations regarding the transfer of funds overseas. Some countries do not allow for large sums of money to be wired abroad, whereas other countries have no limits.

We suggest that you bring a small amount of "startup" money with you ($100 - $150 U.S. dollars) to help make your trip easier. If you have an automatic teller machine (ATM) card, find out before you leave home if you can use it in the U.S. With an international ATM bank card, your parents/sponsor can deposit money into your account at home and you can withdraw the funds at ATM machines throughout Colorado and the United States. If you don't have a card that can be used overseas, check with your bank before you leave to see if it is possible to get a card that can be used in the U.S. The "Plus" and "Cirrus" networks are found widely throughout Colorado and the United States. In addition, ATM machines accept Visa and MasterCard.

You may want to consider opening a bank account once you arrive in Colorado Springs. More information on banking is covered in the Pre-Arrival International Student Orientation course in Canvas.

Paying for Your Tuition and Fees

All billing statements are viewed online via the college's online billing site. Fall semester invoices will be available online in early August. You will access your online billing account via your self-service online portal (more information to come on this). You will also be able to authorize others to view your billing statements and account activity.

- The online billing site will allow you and authorized users to view billing statements online for the term. It will also reflect detailed student account charges/payments in real

time. All students will be required to sign up on for the online billing site, and authorize other users if desired, over the summer (or fall if you're a winter start). You must set-up your online billing account in order to view your invoice. **Your invoice will contain the charges (if applicable) for one semester at Colorado College.**

- **There are several payment methods including:**
  - Cash
  - U.S. Checks
  - Travelers Checks
  - Money Orders
  - Cashier Checks
  - Flywire

For more information on how to make payments and manage your account, please visit the Student Accounts website at: https://www.coloradocollege.edu/offices/studentaccounts/.

Budgeting For Expenses at Colorado College

Many students find it difficult to manage their personal finances during college, and this can be especially challenging for international students unfamiliar with the cost of living in the United States. As a result, we've developed the following figures to help you estimate how much money you will need for one year at Colorado College.

Total Personal Expenses: $175-275/month

Textbooks & Materials (per block)	
Textbooks only	$90 - $150
Notebooks	$2.25
Pen/pencil	$.50 - $3
Lab equipment	$10 - $30
Art supplies	$35 - $80
Calculator	$8 - $90

Personal Items	
Soap	$2.50
Shampoo	$3.50
Deodorant	$3.50
Toothpaste	$3.00
Shaving Cream	$3.50
Sanitary napkins/ Tampons	$4.50

Entertainment and Food	
Movies off campus	$8 - $12

Movies on campus	free - $1
Nice Restaurant	$10 - $30
"Fast Food"	$4 - $10
Ski Area Lift Ticket	$45 - $120/day
CC concerts	free - $30
Ice skating	free - $1
Bus Ride	$1 - $2

>>STEP 7: LIVING IN COLORADO SPRINGS

Colorado Springs is a metropolitan area located at the base of Pikes Peak, the Rocky Mountain Range, and the red sandstone rock formations known as the Garden of the Gods. Its economy is based on tourism, agriculture, military installations and technology businesses. Recreational opportunities are endless in Colorado, and Americans travel from all over the country to enjoy the state's national parks.

Many people think that Colorado offers ideal weather conditions. The mountains provide protection from severe cold in the winter and the altitude (about 6,400 feet above sea level) provides protection from the intense summer heat. The weather is often sunny, but can change unpredictably...sometimes there are several types of weather in one day!

Living in such an arid climate at a high altitude takes time to get used to. You may find that you become short of breath doing everyday activities like climbing stairs. During the first week or two, you may feel slightly dizzy at times or complain of headaches. These symptoms may be a sign of altitude sickness and should pass. However, if these symptoms become severe, it is important that you go to the Boettcher Health Center on campus.

It is very easy to become dehydrated in Colorado's arid climate. Therefore, it is important that you drink a lot of water---even if you do not feel thirsty. Drinking water can help to offset some of the symptoms of altitude sickness. Other effects of the arid climate are dry lips and skin and difficulty

wearing contact lenses. All of these symptoms can be remedied through the use of lip balm, moisturizing body lotion, and eye drops for contact lenses. Some students even complain of nosebleeds during the dry winter months. If you find that you are particularly bothered by the dry climate, having a humidifier in your dorm room can help to alleviate some of the problems. Boettcher Health Center can also give you advice on ways to stay hydrated if you're having recurring problems.

High °F	Low °F		High °C	Low °C
43	18	January	6	-8
45	20	February	7	-7
52	26	March	11	-3
60	33	April	15	1
69	43	May	21	6
79	51	June	26	11
85	57	July	29	14
82	56	August	28	13
75	47	September	24	9
63	36	October	17	2
51	25	November	11	-4
42	18	December	6	-8
62	36	Year	17	2

Average Colorado Springs temperatures

Local Transportation

There are a number of ways to get around campus, the city of Colorado Springs, as well as the state of Colorado. Transportation options are detailed in the Pre-Arrival International Student Orientation in Canvas.

Driving in the United States

It is necessary to have a valid driver's license to operate a motor vehicle in Colorado. In most cases, international students can drive for 90 days using a valid license from another state or country before they must apply for a Colorado Driver's license. More information on Driver's licenses and State ID's is detailed in the Pre-Arrival International Student Orientation in Canvas.

>> STEP 8: LIVING WITH A ROOMMATE

During the first three years at CC, all students are required to live in one of the College's residence halls. It is likely that you will share your room with a roommate. You will receive information about choosing a residence hall from the Office of Residential Life. You will also receive a questionnaire about your interests and living habits (such as how clean you keep your room and when you go to bed). This questionnaire will be used to match you with a roommate, so you should answer the questions as honestly as possible so that you can be matched with someone with whom you can live comfortably.

Living with a roommate can be a real challenge at times, especially if you're not used to sharing a room with someone. A good idea is to sit down and discuss your habits before any problems arise. Here are some questions to discuss:

- How do you feel about overnight guests?
- Do you mind music when you are studying in the room?
- When do you usually go to sleep? Are you an early riser in the morning? If one person goes to bed/gets up earlier than the other, what courtesies should be followed not to disturb the sleeping person?
- If you purchase items for the room (i.e. small refrigerator, carpet), how will you determine who keeps the item if one person moves out?
- How do you feel about sharing food in the room? Will snack food in the room be shared or will each person have his/her own food?
- How do you feel about alcohol?
- Are there any particular habits the other person should be aware of?

>>STEP 9: ACADEMIC LIFE

The Block Plan

The Block Plan was invented at Colorado College in 1970 and has remained a distinguishing feature of the college ever since. Only one other college in the U.S. has a similar academic system. The Block Plan divides the academic year into eight 3 1/2 week segments or "blocks." Students take, and faculty teach, one block at a time. (Each block is equivalent to four hours of credit under a semester system.) In between each block, students have four days off to relax and prepare for their next class.

Academic Expectations

Typically, classes are held every day of the week, Monday through Friday. Most classes begin at 9:00 a.m. and end around 12:00 p.m. Students enrolled in science courses will often return in the afternoon for laboratory work. Occasionally, classes will meet at night or on a weekend in order for students to attend a lecture, view a movie, prepare a presentation, etc.

Because so much material is covered during each class session, it is very important to attend your class every day. On the first day of class, most professors will give students a syllabus. This will include a list of required reading, the date of the final exam, and deadlines for papers or other requirements. You should follow this syllabus carefully.

A Typology of Classes

Lectures are the primary form of instruction at CC; however, many of our courses are discussion based. Regardless of whether attendance is or is not recorded, **you are expected to attend classes**. Material covered in a lecture class may be closely related to the reading assignments or may be completely new material. Doing the reading before attending class is a sure way to improve your comprehension of the lecture.

Class participation is encouraged. Most classes at the college are limited to 25 students. One reason classes are small is to allow for class discussion. At CC, there is a belief that students learn a great deal from their peers and from having to communicate their ideas in class. Professors encourage students to ask questions, express their own opinions, and to use critical reasoning to defend their points of view. Silence may be seen as a lack of preparation or a lack of interest, and class participation may even be a part of your grade. Speaking up in class may be difficult at first, but with time and practice you'll grow more comfortable with it!

Ask if you don't understand. If you have any questions about an assignment or an idea discussed in class, you should speak with your professor. Most professors hold office hours in the afternoon and students are encouraged to meet with them at this time. Don't be shy about doing this---professors expect to discuss issues of an academic nature with their students outside of class, and there is no shame associated with not understanding something, even if it has already been presented in a lecture.

The classroom culture may be more informal than you're used to. Many professors may seem very relaxed in their behaviors with students. Professors may eat or drink in the classroom, dress casually, ask to be called by their first names, and joke with students. Some professors may even invite their students into their homes. This behavior is not viewed negatively. Although you may have a more informal relationship with your professor, you are still expected to be respectful of the student-professor relationship---submitting course work on time, coming prepared for class, adhering to deadlines, etc.

>>STEP 10: STUDENT SERVICES & ACADEMIC RESOURCES

From thesis research to help with your first ever college assignment, CC offers a variety of resources and services for students with academic questions. Several academic departments employ recently graduated paraprofessionals who are there to assist students and faculty without teaching classes. Departments can also recommend peer tutors with proper expertise to students.

>>STEP 11: GET INVOLVED

With over 100 active Student Organizations, and the opportunity to create new ones, Colorado College provides an opportunity for every student to be involved. Student organization involvement is one way at CC that provides the chance to build lifelong friendships, to grow personally, to develop as leader, to engage in community service and much more. You can find information about all of the Student Organizations on their webpage.

>>STEP 12: IMPORTANT DATES

A complete calendar for the academic year is located at:
https://www.coloradocollege.edu/academics/curriculum/calendar/.

Important! Fall Break, Winter Break, and Spring Break are the three times during the academic year when residence halls close and all students not residing in the Western Ridge apartments, Interfaith and Synergy Houses, or 1010 North Weber must leave campus. If finances allow, this is a good time to travel or visit friends who live outside Colorado Springs. If you wish to remain in town, you must make arrangements for a place to live BEFORE the break. *For international students who wish to stay on campus over breaks and summer holidays, special arrangements in conjunction with the Residential Life and Campus Activities Office and ISSS must be made in advance. Break housing applications will be sent to you several weeks before each break period (summer housing applications are sent out late spring).

>> STEP 13: YOUR PRE-ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

Be prepared for your studies at CC. Visit ISSS online and get more information on what to do before you arrive:

Before Your Departure

- ☐ Renew or obtain a passport for travel
- ☐ Receive your Colorado College Certificate of Eligibility (Form I-20/DS-2019)
- ☐ Pay the SEVIS I-901 fee www.fmjfee.com in preparation for your visa appointment
- ☐ Make an appointment at your local U.S. consular office or embassy to apply for an F-1 or J-1 visa
- ☐ Read through the information provided in our Pre-Arrival Guide
- ☐ Review CC Bound on a regular basis
- ☐ Obtain immunization records and submit via CC Bound
- ☐ Make travel plans

Packing & Travel

- ☐ Know what documents and items to pack
- ☐ Ship items to campus ahead of your arrival
- ☐ Bring money to open a bank account
- ☐ Know the documents you will need on the plane. Do NOT pack these in your checked luggage: (passport, I20/DS-2019, proof of funding, SEVIS fee receipt).
- ☐ Be prepared for the U.S. Immigration and Customs procedures

Once You Arrive

- ☐ Know where you will be living when you arrive (have your on-campus housing confirmation)
- ☐ Get your Colorado College Gold Card
- ☐ Attend International Student Orientation
- ☐ Open a bank account (optional)
- ☐ Get a cell phone (optional)
- ☐ Know which CC office to contact if you have questions

We look forward to welcoming you to Colorado College!