

i e  
c e d  
i c e e

H

d

2024



# HANDBOOK FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS & SCHOLARS

This handbook is designed to help international students and scholars at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) living, studying, and researching in the United States of America, and on our campus. We, here at the Office of Global Engagement, would like to make your stay with us a productive and pleasurable one.

Living and s

OFFICE OF GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

**Office of Global Engagement (OGE)**

Wilson Hall

(970) 351-2396

[global@unco.edu](mailto:global@unco.edu)

[www.unco.edu/global](http://www.unco.edu/global)

Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (except summer, when the university closes at 1 p.m. on Fridays)

**If you are stopped or detained by U.S. immigration officials at an airport or land border port of entry, you may call the UNC emergency number +1-970-576-9572.** An OGE staff member has the phone 24 hours a day but may not be a Designated School Official or Responsible Officer able to access the SEVIS system. Please leave a detailed message including your name, date of birth, nationality, current location (e.g. specific airport or land border port of entry), and airline and flight number. We recommend that you provide the emergency number to a close family member or friend who can monitor your arrival in the United States and call us on your behalf if you are not able to make any calls during any delay during processing at the port of entry.

**UNC Global ISSS Portal login** <https://iss.unco.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Security.AngLogin>

**Book an appointment with OGE staff online**

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/CenterforInternationalEducation1@uncoedu.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/>

**OGE STAFF:**

**Olga Baron**

Executive Director

**Vacant**

Director of AFF4.9 (E)4.3iofs io 1.9 (Pnte)15.9 (r)-3 32 BDC /TT1 13

**Erika Saunders**

Assistant Director, International Partnerships and Business Development

**Jane Borisova**

Director of Intensive English Program



lectures or short-term consultations incidental to their primary program activities. (Scholars supported agencies, such as Fulbright/IIE must request authorization from the Program Sponsor that issued their DS-2019).

**Nonresident Alien Tax Assistance:** Anyone who has been in the United States in F or J status during any part of a calendar year is required to file tax forms the following spring, whether or not they have any employment or income in the U.S. OGE's ISSS team provides free access to nonresident alien tax software each spring to assist students and scholars with meeting their U.S. tax filing obligations.

**Emergency Grants:** Small, one-time emergency grants may be available to international students or scholars experiencing severe and unexpected economic hardship. Emergency awards vary according to available funds and demonstrated need. Emergency funding is provided in the form of a one-time grant, which does not need to be repaid. Unfortunately, due to limited resources, not all applicants will be awarded a grant, and the amounts are small.



## IMMIGRATION INFORMATION

**IMPORTANT** - It is your responsibility to remain in status with the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations.

This information is very limited in scope, and more information is available on the <https://www.unco.edu/global/> website and in UNC Global's ISSS portal for students <https://iss.unco.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Security.AngLogin>

**Who to ask for help:** Many international students and scholars coming to the United States in J or F status have friends, family members, professors, or colleagues who have had similar experiences here. While it's fine to ask them for their input or advice, remember that your friends and family do not have



International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) team and the Executive Director of OGE.

**USCIS:** U.S. Citizenship and Immigration is the federal agency that oversees lawful immigration to the United States, but it also adjudicates many benefits for nonimmigrants like F and J status students and scholars. Some kinds of work authorization for F-1 students and J-2 dependents are adjudicated (decided) by applications to USCIS, as well as F-1 (and dependent) reinstatement to valid F status, changes of status, and other benefits. <https://www.uscis.gov/>

**Passport:** Your passport is the basic travel document issued by your home country. It identifies you as a citizen of that country and enables you to reenter that country. The passport must be valid for at least the next six months on your entry to the United States, but should not be allowed to expire while you are here. If an extension is needed, contact the consulate of your country having jurisdiction over Colorado. Consular locations are available at

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/consularnotification/ConsularNotificationandAccess.html>

**Visa:** Once admitted to UNC, you will need to apply for a student or exchange visitor visa. A visa is a document that allows you to request entry to the United States to participate in very specific activities consistent with that visa type. <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html>

After entry into the U.S., visas can expire without penalty; it is not necessary to renew the visa unless you plan to leave and reenter during your program. At this time, visas cannot be renewed inside the United States – but new visas may only be obtained at United States consulates or embassies outside the U.S.

**Immigration Status:** Most international students at the University of Northern Colorado hold status as either F-1 students (F-1 Visa) or J-1 exchange visitors (J-1 Visa). Most scholars hold J-1 exchange visitor status. While your status on entry usually matches your visa category, your status may change inside the U.S. (application to USCIS) after arrival. You should also verify that you were admitted to the United States in the correct status by checking your I-94 Arrival/Departure record online each and every time you arrive and downloading a copy. I-94 records are required to apply for certain benefits, and to ensure that you are complying with the requirements of your status (if CBP makes a mistake, we need to get it corrected – contact OGE's ISSS team for assistance). <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>

**U.S. Residential Contact Information:** All visitors in F and J status must report their residential (living) address immediately on arrival to the U.S. and update the ISSS team within 10 days of any change of living address. Students can submit this information in Ursa. Scholars should reach out to the ISSS team directly to update the information as well as updating Ursa. The address is then updated in UNC Global ISSS portal and SEVIS for students (where you can verify the information) and directly in SEVIS for scholars. It is also important to update us with your U.S.-based phone number if you have it.

**F-1 Student:** The most common non-immigrant status held by international students at UNC is the F-1, issued for the purpose of attending a specific university. In order to maintain valid status as an F-1 student, you must continue to attend that school, be a full-time student (minimum of 12 hours per semester for undergraduate and 9 hours per semester for graduate students) and make normal progress toward a degree or the completion of an educational objective. Accompanying dependents of an F-1 student are classified as having F-2 status.

**J-1 Exchange Visitor:** J-1 Exchange Visitor Status is used by a wide variety of students, professors, researchers, and short-term scholars who come to the United States for academic or training pursuits. An Exchange Visitor visa is obtained on the basis of the DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for J-1 Visa) and is issued by the university stating that a student has been admitted or the intended activities of a scholar at the university. J-1 students must maintain full-time status by carrying 12 credit hours per semester as an undergraduate and 9 credits hours per semester as a graduate student. Accompanying dependents of J-1 Exchange Visitors are classified as having J-2 status. J-1 scholars maintain status by participating in the scholarly activities proposed in their application.

**F-2 and J-2 Status:** Students and scholars wishing to have their spouse and children join them in the

United States are encouraged to consider financial situations carefully before doing so. Students should consider the availability and cost of university and private housing, home government regulations restricting travel of spouses, the general costs of food, medical care, and school facilities for children.

Dependents coming in F-2 status or J-2 status (as opposed to those coming for a short term stay through a B visitor visa or the visa waiver program), must be issued an I-20 (for the F category) or DS-2019 (for J categories) of their own, and apply for the appropriate visa. The primary F-1 or J-1 are required to provide a financial statement or guarantee verifying the means of support for their families. For more details, visit or call OGE. Each category and type of dependent has slightly different rules to follow.

**Duration of Status (D/S):** Students and scholars entering with an F or J visa (and their F-2 and J-2 dependents) should automatically be granted “duration of status” (D/S) on entry to the United States, allowing them to remain until their programs are complete, plus any grace period, unless they violate their status. If the expected completion of degree program is beyond the duration given on the I-20 or DS-2019, notify OGE to apply for an extension of stay.

**Extension of Stay:** If you do not complete your course of study or scholarly activities by the expected date indicated on the I-20 or DS-2019, you must apply to OGE. An application for an extension must be made no later than 30 days before the expiration date on your I-20 or DS-2019, but extensions must meet immigration guidelines, and are not guaranteed. Student extension requests are processed through UNC’s Global ISSS portal. Scholar extension requests are processed manually with ISSS staff.

If you are changing educational levels (for example, from Bachelor’s degree to Master’s degree), you must notify ISSS staff of the change. We will create a Change of Level request in the Global ISSS portal for you to complete and submit for a new I-20 or updated DS-2019. Note that new financial documentation is required.

**Health Insurance Requirement:** All International students and scholars (and all J-2 dependents) must carry a health insurance policy that meets university and U.S. Department of State standards. Students registered for any classes will automatically be enrolled in the university student health insurance plan and the semester premium will be added to your student bill. If you have other comparable insurance, you must submit an online waiver by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of classes. For information on UNC’s health insurance, please see [www.unco.edu/ship](http://www.unco.edu/ship) or contact the Student Health Insurance Program office, Cassidy Hall, 970-351-1915.

J-

options, see [22 CFR 62.14].

Program regulations also discuss coverage through HMOs and self-insurance of the above requirements by federal, state or local government agencies, state colleges and universities, and public community colleges, if permitted by law. Refer to [22 CFR 62.14] for additional information.

### Employment

**Employment:** Employment of any kind without authorization is forbidden while you are in F or J status. Regulations governing employment and work for nonimmigrants in the U.S. are , and include informal employment like monetizing social media, babysitting, the use of Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) for international athletes, and anything else that exchanges your time and energy for goods or services as well as actual money. Even some “volunteer” activities are considered employment for immigration purposes and may not be allowed. Your physical location at the time the “work” is performed matters – even working for a company outside the U.S. is not permitted if you are inside the U.S. Please discuss your plans and ideas with an ISSS team member before engaging in any activity that may be considered employment and jeopardize your F or J status in the U.S.

Some common examples of unauthorized employment:

- Sponsored blogging
- Social media promotion of goods or services for which you receive compensation – INCLUDING “free” merchandise.
- Name Image Likeness activities for athletes (opportunities that are available to your American teammates may not apply to you)
- Driving for Uber and Lyft
- Creating goods for sale (making jewelry, etc.)
- Import/export activities, even if your point of sales is overseas.
- 

zus a (a)4.8tfTem j90kpl621 ( )1( c)5 hT1 . 1 o1.261 Td& a4.9 (m )(e. maNC)5. ma'7Fol[ s n3.7 (L)a0.4.4 m001 T

**Employment that Can Be Authorized:**

**F-1 and J-1 On-Campus Employment:** F-1 and J-1 students who are maintaining status may work part-time on campus while classes are in session. "Part-time" means not more than 20 hours per week. F-1 students do not need special authorization to work on campus; however, J-1 students need written authorization from the responsible officer of their exchange visitor program. During vacation periods and academic breaks, students

5 (b) (4) (1) (i) 13 acad 93 (b) 24 (u) 211 (u) 18 (f) 29 (s) 375 9019 (d) 9 (n) 11 (a) F-2 (-) T(n)



status and first 2 years of J- status, you generally remain a "nonresident for tax purposes." If you did not work or receive any income in the U.S. during 2020, and you are a non-resident for tax purposes, you are legally obliged to file the Form 8843. If you worked or received a stipend, grant, scholarship covering



an H, L, or Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) status until they have returned to and been physically present in their last country of citizenship or permanent residence for a minimum of two years after completion of their J exchange programs. This means that a person in either J-1 or J-2 (dependent) status subject to 212(e) cannot reenter the United States in H, L, or immigrant ("green card") status until the two-year requirement has been fulfilled. 212(e) does not affect eligibility for other visa classes such as a B tourist, an F student, or an O outstanding scholar. Nor does it prevent a person from entering again in J status. It only prohibits H, L, or LPR. For example, a person subject to 212(e) may leave the United States and return in F status to pursue a course of study. However, the F-1 remains subject to 212(e) and remains ineligible for an H, L, or LPR visa until the 2-year condition has been met (cumulatively).

## **ACADEMIC LIFE**

### **Academic Year**

The academic year runs from late August or early September through late May or early June. Schools in the USA often run on a semester schedule of fall (August-December), spring (January-May), and summer (May-August). The semester system is the most common, and is the system used at the University of Northern Colorado. Check the academic calendar so that you do not miss important deadlines:

<https://www.unco.edu/registrar/calendars/>

Some universities use other calendars, and students interested in transferring should carefully check dates and deadlines to insure maintenance of F or J status during a transfer.

**Catalog (also called University Catalog,**





### **Description of the "Student Bill and Bill Payment"**

Both students and scholars will have fees charged to their "student account" or "e-Bill". The "e-Bill" is a list of the charges for which you are responsible. Tuition and student services fees, housing and dining, will be the largest sums on this list. There are two types of tuition: "in-state" tuition, for those students who are classified as Colorado residents, and "out of state" tuition for other students. Very few international students are eligible for in-state tuition. Student service fees are used to support the various student services such as the Counseling Center, Career Services, and the Office of Global Engagement.

Pay attention to whether or not you have been charged for UNC's health insurance. It is the policy of the university that all students have health insurance. This means that you must either have UNC's health insurance or show proof of having your own health insurance. If you have your own health insurance, you must submit a waiver request with proof of adequate alternative insurance in the UNC Global ISSS portal before the 10<sup>th</sup> day of classes.

We strongly recommend using Flywire (<https://www.unco.edu/bursar/pdf/flywire.pdf>) international payments - if you become eligible for a refund, it's much easier to do if you made your payment through Flywire. You can also set up a payment







to promote a safe and respectful living and learning environment. In an effort to foster civility, empathy, and accountability, the student conduct process aims to serve as a learning experience that can result in growth and personal understanding of one's responsibilities and privileges within both the university and the greater community. <https://www.unco.edu/student-conduct-accountability/>

The **Disability Resource Center (DRC) Office** collaborates with the University in its commitment to recognize disability as a valued aspect of diversity and to embrace access to the University of Northern Colorado community as a matter of equity and inclusion. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) offers many services to students needing accommodations. Meetings are a collaborative process with the student and DRC staff to determine appropriate accommodations for each semester.

<https://www.unco.edu/disability-resource-center/>

The **Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC)**, works to build an inclusive academic, cultural and social campus community that supports equitable opportunity for all. OIEC reports to UNC's General Counsel (university attorney) and is committed to preventing and eliminating discrimination and harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, age national origin, disability, sexual

For more information on the program, contact the Cross Cultural GA directly at [Anjulena.bagga@unco.edu](mailto:Anjulena.bagga@unco.edu) or email [globalbuddies@unco.edu](mailto:globalbuddies@unco.edu).

Another





name, badge number, agency and a phone number to call back when you tell them you want to speak with your international advisor first. A successful scam depends on the victim panicking about being deported and not stopping to think whether the call and the demands are legitimate.

Please report any suspicious phone calls you receive to ISSS and or Campus Police. If you have reason to believe that the call might be legitimate, we can help you find out if it was real and who you need to speak to. In many cases, government agencies also have a method of submitting fraud reports. Share this information with your friends and family.

### **Social Media**

One way scammers gather a lot of useful information is social media. Keep in mind that what you post online is public and lasts forever. Who you like, who you are “friends” with (whether or not you know them in real life), what you know, and the surveys you answer publicly. “Have you ever” and other friendship surveys are fun, but they also provide a lot of personal information about you that makes it easy to steal your identity. Both law enforcement and criminals use social media information as tools – criminals to exploit you, and law enforcement to see if you are following U.S. laws or if you might be involved with criminals yourself. Be careful what information you share online, who you connect with, and what you “like.”

### **Renters’ Insurance**

We strongly recommend students and scholars living on campus or renting an apartment or home off campus consider purchasing renters’ insurance. Renters’ insurance is a form of property insurance

- Tornadoes can accompany tropical storms and hurricanes as they move onto land.
- Waterspouts are tornadoes that form over water.
-

Although it's normally closer to 29° C in the summer,

- Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Overexertion can bring on a heart attack—a major

- Marital or relationship stress or



Telephone directories are divided into a White Pages section and a Yellow Pages section, and alphabetically lists the addresses and phone numbers of people and businesses in Greeley and the surrounding communities. You will receive a telephone directory that includes White and Yellow Pages if you choose to get a land line telephone.

For finding information on most business and services, an internet Google search is often your most useful resource.

### **Housing**

UNC offers several types of on-campus housing. See <http://www.unco.edu/housing/places/index.html> for more information. First-year undergraduate students under the age of 20 are required to live in the campus residence halls. The university also offers apartments which are available at reasonable cost for students and scholars.

Off-campus housing information can be obtained through the newspaper postings and the UC (in the Student Activities lounge area). Additionally, you can locate off-campus options through other internet resources. Information is also available on the UNC website : <https://www.unco.edu/off-campus-housing/living-off-campus/>

Before renting a room or apartment, check terms of the lease; the amount of the damage deposit and the conditions under which it will be refunded; and whether or not utilities (water, heat, electricity, garbage collection, etc.) are included in the rent. Notify the landlord, in writing, of any damage to the apartment before you move in. Read the lease carefully before signing it, because it is a binding legal document.

If connecting utilities is the renter's responsibility, contact the following companies. Please be aware that a deposit is often required.

Electricity:		
	Xcel Energy, 1500 6 <sup>th</sup> Ave	800-895-4999
Gas:		
	Atmos Energy, 1200 11 <sup>th</sup> Ave	970-304-2048
Water:		
	1100 10th Street, Suite 300	970-350-9811
Internet, phone, and cable tv:		
	Xfinity, xfinity.com	800-934-6489

Cell phone, garbage collection, and recycling information can be found online, or may be organized by the housing complex or landlord.

### **Banking**

Finances in the United States can be complicated: determining what amount of currency your funds back home translate to in the US, how to move money internationally, and all of the different banking options available to students.

UNC has an official contract and relationship with Wells Fargo, and we previously had a branch located in the University Center (there is still an ATM machine from Wells Fargo). Students can actually turn their student ID into a Wells Fargo Debit Card if they wish.

American coins come in various sizes and metals: \$.01 or (called penny or one cent) is a copper-colored coin; \$.05 (nickel or five cents) is a silver-colored coin larger and thicker than a penny; \$.10 (dime or ten cents) is a thin silver-colored coin and is the smallest US coin; \$.25 (quarter or twenty-five cents) is a silver-colored coin and is larger than a nickel. There are also some one-dollar coins – but they are not

widely circulated. All US bills are a standard size and can look fairly similar at first glance, although newer bills have special security features. US bills come in only seven denominations: \$1, \$2, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100. \$2 bills are so rare, that most people keep them as souvenirs if they're lucky enough to find one.

Most banks have 24-hour ATM banking machines that allow you to make withdrawals, deposits, transfer funds and check your account balance. Banking may be done online as well. Most banks are closed on Sunday and most federal and state holidays. Some banks in Denver exchange foreign currency for American dollars and vice versa.

There are two basic kinds of banking accounts: checking and savings accounts. Checking accounts sometimes have a small service charge for writing checks and other services. Many transactions are done by credit or debit card, but paper checks are also used. A savings account is a good idea for large sums of money because they pay interest on the account balance.

Banks generally will need to see your immigration documents, and proof of your residence location (this can be your UNC Housing contract, or a utility bill in your name sent to your current address) in order to open an account as well as an initial deposit (often around \$25 USD). If you have an SSN or an ITIN, you will need to provide that information to the bank as well.

### **Dependent Children**



coupons for groceries and gas.

- **Drug Stores/Pharmacies:** Medicine can be purchased at drug stores. They also offer magazines, newspapers, snacks, candy, items for personal needs, greeting cards and some grocery items (at a higher price than grocery stores in most cases). The closest to campus is Walgreens at 2600 11<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- **Department Stores:** Items such as clothing, furniture, household items, bedding, kitchen utensils, toys, hardware, appliances, etc. can be purchased at department stores. The closest option to campus is Big Lots at 2628 11<sup>th</sup> Ave. However, larger department stores of Walmart (3103 S 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave) and Target (4400 Centerplace Dr) are also in Greeley.
- **Second-Hand Stores/Thrift/Pawn Shops (Used Items):** Used furniture, clothing and kitchen items can be purchased inexpensively at second-hand stores or thrift shops and pawn shops. A couple of options in Greeley are ARC (2401 27<sup>th</sup> St) and Goodwill (2510 47<sup>th</sup> Ave).
- **Laundromats and Dry Cleaners:** Students and scholars living on campus have laundry facilities in their buildings. Coin-operated machines in self-service laundromats provide inexpensive laundry and cleaning for students and scholars living off campus without a washer or dryer included in their lease. Do not leave laundry unattended in the self-service laundromat. Dry Cleaners clean and make minor repairs on all non-washable items. A few options close to campus are Duds 'n Suds (2460 8<sup>th</sup> Ave), Squeaky's (1605 8<sup>th</sup> Ave), and Nu-Way (2501 7<sup>th</sup> Ave).
- **Gas Stations:** Gas (gasoline/petrol) or service stations sell gas, oil, and snacks. Some provide repair service for your car.
- **Hardware Stores:** Hardware stores carry tools, nails, electrical and plumbing equipment, paint, and appliances. Closest to campus is Ace Hardware (2626 A 11<sup>th</sup> Ave).
- **Garage Sales:**

