
Guidebook Jeppesen Exchange Program

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Disclaimer:

Read through the complete document before asking questions and taking any actions. Although I tried to organize it in chronological order, there is more information in the back to the first chapters and the last ones might answer open questions from the first ones.

This document is meant to give a general overview and advice of those important things that should be done and must not be forgot. It's meant to make life easier for the following students. Everything in here bases on experiences and is written to the best of our knowledge.

However, things change. Please only take this document as a baseline. In particular for critical parts, like getting the visa or maintaining your active student status, check the current requirements. This document does not substitute ANY of the TU Darmstadt and CU Boulder information and orientation sessions, but provides additional knowledge. It also serves the purpose of getting to know about everything BEFORE coming to Boulder.

Some advice:

- Always be proactive and prepared. It helps tremendously in preventing any unwanted situations. But do not be surprised if even then stressful situations occur. That is just the nature of going abroad, especially to the US.
 - Always ask if you have any questions. Go ask twice if that's needed. Go do things early.
 - Connect with your predecessors (via Facebook, or ask the IRO...), this exchange program lives and continues because of you and them!
 - And last but not least: Enjoy!
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1. Pre-Arrival

1.1. Application to CU Boulder

After you receive the confirmation from both the MechCenter and the TU Darmstadt International Relations Office, it is time to apply to CU Boulder. This is more a formality, usually the partner universities trust the selection processes at TU Darmstadt.

For the application (deadline is usually around March 1st at TU Darmstadt and March 15th at CU Boulder) and later, you will need to have the following documents:

- Passport, valid for the duration of your stay + 6 months
- Official TOEFL test results
- Copies of your last performance records (Leistungsspiegel), in English
- Copy of your Bachelor's certificate (if applicable)
- Financial Statement (document from CU Boulder)
- Academic Plan (document from CU Boulder / online form)
- Application form (document from CU Boulder / online form).
- Learning Agreement (MechCenter)

Although part of the application is now online, you are required to submit all other documents in paper to the IRO (and only to the IRO). They will ship it to CU Boulder via official TU Darmstadt mail.

Important: whatever you do from now on, use your full name (*including middle name*) exactly as in your passport (e.g. ü --> ue). Most of the official documents are compared with your passport and if your name does not match, you might get into some trouble.

1.1.1. Online Portal of CU Boulder

CU Boulder now has an online application platform to speed-up the application process.

The website can be reached under: <https://studyabroad.colorado.edu/>, just follow the steps displayed by the portal to sign up for a student account, after that you may log in with the email address you entered during registration.

When you are first logging in you need to sign up for the graduate exchange program with TU Darmstadt, after that you may access your application at any time and submit most of the required following forms.

1.1.2. Application Form

This is a general form and very straightforward. Name, Address, citizenship, etc. You must also choose in which department to enroll in (most likely “Mechanical Engineering” or “Aerospace Engineering”).

1.1.3. Academic Plan

This form asks about the most recent courses you took at TU Darmstadt as well as which courses you plan to take while at CU Boulder. This is not binding however but should show a general direction.

1.1.4. Financial Statement

CU Boulder will process your application and then issue the most important paper of your stay in the US: The DS-2019 form. This will later accompany your visa. In order to issue a visa, CU Boulder and the Department of Homeland Security want to know if you have enough funds to cover your stay. The exact amount will be given to you by the IRO (around \$20,000). Either you go to your bank and let them confirm that you or your parents have enough funds for this (in English!!!! Use sample text provided by the IRO!), or you contact Jeppesen for a confirmation of your scholarship. Both can take some weeks, so plan for it.

Caution: online banks such as DKB, DiBa or others usually do NOT issue such an official document!

1.2. TOEFL-Test

The TOEFL Test must be completed before your application to CU Boulder. It costs around \$250, it can take up to four weeks until you get a test date and then another two months for your official results. It is a good idea to prepare for this test as it can be very long (4hrs and more) and exhausting. Even if you are very good in English, preparation is a wise idea to become familiar with the test mode and atmosphere.

At this point in most cases the CU Boulder email address is already registered and working. It is recommended to use this email address to contact anyone at the CU to make sure the email arrives and is not filtered as spam.

To access your emails just log into the Google Account using your email address and the password from MyCUInfo.

Email: firstname.lastname@colorado.edu (you probably have to use your identikey (“abcd1234”) to login)

Sign up for this test, as soon as you got accepted for the program, as for the university documents, remember to use your full name, including your middle name, for registration. At the test center your passport is compared to your application and changing your name beforehand is a long process as the support for TOEFL is located in New York.

1.3. Acceptance at CU Boulder / Identikey

At some point, around May / June, maybe even as early as March, you will hopefully be accepted by CU Boulder (2016: Mid April). The IRO receives an acceptance package for you, including some information, acceptance letter (very important for the visa) and the DS-2019 form (which is your most important document while in the U.S.). You should also get your “IdentiKey”, your personal username for all services at CU Boulder, including course registration.

The IdentiKey might be sent some days earlier than your acceptance package, you will be receiving a notification via email, including further steps to take (activation process). Keep in mind that some services connected to your IdentiKey need 2-3 business days to be ready for you to use.

If you opt for university housing, use your Identikey for the housing application (see housing chapter).

1.4. Course Selection, Enrollment

Register early! Registration is done via the CU Boulder portal named myCUInfo: mycuinfo.colorado.edu

In general, you can take all courses offered at CU Boulder. However, depending on which department you are enrolled in, you might need to get permission from the Academic Advisor of the course's department. If you only enroll in Aerospace Engineering courses and you are enrolled in the Aerospace Engineering Dept., you will not need permission for example.

It is a good idea to contact the professors in advance, introduce you and your background. Ask for any advice, needed skills / background, etc. Do the same if the course you intend to enroll is already full – in most cases professors are interested in foreign students and allow you into their course.

CU Boulder does not have ECTS (credit points, CPs), but credit hours. One Credit Hour is usually two German CPs. Almost all courses have 3 credit hours (6CPs in Germany).

Because of Visa requirements you must be enrolled full-time. If you only take graduate level classes (level 5000 and up) this means at least 5 credit hours (usually 2 classes), if only undergrad classes (levels 1000-4000) then 12 credit hours and if mixed undergrad and grad classes then 8 credit hours.

You may enroll in up to four classes per semester (12 credit hours) as per the TU Darmstadt – CU Boulder agreement. However, the recommendation is maximum (!) three or even only two – two graduate courses can already cause a decent workload (up to 40h / week). Caution: Always be sure to fulfill the full-time enrollment requirement!

After registration, you can drop classes until two to three weeks after classes have started. Check this deadline for the current semester! It is common to enroll in more classes, go to many of them in the first week and then decide which classes you want to continue.

Consult current or past class schedules online to get an overview over classes offered. It is also useful to browse through the individual departments and faculty's websites for information. Pay attention to prerequisites needed and contact the professor in case you have any questions or doubts. Also contact professors if you wish to take levels 6000, these are usually for PhD-candidates and may require additional prerequisites.

In case you want to get the acceptance for a course you took in Boulder for your studies at TU Darmstadt. Make sure to check the most current version of the "Äquivalenzliste" ([click here](#)) and talk to the corresponding German professor before you fly (Vorabanerkennung von der Auslandsbeauftragten). This minimizes the risk that the credits you take in the US will not be accepted at TUD.

The course catalogue provides a good overview over the currently available classes and their content. To find it search for "CU Boulder Catalog", this way you will find the most recent version, as it changes every year.

1.5. Classes taken by former exchange students

ASEN 4138 – Aircraft Design (Fall Term)

Aircraft Design is an undergraduate class taught by Dr. Gerren. She used to work for several aviation companies and helped to design many aircraft. During this course you will design a whole aircraft with industry tools. You have to hand in monthly reports about the design

process, on which you will be graded. As a graduate student you might be required to work alone, while the others work in teams of two.

The course is a lot (and I mean a lot) of fun and work at the same time. The reports take some time and the grading is tough, however at the same time you learn a lot! The experience of Dr. Gerren (or Dr. G as she is normally called) is tremendous, if feels like she knows everything about aircraft design and is willing to share it with you! Take this class if you love airplanes and you will not regret it, plus you will be invited to her Christmas party! The class is normally accepted as an ADP at TU Darmstadt (Master).

ASEN 5158 Space Habitat Design (Fall Term)

This class, taught by Dr. Klaus (who also speaks a little German), is about the design challenges of human inhabited space structures, in orbit and on planetary surfaces. During the semester there will be a project, on which you and your team will be working on. Depending on how much you are willing to invest, the amount of work might ramp up pretty soon, the possibility to take your project to a national contest at NASA exists (paid trip to Florida ;))! The workload during the semester shifts from occasional assignments in the beginning towards more project-related tasks towards the end of the semester.

During the lecture some former graduates of CU Boulder, who happen to be astronauts, will talk about their experiences in space. In general this class is interesting for everyone that is remotely interested in human spaceflight, as you will learn a lot about the challenges and the current development in this sector! At TU Darmstadt this class is accepted as an ADP.

ASEN 6013 – High Speed Propulsion (Fall Term)

The High Speed Propulsion class is taught by Dr. Starkey. He is a funny guy and also an expert when it comes to high speed propulsion systems. The class is mostly about Ram and Scramjets, and everything in-between. There are quite a few homework assignments which have to be done using Matlab. The final project is to design a Ram-/Scramjet combination engine for a specific mission.

The class demands a lot from you if you are not familiar with Matlab at first, the problems often seem trivial, but getting them to work is not. There are two exams, which are also demanding but not impossible. You might invest a lot of time in this class as the problems often require a lot of thinking and experience in Matlab. What you will get out of this class are Matlab skills and the knowledge that Ram- and Scramjets will take a considerable amount of time before we actually use them. In general, you will work a lot for this class but in the end you will be proud of yourself that you did it! You can transfer this class as a part of Kernlehrbereich at TU Darmstadt (talk to Prof. Schiffer).

ASEN 5012 Mechanics of Aerospace Structures (Fall Term)

This class is thought by Prof. Kurt Karl Maute. He is a German professor from Stuttgart who left Germany 16 years ago. He is maybe the nicest, most understanding and helpful professor you can find at CU. He has always time for its students and is a really good teacher. His exams are quite challenging but the grading itself is fair. With the TU Darmstadt background you will not have any problem to follow this lecture. The course is mainly about calculating strain and stresses distributions on simple examples. Using numerical Matlab tools or analytic calculations.

The course starts easy with eulerian nomenclature but advances quickly to higher levels. I would highly recommend taking that course.

The class can be accepted as M.Sc. Wahlpflicht II - KLV – Platzhalter.

ASEN 5016 Space Life Sciences (Spring Term)

This class is also taught by Dr. Klaus. Other than Space Habitat Design, this class focusses more on biological and psychological considerations of human spaceflight. What you will learn from this class is mainly how to write scientific papers and how peer-review are conducted. Over the course of the semester you will constantly write your own “peer-reviewed” paper.

Similar to Space Habitat Design, you will learn more about how the challenges of spaceflight are met today. Guest lectures from PhD students and astronauts are common! The class can be accepted as Studium Generale at TU Darmstadt.

ASEN 5114 Automatic Control Systems (Fall Term)

This class covers basics of control theory and systems, and dives deeper into some concepts (model derivation for physical systems, Bode diagrams, how to design a controller for an unstable system). It focuses more on practical work than the control theory classes taught at German universities, and thus can be a good choice if your focus is on control systems.

ASEN 5116 Spacecraft Life Support Systems (Spring Term)

This class got taught the first time in 2015, by Prof. Nabity. You will learn about technical requirements of Life Support Systems onboard of spacecraft. With a reasonable amount of work during the semester you will learn a lot about current, and future, life support systems. Towards the end of the semester the amount of work will increase as you will team-up with other students to work on an experiment in the aerospace laboratory.

You will have to design your own experiment, in the context of life support systems, and conduct a series of tests. In the end you are required to prepare a short report and a final presentation. The course can be transferred as Kernlehrbereich at TU Darmstadt.

ASEN 5227 Aerospace Math 1 (Fall Term)

This is a math class, and is not recommended unless you have to fulfill a math requirement at TU Darmstadt. It covers vector and tensor calculus, and numerics of ODEs.

ASEN 6915 Special Topics: Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems Guidance and Control (Spring Term)

The Special Topics class has multiple sections, not all of them are offered each semester. This particular class is taught every 2 or 3 years by Prof. Eric W. Frew – you can contact him and ask him if it is offered during your stay. The class teaches all about control and guidance of small UAVs. You will have to do a lot of MATLAB programming and Simulink modeling. Overall, it’s a very interesting class and I would highly recommend it if it is offered during your stay and you have an interest in this field!

ASEN 5018 Graduate Projects

Graduate Projects is a very unique class that I would highly recommend if you can transfer the credits back to TU Darmstadt (as an ADP or ARP, probably). But even if they won’t transfer, it’s

a very valuable experience. The projects offered differ every year, you can look up the current selection at: <http://www.colorado.edu/aerospace/current-students/graduates/graduate-projects>

1.6. Next step: VISA application

Another big step (to some of us it was the biggest and most annoying step) is the visa application. Here's how to apply for the J-1 visa:

You will need an appointment in the consulate in Frankfurt. Once you have all required documents from CU Boulder, including acceptance letter and DS-2019, your passport, financial statement, you first need to pay the SEVIS fee (ca. 150 € / 200 \$).

Things you will need during the VISA process:

- Passport
- A photograph matching requirements (further information on embassy homepage – digital!)

After that you may start the biggest part of your application. Go to: <http://german.germany.usembassy.gov/visa/> there you will find some help regarding the application process. You need to fill out the DS-160 and submit it before you are ready to make an appointment at the consulate in Frankfurt. Carefully fill out every question asked in this form, take yourself some time, you may take a break at any time as the application is saved for over a month.

The next step is to make an appointment at the consulate in Frankfurt. Therefore, you need to contact a service provider, you'll find the link on the embassy homepage. The service provider requires you to fill out some questions, mostly to verify your identity. During this process you pay around 150€ including your VISA and appointment fee.

It is very helpful to attend the visa orientation and information sessions held by TU Darmstadt or Hochschule Darmstadt and read the documents online how the process works.

Staff will check if you have all required documents before you enter the building. Be prepared to wait an hour or so outside on the street before they let you in. By the way – no umbrellas, no jackets, no water bottles, no electronic devices, no nothing. Be prepared and arrive early. However, do not try to line up in the queue more than 15min before your appointment. It is a good idea to bring a friend with you to take all your stuff, alternatively there is a little shop around the corner (graveyard) which established a business by storing your stuff for a small fee.

Most of the staff is speaking German there, after you passed the security check there are basically four stations you need to attend:

1. Sort your documents in the right order
2. Hand in most of your required documents, take fingerprints
3. Fingerprints – again
4. A short interview, don't worry about that they ask you question like, what are you doing in the US, how long, what are you studying, etc.

The process inside the consulate may take between 15 – 30 min, if all your documents are in order. You are most likely told at the last step, if your visa will be granted.

You will get the visa via mail within about 6-30 days. You are required to leave your passport at the embassy, plan for it if you plan on travelling anywhere before your trip to Boulder.

Although not explicitly required it is a good idea to also bring the following:

- Contact information of the International Student and Scholar Services at CU Boulder (ISSS)
- Your performance records / Bachelor certificate
- Health insurance information
- ...everything that might help you to show that you want to study there.

One general rule to follow, which is also stated everywhere in the consulate, is that you are required to bring everything but only show it to them when asked. Sometimes they do not actually care about anything you bring, but they might also ask you to show your acceptance letter, or financial statement – be prepared.

Also do not forget to sign the DS-2019 before you go to the embassy.

1.7. Travel arrangements

Contact Jeppesen, Meike Cuntz, in Frankfurt for that. Introduce yourself and give her your planned travel dates. You might also contact your manager in Denver, Jason Clark, or the current exchange student in the US for more details on that. Jeppesen will pay and book your flights – do not book your own flights and expect them to pay for them afterwards! The scholarship includes one roundtrip flight. Another important fact to consider is that most airlines only allow a stay at your destination for 365 days. Thus, it might be necessary to book one-way flights or buy flights home for Christmas to split your stay up into 2 round trip flights. Make sure to make travel arrangements early to get good flights (Jeppesen has a budget, too...). Allow some weeks for that since the HR department is very busy.

You must attend some arrival and orientation meetings with ISSS at CU Boulder before classes start (more information on this in your acceptance package). The most important is the one when ISSS check and activate your visa. Usually you must be in Boulder around 5 days before the classes start. You may leave for Germany shortly before Christmas (around 21st), when exam period is over.

It will be mentioned later in this document again but since it is very important and can lead to quite expensive rearrangements later in the year it will be stated very clearly here again. **The Visa is your ENTRY TICKET to the US. The DS-2019 is the official IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENT!!**

If you leave the US without a valid Visa at the day of your reentrance you will NOT be granted access to the US anymore!

Remember that your Visa will most likely be valid only until the beginning of May. Hence during the internship, we highly recommend only travelling within the US.

1.8. Health insurance

You will need to have health insurance for your stay. Most health insurances are only valid for 365 days, so take care. Caution: Together with the internship you will most likely be in the US for more than 365 days!

If you already have appropriate health insurance (e.g. through private health insurance), you need to fill out an Insurance Compliance form and ask your health insurance to confirm that it's services match the requirements for CU Boulder (in English, and make sure it matches requirements). This can sometimes be tough to convince them to write something in English...

You can also obtain health insurance from CU Boulder, which has some advantages (e.g. you do not have to front money when going to the doctor), but is a lot more expensive than the average German insurance. And yet, German health insurances are usually better since they cover 100% of your cost. If you do not want CU Boulder health insurance, make sure you waive this option, do not forget this!! It is preselected in your account.

1.9. Miscellaneous

You need to have certain immunizations and fill out these forms (<http://www.colorado.edu/healthcenter/forms/required-immunization-forms>). You can find those requirements and forms online through ISSS and the Wardenburg Health Center. If you do not have all immunizations, plan for it early, because this can take some weeks to get all immunizations. You can submit the scanned forms online or bring them to the immigration meeting.

Contact students who were in Boulder before you and the CU Boulder student currently at TU Darmstadt to ask them any question you might have. The current German student at CU Boulder can give you valuable hints and information – he or she has gone through the same processes as you do right now!

Get a “confirmation of absence” for the semesters you are not in Darmstadt from the IRO. These are good for Kindergeld, the Semesterticketrückerstattung (online via the AStA), etc.

Apply for CU Boulder housing as soon as you get your IdentiKey (only if you want to follow this option and not look for housing once you arrive. More on this later.

1.10. BFIS

Boulder Friends of International Students (BFIS) is a program offered by ISSS. You get in touch with local people. There are two possibilities: either a one-time dinner or a semester or two-long commitment. You will be matched with a local family and meet with them once in a while to go do fun things, eat, hang out, go to sports / culture events, and just learn the Boulder lifestyle.

It's one of the best things of your stay, so go apply for it. You will not regret it!

More information here: <http://www.colorado.edu/bfis/>

2. Arrival

2.1. Getting to Boulder

After arrival at Denver International Airport (DIA) the best and easiest way to get to Boulder is to take the AB Bus to Boulder. It runs almost every hour and costs \$9. Exact change required. Travel time depends on traffic situation, between 1 and 2 hours. After you get your bus pass from CU Boulder, you can use this bus for free.

The AB bus is super convenient. Brand new busses with AC and reading lights, and the driver is taking care of your luggage and stows it in the cargo bay of the bus for you.

2.2. First things to do

- Meet with ISSS to get to know them and get last minute updates on required events and meetings
- Set up your Colorado.edu email if you haven't done so already (log in through google mail). It might even be smart to do this before you leave for the US, so you can use your Colorado.edu address to contact professors or staff members of the university.
- Get your BuffOne Card at C4C (you can expedite the process if you apply online for the BuffOne Card (upload a picture of you). You will also get your Bus Pass (the Bus pass allows for free travel on the Denver RTD bus system, including the AB Bus from Denver International Airport to Boulder and vice versa)
- Meet with Gretchen Lee, Engineering Scholarship Coordinator to discuss all monetary & scholarship issues (see "money issues"). It might be a good idea to contact her before you leave for the US! She can help you with a lot of things.
- Open a US Bank account (see "money issues")
- Get a phone number
 - AT&T provides best coverage on campus and in the Engineering Center Building, and good coverage outside of cities
 - H2O Wireless uses AT&T network and has very cheap rates. This would be my personal recommendation.
 - usmobile ([click here](#)) don't have the best coverage but are the cheapest you can find and you can adjust your plan every month.
 - Ultramobile uses T-Mobile network, which means it is good in cities, but has poor coverage outside of cities. Free calls to german landlines included.
- Update your US address in myCUInfo as well as emergency contact information (e.g. parents).
- Take part in orientation activities to get to know the campus and the city
- Meet your professors and introduce yourself, get to know their expectations
- Meet with the graduate advisor of your department. Since you will have an "exchange student" status, you will most likely not be assigned to an advisor (usually a professor), and your name will maybe not even be in the computer system of your department, meaning you will be treated as a "nobody". Make sure you introduce yourself to your graduate advisor (for Aerospace Engineering, this is Carrie Simon). This is also important because you might get holds on your student account during the semester saying you must meet with your advisor (if you don't have one, this is obviously not possible – in this case, the graduate advisor will remove this hold from your account)
- Update your (emergency) contact addresses, and sign up for CUAlerts (coming via email and text message in case of emergency or school closure). These are very valuable (e.g. in fall 2013 when there was a huge flooding in Boulder these text messages advised when the next wall of water was coming from which direction, where to go, which

districts to evacuate immediately, etc. – yes, you read correctly, flooding in Boulder is not uncommon).

- Sign up for ISSS and OIE newsletters (they will sometimes remind you of important deadlines, immigration issues, tax issues, etc.), these are called “fs-adviser”.
- Sign up for the “CU international” google group to get notified on events.
- Read carefully through all documents you receive from ISSS and OIE during the immigration and orientation meetings. You will find everything including your rights and obligations as J-1 student in there.
- Go find your classrooms for the first week of classes. The Engineering Center can be very disorienting, especially in the first days... it’ll take you a while to discover all secret passageways and the fastest way to get from one point to another.
- Make an appointment with a tax advisor as early as possible. This can save you a lot of money and time later the year. The advisor can register you in her system so you do not have to pay any taxes on your scholarship, hence you do not have to file any tax return form anymore. Please be aware that the tax advisor cannot answer your tax return questions but can assist you with your concern. The person to contact in year 2016 was Alicia Dandeneau alicia.dandeneau@cu.edu. For more information see “Taxes” later in this document.
- Also get your SSN and Colorado Driving License as early as possible. Attention: Outdated information! You cannot get your SSN early anymore. CU had to stop giving out employment letters to anyone. You can only apply for your SSN once you have an employment letter from Jeppesen, so probably in April or May. These documents make life in the US much easier and are easy to get for you since the CU Boulder can provide you with all the required forms. Note that for the Driving License you only need \$25 and your German Driving License. You do not need to take a theoretical and/or practical test anymore. Check the DMV page ([click here](#)) for most current information on which documents you have to bring to the appointment.
In some cases, it can be that your I-94 is not updated in their system yet so you might want to wait 1 or 2 weeks until you get your Drivers License. (see “Drivers License”)

Go to all the orientation sessions – ask ISSS for details. You must attend those since your student status / visa will be activated there. When you enter the U.S. for the first time with your visa, it is not yet activated. ISSS has a certain timeframe to activate your visa. If it is not activated within this timeframe, you lose your student status and must leave the U.S. immediately.

2.3. First week of classes

- It is common to attend several different classes in the first week and then decide which ones you want to continue. Do not forget to drop classes in myCUInfo before the drop deadline!
- Buy your books at the CU Bookstore. If you need an iClicker for your classes, this little device is also sold at the Bookstore. If you do not need the books immediately, wait for another week or so, as the bookstore is the busiest place on campus during the first week. And buy some Buff gear :D
- Depending on the department you are enrolled in you are required to complete an “alcohol awareness quiz” as well as the “honor code quiz”. By the way, the honor code. This is taken a lot more seriously than in Germany. A violation of the honor code is easy to get, even because of minor issues. One thing you want to avoid is a violation of the honor code. Also, even if both quizzes may seem easy at first glance, they might not be. The honor code quiz can be repeated two times. You also do not want to fail those quizzes... that is no fun! So take your time and take the quizzes seriously.
- Attend orientation meetings. There’s always free food and giveaways!

2.4. During the semester / in general

- Monitor your CU Boulder myCUInfo student account every second week or so. During the semester you might get holds on your account (you will recognize this when you log in when a big red sign pops up) for various (stupid) reasons (e.g. meet with your advisor, send a letter of appreciation to your sponsor, pay your fees, ...). Do not panic in any case but speak to the respective persons first, and in most cases you do not have to do anything, but the holds will be removed. For any academic holds, this person is the graduate advisor, for any monetary / scholarship related issues this is either the Scholarship Coordinator or the Bursar's office. Any tax related issues are resolved by the Tax Department. Holds on your account prevent that you can enroll / register for the next semester, use facilities and prevent the release of your final grades.
- Monitor official emails, as you will be notified when you can register for the Spring semester. The earlier the better.
- Make use of the professor's office hours. Many professors do want their students to come talk to them every once in a while. This shows interest and allows a better getting to know each other. Professors will also give very helpful advice. Some even expect their students to come talk to them!
- Whenever one of the two CU astronauts (Joe Tanner and Jim Voss) gives a talk or a lecture – mark in your calendar and attend even if you're not too interested in spaceflight. It's fun!

3. Getting around / Legal issues

3.1. Bus, bike, walk

Within Boulder, there is a good bus network. More important, Boulder is very bike-friendly and distances are relatively small. Almost every student owns a bike, and there are multiple free bike repair stations (yes, they are included in tuition!) across campus. On campus you can also get along with walking or taking the free BuffBus (connecting Bear Creek Apartments to the campus).

The AB Bus runs approximately every hour from Boulder to DIA and vice versa. Travel time approx. 1 hour 30min. The Flatiron Flyer busses connect Boulder to downtown Denver. Both buses (in fact any bus of the RTD system) are included with your Bus Pass.

In order to get out of the city, especially into the mountains, a car is highly recommended.

There is a CU NightRide service, like a taxi for students. They take you home late at night from university. Plan ahead here – waiting times for the NightRide service can be as long as 40-50min.

3.2. Owning a car / US driver's license

Owning a car is straightforward – if you have all the required documents!!!. You must have a valid driver's license, the car registration documents and a current and valid car insurance. In order to get the registration, you need to present the license, the contract of purchase (along with the associated documents – title!!!), proof of insurance and the emissions test results (fee for that is about \$25, just go to Boulder Airport, there is an emissions test facility). If you don't have the title for the car, the process to get a replacement can be very, very long.

You do not need a U.S. driver's license. The German one is good. An international driver's license might help (get it at the KFZ-Zulassungsstelle in Germany for a small fee), but usually doesn't. It's still a good idea to get one, just in case.

As a German citizen, getting a U.S. driver's license (in Colorado) is easy and straightforward. This is very helpful and thus highly recommended, because the driver's license substitutes our Personalausweis and acts as an ID pretty much everywhere you go. You don't have to carry your passport (Reisepass!) with you if you go out at night. However, you do not need it and can get along with the German license and passport. Plan some time for the application process. Typically, you have to wait 2-3 hours on busy days and the final license will be sent to you within 2-3 weeks. You should wait a couple of days after CU has activated your J-1 status in the computer system (usually this is done after the immigration reporting session), so that the staff at the driver's license office can find you in the system. The driver's license office is NOT the same as the DMV. It is located a bit north in Boulder, in a strip mall close to Wal Mart. Google it.

A 4WD / AWD (four-wheel drive / all-wheel drive) car is recommended if you are an outdoorsy person. A lot of trailheads require you to drive on 4x4 roads to get to them. Also, during winter, when there is a lot of snow on the road, 4WD comes in handy.

Notice the “passenger vehicle traction law” and the “passenger vehicle chain law”, which require you to have appropriate winter equipment such as M+S tires or even chains when driving your car in the snow. To be found here: <https://www.codot.gov/travel/winter-driving/TractionLaw>

Toll Roads

In the Denver area, you will encounter some toll roads as well as ExpressLanes on the highways (i.e. Hwy 36 Boulder-Denver, I-25, I-70). To learn about them, check out the following link:
<https://www.expresstoll.com/Pages/HowDoesItWork/HowDoesItWork.aspx>

4. Housing

If you plan on coming to Boulder without a place to live, craigslist and newspaper would be your first source. You might get some very good deals (remember, housing is super expensive in Boulder). This has some risks, though. ISSS has a program in which you can have an expert look over your contract to give you a thumbs-up if everything looks good.

If you want to arrange housing before coming to Boulder, you should go with official university housing through CU Housing & Dining Services. <https://housing.colorado.edu/>

You might want to go with either Bear Creek Apartments or “Family Housing” (<https://housing.colorado.edu/residences/graduate-family>), as both are options for graduate students. Both are off-campus, but Bear Creek is connected via BuffBus to the campus (5-10min travel time) which runs every 5 to 15 minutes.

Residence halls are for undergraduates and mostly on campus.

If you want to find private housing, the university offers a web site called ‘Ralphieslist’ that is similar to our “wg-gesucht”. I found very cheap and good housing there last year (2016/17). Make sure that you will be an official tenant on the lease contract to proof your address to authorities and CU! Keep in mind though that if your name and signature is on a contract together with your roommates, if one of you does not pay the rent, all will be held liable!

As soon as you get your IdentiKey, apply for housing online (through link mentioned above). For family housing options, waiting time can be as much as 18 months, so you might want to have alternatives (such as Bear Creek). All applications have a fee and also collect deposits (as high as \$200), which you get back.

When looking for options, make sure they offer furnished rooms as some are just the room with nothing in it. Or plan on buying furniture. You can find cheap stuff on craigslist, but be quick at the beginning of the semester as everyone is looking to buy new furniture when the semester starts.

At most housing options you can select between multiple options regarding the apartments (shared or private room, shared or private bathrooms, studios, etc.). Almost all undergrad residence halls are shared room and shared bathroom. Bear Creek offers all options.

CU Boulder housing usually includes WiFi, electricity, water, heating, etc. Access to laundry facilities is provided. Be sure to check exact details at the Housing & Dining website.

Your Jeppesen scholarship will be adjusted to your rent (there might be a limit however).

You may be required to submit an “Intent to Vacate”-notice 45 days prior to your move-out date. Do not forget this, otherwise your deposit will be forfeited. You have to submit this even if your contract ends automatically.

If you move, make sure to set up forwarding of your mail with USPS (can be done online, cost \$1).

5. Money issues

Boulder is pretty expensive. While gas prices in the U.S. are very low compared to Germany, prices for food and especially housing are very high (see “Food” later in this document).

5.1. Scholarship

The Jeppesen Scholarship covers all CU Boulder tuition. You do not have to worry about that. It will also cover living expenses; these will be adjusted to your rent. In the first week at CU Boulder, meet with Scholarship Services to talk over it. You will get the money split, in September for the first semester and in January for the second semester and internship. Caution: the money you get for the second semester also needs to cover your expenses during the internship, you will be paid some internship salary but be aware that you most likely have to move to Denver and find a new apartment which can be quite expensive!

Allow CU Boulder some days or even weeks to process and release this scholarship money, so plan on living through your first month in the U.S. on your own.

You will need to have a U.S. bank account. (see below!)

The Scholarship Coordinator for Engineering is Gretchen Lee. Don't hesitate to ask any questions to her, she knows everything and is very helpful.

5.2. Taxes

Make sure to meet up with a tax advisor some when in the beginning of the semester to sort all the tax return topics. As described further above this will save you time and money during the second semester and also when you are back in Germany again.

Regulations regarding SSNs recently changed (see SSN), thus you now have to apply for an ITIN in order to file a tax return. To do this, you either have to send a **certified** copy of your passport along with your tax return documents and the application form for the ITIN (Form W-7) or you have to do it in person (either at the IRS Taxpayer Assistance Center in Denver or at H&R Block, Evelyn Rojas on Main Street in Longmont). Information regarding this process can be found online, on the web pages of the IRS, or through Glacier Support (which is included in your software license if you buy the software).

You will have to pay taxes on your scholarship. However, if you file a federal tax return (form 1040EZ-NR) and submit it before mid/end April– dates change every year - (you have to do this anyway if you don't meet the tax advisor), you get all your taxes back. By the way, you **MUST** file this federal tax return! The easiest way is to use the online software called GLACIER (<https://www.glaciertax.com/>), cost for this is about \$39. But it's worth it if you get more than \$1000 or so back!

You will also have to file a tax return the year after you return to Germany. Not only because you have to pay taxes again on the second part of the scholarship, but also you have to pay taxes on your income at Jeppesen. You must also file a Colorado State Tax Return in addition to the federal tax return.

You might also get contacted by the tax-office of CU Boulder, in this case, ask them if they can waive your tax duties for your scholarship. As a result, you do not have to pay any taxes for the first semester first and then get them back. You will still have to file a tax return, although you

will not get anything, but you do not have to pay something first and get it back a couple months later. However, keep in mind that you will still have to file a full tax-return for your internship. However, there is an exception from this benefit: If you were living in more than one country (i.e.: outside of Germany) during the 12 months prior to your entry to the US, CU cannot waive your tax duties beforehand. In this case, you have to pay the taxes and then file the return to get your money back.

Attention: Official tax documents might be shipped to your German address. Make sure someone has access to your mail and can ship it back to the U.S.!

Where's My Refund?

There is an online portal where you can check your refund status. Google "Where's my refund" to find it. However, since we exchange students have to file in paper and apply for an ITIN as well, it can take a while until you see your refund status on the website. For me, it took about 10 weeks until the portal showed me that my refund was received and then another week until it was in my bank account.

5.3. BuffOne Card

The BuffOne Card is your student identity card. You can also pay with it in all dining centers ("Campus Cash"), and university housing options (e.g. laundry).

Go to: <http://services.jsatech.com/index.php?cid=59&>

For the dining centers a meal plan can be purchased. You basically purchase an amount of meals/entries into the dining halls at one time for a reduced price. Depending on the meal plan you get 50, 80, 120 meals are included. Note that unused meals on your account do not transfer to the next semester. Hence be sure that you will all of them in time. The savings are \$0.20-\$0.30 per meal. [Click here](#) for more information. Munch Money can be spent everywhere on campus (bakery, soda, kiosk).

5.4. Credit Cards & U.S. bank account

If you don't already have one, get a German credit card with no foreign transaction fees, e.g. from DKB. Let your credit card company know that you will be out of the country for a year to avoid them freezing your card.

You will need to have a US bank account. Wells Fargo is the easiest, see above. You only need your ID (passport) and BuffOne Card to open an account, no social security number. It is free of charge and includes a credit / debit card (visa). It comes with three different accounts: a checking account (for the debit card), an overdraft account (if your checking account's balance is zero and you still use the debit card) and a savings account. Online banking available. They might have special giveaways for opening an account with them (2-for-1 ski pass – just ask for it!). A good alternative to Wells Fargo is Chase.

The easiest way to deposit money into the accounts is the following: use your German credit card with no foreign transaction fees to get money from an ATM (DKB is the easiest, they charge 5 USD for every ATM transaction, but you will get that back) and then go to the U.S. bank to deposit the money into the U.S. account.

Wiring money is not recommended; fees are super high.

6. During the semester

6.1. Travelling

If you want to travel and leave the United States, you will have to go to ISSS first to get a “travel signature” on your DS-2019 to be granted re-entry into the US. This is very important: Do not forget to obtain a travel signature before leaving for Christmas!

Also, **important:** If you travel to Canada or Mexico over land (i.e. you enter the US again via a land border), you should apply for a new I-94 BEFORE re-entering. If you don't do this, your I-94 immigration record might not be updated when you re-enter, that means it will show that you left the US, but never came back. This will cause problems when applying for a Driver's License or SSN. In that case, you have to go to the nearest port of entry (Denver Airport) to get the record corrected. Information on the I-94 application can be found here: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/apply-document>

6.2. Weekly Events, Involvement on Campus

As an international student, there are two weekly events that are highly recommended: CUWednesdays (dinner each Wednesday with international students in different restaurants / bars / pubs in town) and International Coffee Hour (ICH) on Fridays from 4 to 5.30pm.

It is a good and fun idea to get involved with International activities. This also includes representing TU Darmstadt at International Student or Study Abroad Fairs.

Explore Colorado (or the whole US), it is a beautiful state! Visit national parks, travel around, do whatever you feel like doing, spontaneous road-trips to the Grand Canyon might have happened in the past (hooray for cheap fuel)... Have fun, you are not required to lock yourself in and study all day and night – that is something you can do in Darmstadt as well!

Go see your professors regularly during the semester, the relationship between students and professors is different than in Germany!

7. Conversion from studying to the internship

7.1. Visa

In mid-March, go to ISSS. Before you go there, obtain a letter of recommendation from an advisor (Scholarship Services, Engineering Department) and an offer letter from Jeppesen. ISSS will then check everything if it matches requirements for “Academic Training”. The internship will be known as Academic Training. Through this, you do not need to get a new visa, and you keep your J-1 status. ISSS will issue a new DS-2019 for the duration of the internship.

Caution: The visa you have in your passport will most likely expire with the end of the spring semester in May. As long as you stay in the U.S. and have an up-to-date DS-2019, this is no problem. If you leave the US, however, you will need to get a new visa to continue working! There are only few exceptions like Canada and the Bermuda, but check limitations and requirements if you plan to leave the US after your visa has expired and you plan to return for the internship. Generally, new visas can only be issued in your home country (Germany), not in the U.S.. Remember, the visa is just an entry document. Without the DS-2019 form, it is not valid. The DS-2019 is THE document! To enter the US though, you need a valid Visa AND valid DS-2019 with valid travel signature. That’s why you cannot leave the US anymore after May 11 (or whenever your Visa expires)!

7.2. SSN

In order to work, you will need to get a Social Security Number. This process can also take a few weeks, so do it as early as possible. There is one Social Security Office in Boulder. You can obtain all documentation needed for the application from ISSS. Recommendation: to avoid long waiting times, either come early (15min before they open) or make an appointment online / by phone.

New Information: Currently, there is no possibility to make an appointment with the SSA in Boulder, neither online nor over telephone! You have to just go there and wait in line. You will have to fill out a form SS-5.

You will get some documents for your SSN during orientation, but it is always wise to talk to the ISSS again before going to the SSN office, as there might be new requirements.

For 2016/17, the requirements to get a SSN changed. You cannot apply for one anymore if you don’t have a “letter of employment” that is verifying that you are starting a job. For tax purposes, you now have to get an ITIN since you are not eligible for a SSN anymore. Yes, it is more work now than it used to be.

Furthermore, the SSN application cannot be submitted more than 30 days in advance of the starting date of your job.

The Boulder SSA office has a telephone number that is not published online: 877-405-5872

7.3. Before the internship

You will have to have an official online application with Jeppesen as well as an interview (either in Englewood or via phone). After you pass it, you get your employment documents, including tax documents, and a lot of documents to read and sign.

You will have to pass a drug test (most likely with QuestDiagnostics in South Boulder (Jeppesen will tell you) and a background check.

You can only start the internship on selected dates (Jeppesen payroll cycle).

7.4. Housing

Jeppesen had corporate rates with local hotels, check for that, but these might be very expensive (2016/17: \$50 to \$124 per day). Another way that costs more time but will save you money is to find local housing (subleasing) via craigslist.

8. Misc

8.1. Rocky Mountain National Park

Rocky Mountain National Park is close to Boulder (1hr drive) – and definitely worth a visit. If you plan on visiting this park more than once or twice or plan on visiting other National Parks, consider obtaining an Annual Pass for all the National Parks (cost: \$80, while week passes for single parks are usually \$20 or \$30). Admission to State parks like Eldorado Canyon (5 minutes South of Boulder) is not included in the National Park pass.

8.2. Drugs

While consuming marihuana in Colorado is legal if you are over 21, it is never permitted on campus or in any CU Boulder housing or buildings. Universities are under the jurisdiction of the federal government and not under the states. Getting caught with Marihuana on campus is not only a criminal offense but is also considered a violation of the honor code!

John Oliver made a good video explaining the ironic legal situation of marijuana in the US ([click](#)).

8.3. Food

Again – Boulder is pretty expensive...

There are multiple grocery stores in Boulder, including Safeway, Trader Joe's, King Soopers, Sprouts, WholeFoods. WholeFoods is a big organic place, expensive but excellent quality. Check out their bakery for good GERMAN BREAD (located in the WholeFoods on Pearl Street). You won't find German bread anywhere else. Boulder is very green and organic, the WholeFoods Market on Pearl Street is the second biggest revenue maker store for WholeFoods in the whole United States.

King Soopers is conveniently located. Another big plus: They have a rewards program called Fuel Points. Ask for a membership card. You will earn one Fuel Point per one dollar spent. One hundred fuel points save you 10 Cents per Gallon at King Soopers and LoafnJug gas stations. You can save up to 1 Dollar (= 1000 fuel points) per gallon.

Just to make clear what “life is expensive in Boulder” means, and to give you a better idea of how much money you will have to spend on food, here are a few common food items and price tags:

- 6 pack of craft beer - \$10 to \$15 (the cheap beer in the USA is low-quality)
- Loaf of organic bread (700g) at King Soopers - \$4 to \$7
- One (!) organic red bell pepper (Rote Paprika) at King Soopers - \$2.50
- Non-organic red bell peppers – \$1.50 each
- Greek Yoghurt (500g) – \$4 to \$5

Another big difference is that advertised prices here are always before tax. So for most things you have to add an additional 8.845% of CO (Boulder) sales tax on top of the advertised price (does not apply for gasoline – gas has 0% tax). Moreover, tipping is super common and expected and usually you have to give at least 10% of tip! (Some people give 20% - 25%, 10% is already considered rude by a lot of people). Keep that in mind.

Throughout Boulder, there are numerous Fast Food restaurants.

The University has two big locations to eat (dining centers): C4C is the biggest, for 7.63 USD you can eat as much as you want (pay with your BuffOne Card, campus cash). There are places to eat in the UMC, too. A third option is Sewall Hall next to the Rec.

8.4. Climate

Boulder's climate is very similar to that of Frankfurt's, but with less rain and much more sun (about 300 sun days. It does not rain very often - however, sometimes it may rain for two days and then the chance for flash flooding is high). Snow is common in winter, falls up to mid-May. Temperatures range from -25°C on cold days to +35°C in the summer. Consider the elevation, sunburns are common. There are plenty of opportunities around to go skiing. Often, snow falls during the nights and melts during the day because of the sunshine. In higher elevations, e.g. Rocky Mtn Ntl Park, not all roads are plowed. Up to 4m of snow. Check the weather forecast before you head to higher elevations.

Whenever you plan a longer hike or road trip, plan ahead! Make sure you know how the weather will be like and be prepared for snowstorms especially during the winter and early spring month. It can snow up to 2m overnight. Have a backup plan – it is better to stay in a safe spot for another day then get into a car accident or lost on a mountain!

8.5. Clothing

Plan for all types of weather, from super-hot to super cold. Dress in layers. You will definitely need warm shoes and a warm jacket, along with other winter gear. Keep in mind that you will also need Business and Business Casual attire while working at the office in Denver for the internship and you might want to have this already in October for the scholarship dinner. Also, you might have to attend meetings with customers if you are working on projects where business attire might also be expected. Definitely go check out the CU Bookstore for Buff gear. If you forget anything, no problem, Boulder has a variety of stores to buy clothing (e.g. 29th Street). Denver has several shopping malls. There are also Flatirons Crossing Mall on US36 and Colorado Mills in Golden, if you have a car these are easy to reach. During your internship, Park Meadows mall and the Castle Rock Outlets are close and easy to reach. For any outdoor equipment make sure you check out the several garage sales and warehouse sales at the beginning of each season (August, September). Here you get brand new equipment for almost nothing! Events are posted on FB or advertised in the city center.

8.6. Skiing

Skiing is probably the best thing you can do in Colorado during the winter. Everyone has a season pass and I highly recommend getting one too. It might seem a little expensive at first but if you think about skiing as little as 2-3 times over the entire season you might already have the money back. The day passes are RIDICULOUSLY expensive. You basically have to decide between the Rocky Mountain Super Pass Plus or the Epic (Local) Pass. You will find all the information about them online. The difference is the price and included ski resorts. They have reduced prices for students and the earlier you buy the cheaper they are. They are usually sold until November or December, after that you cannot get them anymore for the running season. Colorado has a great amount of Ski resorts some of them are quite far ~4h away but are perfect for a weekend trip. The majority however is 1-2 car hours from Boulder and can be reached for

daytrips easily. Please plan some extra time all these ski resorts can only be reached with one road the I-70 this can lead to some heavy traffic especially on the weekend – leave Boulder early at 5am!! Eldora is a small but very fun ski resort. It has some very technical backcountry downhill slopes and can easily be reached with the bus. This is perfect for afternoon spontaneous ski trips, and Eldora is part of the RMSP+

Nordic Skiing is best in Eldora Ski Resort. The tracks are well prepared and they have a very big network of almost 40km. You can purchase a season pass or day tickets directly in the ski resort. The RTD bus drives you directly there. It has beginner's loops as well as schools to teach you good technique.

Equipment can be rented for a good price at the ski shops in Boulder. Christy Sports offers high quality seasonal rental of boots, skis and poles for \$200 the entire season ([click here](#)). This includes maintenance of skis or exchange the types of skis.

8.7. Things to do in and around Boulder, at CU and elsewhere

- Visit Rocky Mountain National Park
- Visit NCAR (National Center for Atmospheric Research) in Boulder
- Go hike in Chautauqua Park along the Flatirons
- Go to the Boulder Farmer's Market for local fresh food
- Check out 29th Street Mall
- Pearl Street!
- Hike or drive (or ride bike!) up Flagstaff Road to Flagstaff Summit
- Go skiing!
- Visit Vail and Breckenridge (1.5 to 2hr drive)
- Visit Estes Park – a one-hour drive from Boulder.
- Aspen is worth a trip, especially in the fall! (may take up to 4hrs one-way drive)
- Denver Downtown (16th Street Mall, Capitol)
- Georgetown has a "Christmas Market"
- Go to the planetarium (CU Fiske Planetarium) – they have free shows for students.
- Meet with Joe Tanner and Jim Voss, both ex-NASA-Astronauts. It's fun to listen to them. Go to all events where they speak, they have so much to tell.
- Take part in the International Festival at CU.
- Cheer for the Colorado Buffaloes (CU's football team – they need it! Although that was not true anymore for the season of 2016-17, they rocked). If the Denver Broncos win a game, go to KingSoopers the next day, they might have special deals!
- Trail running – Check out the Rocky Mountain Runners – these guys will most likely be the craziest runners you have ever seen. The best trail runners in the world come together for running, beer and burgers. Do not be afraid it is really great fun and you will see Boulder from its nicest side.

8.8. To remember

Boulder is at altitude, approximately 1600m above Sea Level. You might notice that during your first days... also, that implies that you're getting a sunburn much (!) easier. There's basically no need for an umbrella – it just doesn't rain very often.

With the scholarship – you won the lottery! Use it wisely to see and do as much as you can.

Fines for parking violations or speeding make you a poor guy very quickly.

Take care of your paperwork, Visa and DS-2019. Whenever you travel, make sure you have a current travel signature.

Watch for wildlife! ENJOY!!!

9. The End – Final Presentation

You will be required to give a presentation to the Jeppesen team shortly before or upon your return to Germany. It should include information about the program and your experience overall, as well as your internship with Jeppesen.

Please feel free to update the Jeppesen Guidebook!