F-1 International Student Guide

The F-1 Student Guide acts as a step by step guide of what a new F-1 Student needs to do after receiving their I-20 in preparing for their arrival at the University of Colorado Denver.

If you have additional questions please be in contact with International Student & Scholar Services using the contact information on the right side of this document.
Welcome to the University of Colorado Denver!

On behalf of the International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) unit within the Office of International Affairs (OIA), we are excited to have you join us! You will soon become part of an international community that includes more than 1,500 international students and scholars from nearly 100 different countries. We trust you will find your time here rewarding and complimentary to your personal and professional goals.

Soon you will receive your Form I-20 (for F-1 visa status). Please review this document carefully, and notify ISSS immediately if any of the information is incorrect or if your plans to attend CU Denver change.

In order to ensure a successful start to your academic career at CU Denver, all new international students in F visa classification are required to attend a mandatory International Student Check-In & Fundamentals. International We will be sending additional information about the location and important details prior to the “Check-In” Please be sure to sign up! Additional information about the International Student Check-In & Fundamentals, including online registration, can be found at:

http://international.ucdenver.edu/checkin

“Check-In” is designed to facilitate your immigration reporting requirement with ISSS, which is required by federal law, and to help you make the transition to life in the U.S. and at CU Denver by providing important information about your immigration status and by reviewing some practical tips to ensure that you start off on the right track for a successful academic career at CU Denver. Failure to attend the International Student Check-In & Fundamentals or otherwise failing to check in with ISSS prior to the start of your academic program may result in the loss of your legal status in the United States.

In addition, you will also find detailed information on our Web site regarding next steps to take as you prepare to come to the U.S. and upon your arrival in Denver. This information is available at:

http://international.ucdenver.edu/prearrival

The information and Web links available at this site include various topics, such as the visa application process, arrival at the U.S. port of entry, housing, health insurance, academic advising, registering for classes, and much more! Be sure to visit the site for timely and critical information as you prepare to come to the U.S. and CU Denver.

Have a safe and enjoyable trip to the United States. We look forward to seeing you in Denver soon!

Sincerely,

Michelle Larson-Krieg, Director ISSS
I have My I-20 What do I do now?

Step 1: Pay the SEVIS I-901 Fee

Students applying for F-1 or J-1 visas for initial attendance at a university must first pay the I-901 SEVIS fee of $200 for F-1 students and $180 for J-1s. We recommend that you pay the fee on-line. This fee should be paid prior to making a visa appointment at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate. F-2 and J-2 spouses and dependent children DO NOT have to pay this fee. You must take your fee receipt for proof of payment to your visa appointment. Payments can be made on-line by using a credit card, by mail or by Western Union. If paying by Western Union or mail, please keep in mind that it will take several weeks to get a receipt; please pay this fee early to avoid delays. Please visit www.fmjfee.com to pay the fee and complete an I-901 form.

Hints for filling out the I-901:

- Read the FAQ (frequently asked questions).
- Double-check that the information on the I-20 is correct.
- If it is not, do NOT pay the fee and contact CU Denver’s ISSS to correct the I-20
- The school code is DEN214F00301000
- Your SEVIS number is in the top, right-hand corner and begins with N00.
- Print at least two copies – one to take to the Embassy or Consulate and one for your records.

If you have applied to more than one school, you must decide which school you will attend and pay the SEVIS fee using that school’s information. If you are denied a visa, you cannot get a refund of your SEVIS fee. If you decide to reapply for a visa within the next 12 months, you will not have to pay the fee again.

Step 2: Apply for VISA

You should also make an appointment as soon as possible with the US Consulate where you will be applying for your student visa. You must enter the country BEFORE the reporting date on your I-20 or DS-2019. In fact, you can enter the U.S. up to 30 days before the reporting date. Arriving early will allow you time to settle into the Denver area before the start of school. You can go to the Department of State website to see the estimated wait time for the Embassy or Consulate nearest you. The visa can be issued up to 120 days before the reporting date on your documents.

Be prepared for the visa interview. The officer must assume that each prospective student is planning on staying in the U.S. It is your job to prove otherwise. Any ties to your country – family, jobs, land ownership, etc – will help show that you do plan to return to your home country after you are finished with school. Take any documents that you think will help your case including your original financial documents or letter of sponsorship, but don’t be surprised if the officer does not ask to see anything. The officer will probably spend less than a few minutes with you as well.
You should take:

- I-20
- Proof of having paid the SEVIS fee
- Evidence of financial resources
- Evidence of English ability
- Evidence that you intend to depart the US upon completion of your studies
- Form DS-160
- Passport-sized photographs
- Proof of payment of Machine Readable Visa (MRV) fee
- Visa reciprocity fee (if applicable)
- Transcripts, test scores (GRE, TOEFL, etc)

You can find specific information about the consulate, appointment process, application forms, and visa fee at the [Department of State website](https://www.state.gov).

**Step 3: Register for the ISSS Check-In & Fundamentals**

ALL new international students, including any transfers from other institutions within the U.S., are required to complete orientation and attend the [ISSS Check-In & Fundamentals](https://iss.sedans.edu) event.

For more information and to sign up for a session now visit the [International Check-In & Fundamentals Page](https://iss.sedans.edu).

**Step 4: Arrival at U.S. Port of Entry**

After you receive your visa, you may enter the U.S. up to 30-days before the reporting date listed on their immigration document. Make sure that you pack all your important documents in your carry-on luggage.

This should include:

- Passport
- I-20/DS-2019
- Evidence of financial resources
- Evidence of student status, such as recent tuition receipts, transcripts or proof of registration
- Paper receipt for the SEVIS fee, Form I-797
- Name and contact information for your Designated School Official

You can also read more about what will happen at the Port of Entry at the [ICE website](https://www.ice.gov).
Traveling to the U.S. with a Sufficient Amount of Money

When you travel to the U.S., be prepared with enough of U.S. currency to pay for your first meals, transportation, and incidentals. A credit card that you can use in the United States will also be helpful. Study the U.S. exchange rates prior to your trip to the U.S. so you are prepared to handle your travel and settling expenses.

Step 5: Arrival in Denver

Transportation from Airport:

Denver International Airport (DIA) is located about one hour from downtown Denver. To get to campus from the airport, you have a few options:

- Contact your student group for pick-up possibilities. UC Denver does not offer pick up services, but some of the student groups may. You can visit the Student Clubs and Organizations Page
- Shuttle services (about $20 per person to downtown; cash or credit)
- ABC shuttle www.abcshuttle.com
- Taxi ($54 flat rate to downtown; cash only)
- Metro taxi: 303-333-3333
- Yellow Cab: 303-777-7777
- Zone Cab: 303-444-8888
- RTD bus ($8 one way; exact change – cash only) The bus will drop you off at the Market Street Station (Market and 16th), just a few blocks from campus.

More information is available on Level 5 (ground transportation and baggage claim). Please see www.flydenver.com for information on DIA and services provided. You can also call 303-342-4059 or email ground.transportation@diadenver.net.

Finding Housing:

Finding Housing can be difficult in a new city. Please see our handy International Housing Guide below and the site for on-campus housing that will assist you in finding proper housing on or off-campus.

On Campus Housing Website

Off Campus Housing Guide
Step 6:

Once Arriving in Denver you will want to prepare to start your semester at CU Denver. Below are some of the things you will need to complete before classes start:

- Attend the ISSS Check-In & FUNdamentals event
- Activate your University E-mail
- Update your local address in the Portal
- Meet with your Advisor and Register for classes
- Get your Student ID
- Pay your Bill with the Bursar’s Office

Health Insurance and Immunization Information

Health Insurance

The University of Colorado Denver has a mandatory health insurance plan for all international students in the non-immigrant visa categories of F-1 and J-1 at the Denver Downtown Campus. The insurance premium will be automatically added to the student account each semester. Dependents can be added on the plan within 30 days of arrival or birth in the U.S. All other international students and scholars will be eligible to enroll on the voluntary domestic health insurance plan. Please contact the Health Insurance Office at 303-556-6273.

Waiver Policy

You may qualify to waive out of the University issued student health insurance plan if your own health insurance policy meets all University’s health insurance requirements.

To access more information about the waiver and the International Health Insurance see the Health Insurance Website.

Immunization Policy

All international students are required to comply with the Immunization Policy at the University of Colorado - Denver. Students born after January 1, 1957 must provide documented proof that they have received two rubella (measles), two rubella (German measles) and two mumps vaccinations OR two combination MMR (measles, mumps and rubella.)

For more information, forms and assistance with compliance with the immunization policy, visit the Immunization Policy Website.