FAQs for Visiting Scholars and Research Associates

For your convenience, we have put together a list of questions most frequently asked by our international visitors and the answers to those questions below. Should you have any questions or need additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Tricia Davis, International Program Coordinator, at tricia_davis@ncsu.edu or 919-515-3120.

Please note, the Office of International Resources’ website contains helpful information and resources. Please visit http://www.ncsu.edu/ois/orientation/ and use the menu on the left for assistance.

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How do I get a Social Security card?

A Social Security number (SSn) is a number issued by the U.S. Federal government for tax purposes. All students and scholars who are currently employed are required to apply for a SSn.

Students in F-1 or J-1 status who are not currently employed are not eligible to apply for a SSn. F-2 dependents are not eligible for a SSn; J-2 dependents are only eligible if they’ve applied for and received work authorization from USCIS and have a current offer of employment.

The SSn is NOT required to obtain an NC State driver’s license or to open a bank account with some financial institutions (including the Wells Fargo branch located across from NC State campus at 2600 Hillsborough St. and also the Bank of America on Oberlin St.).

Students or scholars in F-1 or J-1 status will need to collect the following documentation to apply for a SSn:
- passport and visa
• I-94 card
• I-20 (for F-1 students) or DS-2019 (for J-1 students/scholars)
• a completed application for a SSn
• An offer letter confirming employment. The Social Security Administration (SSA) requires that the offer letter:
  ○ Have an original hand signed ink signature by the hiring official (electronic, stamped or copied signatures will not be accepted by the Social Security Administration)
  ○ Be on departmental letterhead
  ○ Include the job title
  ○ Include the employment start date
  ○ Include the work location
  ○ Include the salary

If the offer letter does not follow the prescribed requirements, it is the responsibility of the student to request a new letter from the hiring department/office prior to the SSA visit to campus.

Please visit the SSA website for additional information: http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10181.html

What is my employee ID number?
Your employee ID number is assigned by OIS when you begin employment. This number has nine numerals (no letters). Example: 123456789. Please contact Tricia Davis at tricia_davis@ncsu.edu or 919-515-3120 to obtain your campus ID number.

How do I get a campus ID card?
The Wolfpack One Card is available to all NC State students, faculty, staff, and affiliates.

Wolfpack One Card Services is located in Talley Student Center and can be reached by phone Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. at 919-515-3090.

Click here for more information about obtaining your Wolfpack One Card: http://onecard.ncsu.edu/faq/

What is my Unity ID?
Each person affiliated with NC State University is assigned a Unity ID and password. Your Unity ID and password allow you access to NC State e-mail, computing labs, MyPack Portal, etc. It can take several days after you begin employment for your Unity ID and password to be available.

Your Unity ID
• Has eight or fewer characters. Examples: eapoe, jddoe4, owinfrey, tseliot2
• Has letters generated from your initials and last name.
- May end with one or more numerals (if the letters generated for you match those generated for someone else).

**NOTE:** You can't guess a Unity ID, so if you don't know yours, avoid frustration and call the NC State Help Desk at 515-HELP (4357).

You'll need your Unity ID when you log in to:

- MyPack Portal
- Secure Web sites
- Certain OIT services
- Other university IT resources

**What is my Unity password?**

Your initial (default) password is an 8-digit number composed of:

- the last four digits of your campus ID* number followed by
- the four digits of your birth month and day
  - For example, if your campus ID number ends in 1234 and your birthday is January 31, then your initial password is 12340131.
- If it becomes necessary to reset your password, the default will be used.

New undergraduate NC State students can find their Campus ID* in WolfPAW. Log in to WolfPAW and view "Application Status."

*Although WolfPAW actually lists Student ID number, for the majority of students their Student ID number is the same as their Campus ID number.

Contact the Information Technology Division helpdesk at (919) 515-HELP if your password is not working

**How do I get a parking pass?**

**New Employee Parking**

New employees may apply for a parking permit online by visiting MyPackPortal, Employee Self Service, Compensation and Benefits; nine-digit campus ID and vehicle information is required.

Online purchase allows printing of a temporary permit for immediate use; an annual permit is mailed to the employee's campus address within three - five business days. New employees may also visit the Transportation office to purchase a permit; please bring a completed parking permit request/authorization form, including supervisor signature.

Employee parking is assigned based on the individual's primary work location. If parking is not available in areas near the employee's work location, parking will be assigned in the closest available parking area.
Payment Options

Employees may pay in full for parking permits by cash, check, money order, debit card, Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or Discover. Returned checks and bankcards will be charged a $25 service fee.

Eligible employees may elect for parking permit costs to be paid through monthly payroll deduction. Deductions may be on a pre-tax or after-tax basis. Participants in payroll deduction will have their monthly parking fees continuously deducted and adjusted through payroll, including adjustments for permit costs, until they separate or return their parking permit.

Return Permits to Transportation

Separating employees using payroll deduction must return their parking permit to the Transportation office prior to the 9th of the month to end payroll deduction; otherwise parking charges will continue to accrue for that month and every month until the permit is returned.

Parking for Temporary Employees

Temporary/part-time employees may purchase parking permits by the day, week or month. Transportation will make every effort to assign temporary employees parking assignments near their work location, but all parking assignments are subject to space availability.

Please visit the Transportation Office to purchase a permit.

Is there a campus bus system?

Yes, the NC State Wolfline is the campus bus system. You don't need anything to ride NC State's Wolfline buses - just stand at a Wolfline bus stop. To learn more about the bus schedule click here: http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/trans/transportation/wolfline/

What other bus lines are available?

GoPass

GoPass is a free student bus pass sponsored by NCSU Transportation which allows NC State students to ride city Capital Area Transit (CAT) and regional buses Triangle Transit (TT) free of charge; NC State Faculty/Staff pay a $25 pre-paid annual fee. Use your GoPass to travel the Triangle - commute to campus, get to the airport or even visit your friends at that "other" university in Chapel Hill! Follow this link for more information or to order your GoPass: http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/trans/transportation/GOPASS.html

- You only need a GoPass to use city and regional transit service.
- Passes are renewed annually.
- This year's pass is valid from August 4, 2012 - August 3, 2013.
- GoPasses are non-transferable; only valid for assignee on record with NCSU Transportation.
- There is a $5 charge for replacement passes with a maximum of two replacements available per 12 month GoPass period.
- Centennial Campus affiliates are also eligible for GoPass.
Where can I open a bank account?

There are several local banks where you may open a bank account:

State Employees’ Credit Union  
2802 Hillsborough Street  
Raleigh, NC  
(919) 839-5391

Wells Fargo Bank  
2600 Hillsborough Street  
Raleigh, NC  
(919) 664-8801

Bank of America  
321 Oberlin Road  
Raleigh, NC  
(919) 829-6654

Please note many banks require a Social Security number to open an account.

Am I eligible for health insurance through NCSU?

Unpaid visiting scholars are required to purchase their own health insurance. Insurance is not paid by NCSU for unpaid visiting scholars/researchers.

All J-1 Exchange Visitors and their accompanying family members are required at all times during their stay to have health insurance which meets certain federal requirements: $50,000 minimum per accident or illness; $500 maximum deductible per illness; $10,000 provision for medical evacuation; and $7,500 maximum for repatriation.

If the Scholar will not be paid by NC State and does not purchase insurance prior to arriving in the U.S., the Scholar will need to purchase insurance in the U.S. If possible, the Exchange Visitor should assure adequate insurance prior to traveling to the U.S. For more information and additional resources on health insurance, please visit http://www.ncsu.edu/ois/research/j1health.php

If not, how do I obtain health insurance?

Purchasing of the University Student Medical Insurance is a REQUIREMENT for all F-1 and J-1 students at North Carolina State University. All F-1 and J-1 students are required to enroll in the Medical Insurance Plan each semester of study. The NC State Medical Insurance is currently provided through Blue (formerly Hill, Chesson and Woody). Applications are available through their website.

Current Student Blue information can be found at this site: http://www.bcbsnc.com/content/student/ncsu/student.htm

Students in the following categories are not required to purchase the North Carolina State University Student Medical Insurance Plan:
• **Teaching and Research Assistants.** Students on assistantships will be provided the NC State health insurance through the Graduate Student Support plan (GSSP).

• **J-1 Government Sponsored Students.** Student who are sponsored by their governments are not required to purchase additional health insurance. The students must bring to OIS a copy of their health insurance card as proof of coverage and a sponsorship letter that states the government will be responsible for the student's insurance.

• **J-others: Fulbright.** Health insurance coverage is provided through Fulbright and the students in this category are not required to enroll in additional health insurance.

**How do I find an apartment?**

**University Housing (on campus)**
The University Housing Office provides comfortable housing in residence hall communities at reasonable prices. Several residence halls, such as Alexander Hall and Turlington Hall, pair American and international students as roommates. Residence halls also offer unique cross-cultural programs such as ethnic dinners, lectures, and cultural events. Follow this link to learn more about University Housing: [http://www.ncsu.edu/housing/](http://www.ncsu.edu/housing/)

**E.S. King Village** is N.C. State’s student family housing complex. The main goal of E.S. King Village is to provide a safe, well-maintained, comfortable living environment with reasonable rental rates.

**Off-Campus Housing**
Raleigh is a rapidly developing city and securing affordable off campus housing may be a challenge due to the current demand and expense of rental units. Therefore it is important to try and secure accommodations as early as possible. Below, please find a list of resources to aide you in your search:

• OIS Apartment File: a list of affordable off-campus housing with transportation connections to campus. (coming soon)

• The Apartment Guide

• Temporary Living Company: Temporary Living Company offers to faculty, staff and students of N. C State University fully furnished accommodations in Raleigh and surrounding areas of North Carolina. The rentals offered have flexible lease terms at competitive rates. [www.temporarylivingcompany.com](http://www.temporarylivingcompany.com)

• PC Housing: PC Housing offers beautifully furnished short term rentals. Many units include full size kitchens, washer & dryer, phone, internet, TV & DVD and can be pet-friendly. [PC Housing Raleigh](http://www.ncsu.edu/housing/)

**Leases**
A lease is an oral or written, and signed contract between a landlord and tenant and is legally binding. A lease can benefit both the landlord and the tenant because the obligations of each are in writing. A lease is negotiable before signing. It is difficult to break a lease so it is very important that you read your lease carefully to be sure you understand the terms specified. Please note, many landlords will not allow you to sign a lease agreement without a Social Security card.
If you have any questions, or if you have trouble understanding the lease, please make an appointment with an attorney in Student Legal Services (919.515.7091) located in the Talley Student Center in Suite 4130. This service is free of charge to you.

Most apartments will not allow you to sign a lease agreement without first obtaining a Social Security card.

**Will I receive any travel or moving expenses?**

Unless specified, visiting scholars and research associates are not paid for travel or moving expenses. Please plan accordingly.

**Can I enroll in classes?**

Postdocs cannot use a tuition waiver to take classes. This benefit is provided only to "State" employees. Postdocs may work with a professor to audit a class but may not earn course credit.

To earn credit for courses, postdocs must apply to the Non-Degree Studies (NDS) program to enroll and pay the tuition/fees as an NDS student.

If you need assistance with your application, please contact the Registration and Records Office if necessary at 919-515-7730.

To attain an additional degree, postdocs must apply to the Grad School as NDS is only for non-degree seeking students.

**How can I get a driver’s license?**

Please follow this link to the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles to learn how to obtain a drivers license: [http://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/driver/license/](http://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/driver/license/). You will be asked to provide proof of age and identity; proof of social security; proof of residency; and proof of liability insurance before you can obtain a license to drive in the State of North Carolina.

**Where can I attend to English courses?**

For many international students, scholars and spouses, functioning primarily in English can be a new and challenging experience. The Raleigh area has numerous English language resources for non-native speakers as a result of our area’s growing international population. Please follow this link to learn more: [http://www.ncsu.edu/ois/orientation/engres.php](http://www.ncsu.edu/ois/orientation/engres.php)

**Where can I get keys to my office?**

Your PI will assign an office or workspace to you. Once you know, the room number of your office/workspace, please contact Tricia Davis to obtain a key. She will also provide you with a key to the building.

**Who should I visit on my first day of work?**

On your first day of work, you should check in with OIS. You will also meet your PI who can introduce you to your co-workers. In addition, you will need to meet with the college HR representative, Trenel Holloway, to complete an I-9 verification form. This form confirms your eligibility to work in the U.S. Please email Trenel to arrange an appointment, trenel_holloway@ncsu.edu.

**Are there any university dining places for students at the campus?**

There are multiple dining halls on campus as well as two “food courts”, which offer fast food options. Follow this link to view location maps.
http://www.ncsudining.com/dining/calendar/east_map.html (be sure to scroll to the bottom of the page and click “view full sized map”.)

**What is this “MyPack” that everybody is talking about?**
The MyPack portal is an employee self-service website that gives employees the ability to view and make changes to much of their personal, payroll, and benefits information. You will need your unity ID and password to log in. Follow this link to learn more about MyPack: http://www.ncsu.edu/human_resources/hrim/hrsystem/selfserv.php Included on this webpage is a link to a step-by-step guide.

**Where can I buy groceries? Where can I find retail shopping?**

**Local Markets**
Whole Foods - http://wholefoodsmarket.com/stores/raleigh
Food Lion - location map
Fresh Market - location map

**Retail Shopping Centers**
Cameron Village (closest to campus) location map ; http://www.shopcameronvillage.com/
Crabtree Valley Mall - location map ; http://www.crabtree-valley-mall.com/
Cary Town Center - location map ; http://www.shopcarytownecentermall.com/shop/carytowne.nsf/index
Triangle Town Center - location map ; http://www.triangletowncenter.com/shop/triangle.nsf/index
North Hills - location map ; http://www.northhillsraleigh.com/

**What are some fun things to do and see in Raleigh?**

Visit the Raleigh Visitor website for information on sight-seeing in Raleigh including free attractions, historical sites, museums, tours, outdoor activities, and more. http://www.visitraleigh.com/visitors/things_to_do/

Favorites include:
- North Carolina State Capital
- North Carolina Museum of Art
- North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences