

# **Graduate Student Support Plan (GSSP) Handbook**

The Graduate School  
North Carolina State University

**2017-2018**

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
Key Terminology	3
<b>Eligibility Requirements and Benefits Duration</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>Student Checklist</i>	4
<i>Requirements At-A-Glance (Semesters of Benefits Eligibility)</i>	5
<i>Qualifying Graduate Appointment</i>	6
<i>Full-Time Enrollment</i>	6
<i>Tuition Support Eligibility</i>	7
Residency Requirement for Tuition Remission Benefits	8
Master's Students	8
Doctoral Students	8
<b>Graduate Student Support Plan Benefits</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>Health Insurance</i>	9
Enrollment in the NCSU RA-TA Plan	9
Waiving/Declining Coverage on the NCSU RA-TA Plan	10
Waiving Coverage on the University Mandatory Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP)	10
Dependent Enrollment	11
Termination from the NCSU RA-TA Plan	11
Other Important Policies Regarding NCSU RA-TA Plan Eligibility	12
<i>Tuition</i>	13
<b>Deadlines</b>	<b>13</b>
Important NC State Calendars for Graduate Students	13
<b>Important Contacts</b>	<b>14</b>

## Introduction

The Graduate Student Support Plan is a highly competitive support package used to attract top students to NC State University. Graduate students that meet the requirements outlined below are *eligible*<sup>1</sup> to receive health insurance and tuition support (for a limited number of semesters).

- Supported on a qualifying graduate assistantship (teaching or research) or fellowship of, at least, \$8,000 annualized (~\$666.67/month)<sup>2</sup>
- Meet the minimum enrollment requirement – Full-time, at all times
- Enrolled in an on-campus master's or doctoral program\*  
\*Distance Education and Graduate Certificate programs do not qualify for the Graduate Student Support Plan.

In this document, you will find explanations of eligibility, length of benefits, when to expect GSSP benefits sponsorship each semester, and what to expect when your eligibility for the Graduate Student Support Plan ends.

This document provides a general overview of the Graduate Student Support Plan. For more detailed information and updates to the GSSP, please visit [go.ncsu.edu/gssp](http://go.ncsu.edu/gssp).

## Key Terminology

Tuition Remission ("TR") = difference between in-state tuition rate and out-of-state tuition rate

ISTA = In-State Tuition Award

GSHI = Graduate Student Health Insurance

TA = Teaching Assistantship

RA = Research Assistantship

RA/TA = Research and Teaching Assistantship

Appointment = Assistantship or Fellowship

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<sup>1</sup> Student may be eligible for Graduate Student Support Plan benefits if they meet all eligibility requirements as outlined in the GSSP Eligibility Requirements At-A-Glance, including meeting residency and semester limit requirements.

<sup>2</sup> Please see the "Eligibility" section of this document to determine what other requirements are necessary for a graduate appointment to meet GSSP eligibility requirements. To determine the annualized rate, please see your department Graduate Services Coordinator. Or, to get a rough estimate, multiply your bi-weekly rate by 26. There are 26 payroll periods in a fiscal year.

# Eligibility Requirements and Benefits Duration

## Student Checklist

In order to be eligible for the Graduate Student Support Plan, a graduate student must meet all of the following requirements, at all times:

- Have an active, qualifying graduate appointment
  - Graduate appointment must be one of the following types:
    - Primary Fellowship
    - Research Assistantship
    - Research & Teaching Assistantship
    - Teaching Assistantship
    - Extension Assistantship
  - Qualifying appointment must be, at least, \$8,000 annualized<sup>3</sup>
  - Must begin on or before Census Day
    - Must extend, at least, 30 days beyond the first day of classes<sup>4</sup>
- Be enrolled full-time, at all times<sup>5</sup>
- Be [within their allowed semesters](#) for Graduate Student Support Plan tuition support<sup>6 7</sup>
  - Master's degree – 4 semesters
  - Doctoral degree with previous related master's degree – 8 semesters
  - Doctoral degree without previous related master's degree – 10 semesters
  - Every semester in which the student is enrolled counts against the total number of allowed semesters for tuition support, even if the student does not participate in the Graduate Student Support Plan.
  - Qualifying students are only *eligible* for tuition remission support for two semesters (one academic year) – after those two semesters, the student must obtain in-state residency or a “good faith effort” toward establishing in-state residency each subsequent semester to continue being *eligible* for GSSP tuition remission support.<sup>8</sup>
- Active in an on-campus degree master's or doctoral program
  - Distance education (DE) and graduate certificate programs do not qualify for the Graduate Student Support Plan.

If you have questions regarding your eligibility for the Graduate Student Support Plan, please see your department [Graduate Services Coordinator](#).

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<sup>3</sup> To determine the annualized rate, please see your department Graduate Services Coordinator. Or, to get a rough estimate, multiply your bi-weekly rate by 26. There are 26 payroll periods in a fiscal year.

<sup>4</sup> If the qualifying appointment does not extend past November 30th for fall or April 30th for spring, tuition support will be prorated according to that early graduate appointment end date. The prorated portion of tuition associated with the segment of the semester in which the student is not appointed to a GSSP qualifying appointment will be applied to the student's billing account. It is the student's responsibility to pay this prorated portion of tuition if the department chooses not to sponsor this remaining tuition.

<sup>5</sup> If a student does not maintain full-time enrollment the duration of the sponsored semester, *ALL* of the tuition supported through the Graduate Student Support Plan will be reapplied to the student's billing account for payment. It is the student's responsibility to pay this tuition if the department chooses not to sponsor this tuition.

<sup>6</sup> The Graduate Student Support Plan does not sponsor summer tuition or *any* semester fees.

<sup>7</sup> Please be aware that if a GSSP eligible student also has other third party tuition sponsorship, external to the GSSP (excluding department GA-1 payments), that third party tuition sponsorship may take priority over GSSP tuition sponsorship. In other words, other concurrent third party sponsorship may be used for tuition payment in the place of or before any GSSP sponsorship will be applied. It is the student's responsibility to work with their sponsoring agencies (including their department) to manage their benefit administration.

<sup>8</sup> This two-semester (one academic year) stipulation on GSSP tuition remission support does not apply to international students with visa types that cannot establish in-state residency.

## Requirements At-A-Glance (Semesters of Benefits Eligibility)

<b>Graduate Student Support Plan<sup>9</sup> Membership Requirements At-A-Glance</b>											
		Number of Semesters from Initial Graduate Enrollment to Current Semester <sup>10</sup>									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Current Graduate Classification</b>		<b>Hours of Registration Required (F=Full-time, at all times)<sup>11</sup></b>									
<b>Master's</b>		F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
<b>Doctoral (DR)</b>	DR students <i>with</i> a previous master's in the same or related field upon initial enrollment to the Graduate School at NC State	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
	DR students <i>without</i> a previous master's in the same or related field upon initial enrollment to the Graduate School at NC State	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
		Eligible Benefits: Health Insurance, In-State & Out-of-State Tuition <sup>12 13</sup>									
		Eligible Benefits: NCSU RA-TA Health Insurance Plan ONLY									

<sup>9</sup> For degree seeking graduate students that meet the below requirements, at all times:

- Have an active, qualifying graduate appointment (RA, TA, RA-TA, EA, or primary fellowship) with a minimum stipend of, at least, \$8,000 annualized. The qualifying appointment must begin on or before Census Day and extend, at least, 10 days beyond the first day of classes. Tuition will be prorated for graduate appointments that do not extend through the fall or spring semesters.
- Active in an on-campus master's or doctoral program. Distance education and graduate certifications are not eligible for the Graduate Student Support Plan
- Student must be enrolled full-time at all times.

\*\*Eligibility for any Graduate Student Support Plan benefit is contingent on meeting these requirements at all times. If a student ceases to meet any of the GSSP requirements, it will negatively affect their tuition (responsible for some or all semester tuition) and health insurance benefits (termination of coverage). Student must be within allowed semesters in order to be eligible for GSSP tuition benefits.

<sup>10</sup> Fall and Spring semesters only. The Graduate Student Support Plan does not support any summer tuition. Semesters of Graduate Student Support Plan eligibility begin at initial enrollment in graduate studies at NCSU regardless of whether the student is active in a degree seeking program. Each semester that a student is enrolled in graduate studies counts as an eligible semester and against the total number of allowed semester for GSSP tuition eligibility regardless of whether the student actually participated/benefitted from the Graduate Student Support Plan.

<sup>11</sup> F = Full-time, at all times -- See "Full-Time/Part-Time Determination for All Graduate Students" for more information about enrollment requirements (<https://grad.ncsu.edu/students/rules-and-regulations/handbook/3-14-minimum-enrollment-requirements/#b>)

<sup>12</sup> Out-of-State students are only eligible for tuition remission support through the Graduate Student Support Plan for the first two semesters of graduate studies (first academic year). After this time, the student must establish in-state residency. If the out-of-state student does not establish in-state residency after the first two semesters, they must receive, at least, a "Good Faith Effort" toward establishing in-state residency each subsequent semester in order to continue to be eligible for GSSP tuition remission support. This tuition remission stipulation does not apply to international students with visa types ineligible for establishing in-state residency.

<sup>13</sup> Please be aware that if a GSSP eligible student also has other third party tuition sponsorship, external to the GSSP (excluding department GA-1 payments), that third party tuition sponsorship may take priority over GSSP tuition sponsorship. In other words, other concurrent third party sponsorship may be used for tuition payment in the place of or before any GSSP sponsorship will be applied. It is the student's responsibility to work with their sponsoring agencies (including their department) to manage their benefit administration.

## **Qualifying Graduate Appointment**

In order for a graduate appointment to meet eligibility requirement for the Graduate Student Support Plan, it must meet the criteria below.

Appointment Types (Job Code)<sup>14</sup>:

Graduate Research Assistantship (A148)  
Graduate Teaching Assistantship (A138)  
Graduate Research & Teaching Assistantship (A178)  
Graduate Extension Assistant (A428, A438, A448, A478)  
Primary Fellowship<sup>15</sup>

- Definitions for graduate appointments are found in [Section 4.1.B.](https://grad.ncsu.edu/students/rules-and-regulations/handbook/) of the Graduate Administrative Handbook (<https://grad.ncsu.edu/students/rules-and-regulations/handbook/>).

Stipend:

At or above \$8,000 annualized (~\$666.67/month)  
Payment administered through NC State<sup>16</sup>

Duration:

Appointment must begin on or before Census Day  
Extend, at least, 30 days beyond the first day of classes  
Extend through November 30<sup>th</sup> (Fall) or April 30<sup>th</sup> (Spring) to be *eligible* for full tuition benefits<sup>17</sup>

It is important that your qualifying graduate appointment be entered and approved at all levels in the HR (assistantships) or Student Information (fellowships) systems well in advance of Census Day in order to receive GSSP benefits in a timely manner.

## **Full-Time Enrollment**

Graduate students must be enrolled full-time by 5:00 pm on [Census Day](#) each fall and spring semester and remain enrolled full-time at all times during the semester in order to meet the enrollment GSSP eligibility requirement. Census Day is the 10<sup>th</sup> day of classes each fall and spring semester. To add an academic calendar for graduate students to your Google Calendar, please visit the link below.

<https://registrar.ncsu.edu/calendars/>

Full-time determination for all graduate students is as follows:

*For Fall and Spring Semesters*

*Graduate students enrolled in degree plans requiring a thesis or dissertation:*

Students will be considered full-time “if they take at least 9 [credit] hours per semester until the semester in which a course load of less than 9 credit hours will reach an accumulated total equal to the minimum number of hours required by their program. They should then register for that number of credit hours, but not less than 3 [credit hours]. From that point on, they will continue to be considered full-time until they complete their thesis or dissertation, as long as they enroll for at least 3 credit hours.”

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<sup>14</sup> Supplemental fellowships, Graduate Services Assistantships (A198) and Student Worker positions are not GSSP eligible appointments. Therefore, they do not contribute toward the minimum stipend requirement.

<sup>15</sup> Please speak with your sponsoring department/unit if you have questions about whether your graduate fellowship is considered primary or supplemental.

<sup>16</sup> Qualifying graduate appointment must be paid through NC State. Appointments that paid directly to the student from external agencies are not considered eligible appointments.

<sup>17</sup> Eligibility for tuition benefits are also dependent on meeting all other GSSP eligibility requirements, including residency, “allowed semesters,” and enrollment requirements.

Graduate students enrolled in degree plans not requiring a thesis or dissertation:

“These students will be full-time if they take at least 9 [credit] hours in a given semester.”

For the complete full-time determination policy for all graduate students, please see the link below.

<https://grad.ncsu.edu/students/rules-and-regulations/handbook/3-14-minimum-enrollment-requirements/#b>

\*Audit hours do not count toward minimum full-time enrollment. Tuition and/or fee charges related to audit hours are not covered or reimbursed by the GSSP.

\*Summer session enrollment is not required for GSSP eligibility.<sup>18</sup> The GSSP does not cover summer tuition or fees.

Please speak with your academic department Graduate Services Coordinator if you have questions regarding your enrollment. Also, please be advised that some degree plans are considered “Option B” degree plans. Option B plans are considered “non-thesis or dissertation” until a Graduate Plan of Work is approved confirming that the student is pursuing the thesis or dissertation required option.

### **Tuition Support Eligibility**

In order to be eligible for tuition support (in-state tuition (ISTA) and/or tuition remission (TR -- out-of-state tuition portion)) through the GSSP, the graduate student must have been enrolled as a NCSU graduate student for *no more than* the maximum allowed number of semesters for their designated graduate degree classification (as outlined in [GSSP Requirements At-A-Glance Chart](#)).<sup>19 20</sup> Initial enrollment refers to the first semester of enrollment in the NC State University Graduate School and includes semesters spend in a master’s plan for those graduate students that transition from a master’s to a doctoral degree.

All fall and spring semesters in which the student is enrolled count against the total number of allowed semesters the student is eligible for GSSP tuition support regardless of whether the student actually received benefits (was eligible). If the qualifying appointment does not extend past November 30<sup>th</sup> for fall or April 30<sup>th</sup> for spring, tuition support will be prorated according to the qualifying appointment end date. The prorated portion of tuition associated with the segment of the semester in which the student is not appointed to a GSSP qualifying appointment (duration of ineligibility) will be applied to the student’s billing account.<sup>21</sup> It is the student’s responsibility to pay this prorated portion of semester tuition if the sponsoring department/PI/advisor chooses not to pay these remaining expenses.

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<sup>18</sup> Students do not have access to university facilities, such as the Student Health Center and Recreation Center during semesters that they are not actively enrolled (and fee paying) – including summer sessions. The semester fees assessed in conjunction to on-campus tuition are partially comprised of the costs associated with using these facilities (similar to a membership fee). If the student is not enrolled, therefore, fee paying, they do not have access to these campus facilities. Please contact the [Student Health Center](#) and [Recreation Center](#) to inquire about possible separate fees that non-summer-enrolled students can pay in order to continue to have access to these facilities.

<sup>19</sup> In order to be eligible for GSSP tuition support the student must also, of course, meet all other GSSP eligibility requirements, at all times.

<sup>20</sup> Please be aware that if a GSSP eligible student also has other third party tuition sponsorship, external to the GSSP (excluding department GA-1 payments), that third party tuition sponsorship may take priority over GSSP tuition sponsorship. In other words, other concurrent third party sponsorship may be used for tuition payment in the place of or before any GSSP sponsorship will be applied. It is the student’s responsibility to work with their sponsoring agencies (including their department) to manage their benefit administration.

<sup>21</sup> Dates used for prorating each semester are as follows and comply with University Contracts & Grants policy.

Fall: 8/16 – 12/31 (138 days)

Spring: 1/1 – 5/15 (135 days) (136 days – leap years)

## Residency Requirement for Tuition Remission Benefits<sup>22 23</sup>

In order for out-of-state graduate students (US citizens and students with visa types able to establish in-state residency) to receive full GSSP tuition support (tuition remission) after the first academic year (first two semesters), the graduate student must apply for in-state residency and be approved/granted reclassification to in-state residency status (in which case, tuition remission support become irrelevant) or receive a “Good Faith Effort” toward establishing in-state residency. If the student receives a “Good Faith Effort” toward establishing in-state residency, the student must continue to reapply for in-state residency each subsequent semester (a) until they are approved/granted reclassification to in-state residency status, or (b) continue to establish a “Good Faith Effort” to continue receiving GSSP tuition remission support. If the student does not receive in-state residency or establish a “Good Faith Effort” toward establishing residency, tuition remission costs will be the student’s responsibility unless the department/PI/advisor chooses to sponsor this expense.

For more information regarding residency, please visit [go.ncsu.edu/NCRRes](http://go.ncsu.edu/NCRRes).

## Master’s Students

Graduate students enrolled in master’s degree plans are eligible for GSSP tuition support for [four \(4\) semesters](#) from initial enrollment in the Graduate School at NC State University.<sup>24</sup>

## Doctoral Students

Doctoral students *with a previous related master’s degree* upon initial enrollment in the Graduate School are eligible for GSSP tuition support for [eight \(8\) semesters](#) from initial enrollment. This includes NC State master’s students that take a break between completing the master’s and beginning doctoral studies.

Doctoral students *without a previous related master’s degree* upon initial enrollment in the Graduate School are eligible for GSSP tuition support for [ten \(10\) semesters](#) from initial enrollment. This includes NC State master’s students that transition to a doctoral degree without a break in enrollment.

## Partial Semester Eligibility

If a graduate student’s qualifying graduate appointment terminates prior to the end of the semester, the GSSP tuition sponsorship will be prorated for the period the student is eligible. The prorated tuition amount for the period of time that the student was ineligible for the GSSP will be the graduate student’s responsibility unless the department/PI/advisor/external agency chooses to sponsor these expenses.

If a graduate student drops below full-time during or withdraws from a semester in which the student is receiving GSSP tuition support, all semester GSSP tuition support will be cancelled and pushed back to the student’s billing account. The full tuition is then the student’s responsibility unless the sponsoring department/PI/advisor chooses to sponsor these expenses.

It is important to remember that not maintaining all GSSP eligibility requirements throughout the semester will affect student GSSP benefits, both tuition and health insurance. In these cases, the student could be responsible for all or a portion of semester tuition and health insurance. Please speak with your advisor, [Director of Graduate Programs](#), or [Graduate Services Coordinator](#) questions about the GSSP implications of particular events and actions.

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<sup>22</sup> This GSSP tuition remission sponsorship stipulation does not apply to international students with visa types ineligible for establishing in-state residency. Students with visa types that prohibit establishment of in-state residency receive tuition remission support throughout their semesters of GSSP tuition eligibility, if they meet [all GSSP eligibility requirements](#) at all times.

<sup>23</sup> Please be aware that if a GSSP eligible student also has other third party tuition sponsorship, external to the GSSP (excluding department GA-1 payments), that third party tuition sponsorship may take priority over GSSP tuition sponsorship. In other words, other concurrent third party sponsorship may be used for tuition payment in the place of or before any GSSP sponsorship will be applied. It is the student’s responsibility to work with their sponsoring agencies (including their department) to manage their benefit administration.

<sup>24</sup> The number of allowed semesters for GSSP tuition support does not reset if the student changes master’s degree plans or programs or decides to pursue a second master’s degree.

## Graduate Student Support Plan Benefits

Receiving any Graduate Student Support Plan benefit is contingent on the graduate student actively meeting *all* [Graduate Student Support Plan eligibility requirements](#), as outlined above. Once all GSSP eligibility requirements are met in the NCSU Human Resource and Student Information Systems, applicable GSSP benefits will *automatically* apply to the student's billing account within 1-2 business days (i.e., applicable tuition support (if any) will post to the student's billing account, the mandatory health insurance charge will "zero" from the student's billing account, and the student will be automatically enrolled in the NCSU RA-TA health insurance plan if they have not already waived coverage on the plan).

The system that administers GSSP benefits on behalf of eligible students *will not* post any sponsorship (tuition or health insurance) if any of the GSSP eligibility factors are not actively met in the HR or Student Information systems. If you expect to be eligible for the GSSP (tuition or health insurance) and benefits have not appeared in your student billing account, it is likely that one of the GSSP eligibility requirements are not met in the HR and/or Student Information (SIS) systems. Please see your department [Graduate Services Coordinator](#) for help determining why GSSP benefits have not applied to your account. These department Graduate School representatives have access to look up your GSSP eligibility requirements in campus HR and SIS. If they cannot determine the cause of why GSSP benefits have not applied, they will then contact the Graduate School for further assistance. Please do not contact the Graduate School directly.

To help identify why a student has not received GSSP benefits, please see the "[Receiving GSSP Benefits/Sponsorship – Flow Chart](#)" found at the [GSSP: For Students](#) website. Simply start at the top of the flow chart with the benefit about which you have questions and follow the path downward, answering the indicated questions as you go.

### Health Insurance

The Graduate Student Support Plan provides health insurance coverage through Student Blue (Blue Cross & Blue Shield of North Carolina) at no cost to the student. The [NCSU RA-TA health insurance plan](#) is a "gold" metallic tier student health insurance plan available to all graduate students that meet GSSP eligibility requirements, at all times. *Only* students eligible for the Graduate Student Support Plan can participate as members of the NCSU RA-TA health insurance plan.

[Plan benefits](#) can be found on the Student Blue [NCSU RA-TA Plan](#) website listed below. For questions regarding plan benefits or claims, please [contact Student Blue](#) directly at 1-800-579-8022 or email@studentbluenc.com. Your graduate appointment sponsoring department and the Graduate School only manage eligibility for the GSSP. If you have questions regarding your *eligibility* for the GSSP and NCSU RA-TA plan, please contact your [graduate appointment sponsoring department](#).

NCSU RA-TA Website: [www.bcbsnc.com/content/studentblue/ncsu-ta/index.htm?page=welcome](http://www.bcbsnc.com/content/studentblue/ncsu-ta/index.htm?page=welcome)

NCSU RA-TA Benefits: [www.bcbsnc.com/content/studentblue/ncsu-ta/index.htm?page=benefits](http://www.bcbsnc.com/content/studentblue/ncsu-ta/index.htm?page=benefits)

### Enrollment in the NCSU RA-TA Plan

Students that have actively met all [GSSP eligibility requirements](#) in the HR and Student Information Systems are automatically enrolled in the NCSU RA-TA health insurance plan<sup>25</sup> and waived from the University Mandatory Student Health Insurance Plan<sup>26</sup> (managed through the [Student Health Center](#)). The typical coverage start dates for each semester are listed below.<sup>27</sup> Please contact your [graduate appointment sponsoring department](#) if you have questions regarding your coverage start (or end) date.

Fall: August 1

Spring: January 1

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<sup>25</sup> Students are automatically enrolled in the NCSU RA-TA Plan if they have actively met all GSSP eligibility requirements and HAVE NOT waived coverage on the NCSU RA-TA plan using this plan's waiver/decline form found on the [GSSP: For Students](#) website.

<sup>26</sup> University Mandatory Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) is the other NCSU student health insurance plan on campus, available to all enrolled on-campus (non-GSSP) students, managed through the Student Health Center. Please see the [Student Health Center – Insurance](#) website for more information ([healthypack.dasa.ncsu.edu/insurance-and-billing/](http://healthypack.dasa.ncsu.edu/insurance-and-billing/)).

<sup>27</sup> Health insurance coverage start and end dates primarily follow the start and end dates of the student's GSSP qualifying graduate appointment, unless the student fails to meet one of the other GSSP eligibility requirements (i.e., drops below full-time enrollment, withdraws, changes to a GSSP ineligible degree plan or graduate certificate, stipend level drops below eligible level, etc.)

All [GSSP eligibility requirements](#) must be actively met before the student is reported to Student Blue for coverage start (or continuation each month). The *mailing address the eligible student has listed in MyPack Portal* is the address reported to Student Blue for enrollment.<sup>28</sup> Please allow Student Blue one week to mail health insurance membership cards. If the student needs their individual policy information before the physical card arrives the student should [contact Student Blue](#) at 1-800-579-8022 and request their policy information (subscriber ID and group number). With this information, we encourage the student to register for [Blue Connect](#). This online service allows members to manage their policy online, including printing temporary cards. If the student needs to change the mailing address on file with Student Blue, they should contact Student Blue at 1-800-579-8022. Please be aware that the NCSU RA-TA Plan has a specific customer service team that can be reached at 1-800-579-8022 – use of other phone numbers may lead you to customer service representative unfamiliar with the NCSU RA-TA plan.

Blue Connect: [www.bcbsnc.com/content/studentblue/ncsu-ta/index.htm?page=resources](http://www.bcbsnc.com/content/studentblue/ncsu-ta/index.htm?page=resources)

## Waiving/Declining Coverage on the NCSU RA-TA Plan

Students can waive/decline coverage on the NCSU RA-TA Plan<sup>29</sup> if they have alternate health insurance that they would prefer. In order to waive/decline coverage on the NCSU RA-TA plan, the student should complete the online form found below and on the [GSSP: For Students](#) webpage.

### [Request Form to Waive/Decline NCSU RA-TA Coverage](#)

If the student's alternate health insurance coverage is outside of one of the two NCSU student health insurance plans (NCSU RA-TA and University Mandatory), they will also need to [waive out of the University Mandatory Student Health Insurance Plan](#).

If the student wishes to withdraw a previous request to waive/decline NCSU RA-TA coverage (in other words, subsequently request coverage on the NCSU RA-TA plan again, after previously waiving coverage), they should complete the form linked below. Previous requests to decline/waive coverage on the NCSU RA-TA plan remain active until the student request to withdraw the waiver/decline request.

### [Withdraw Previous Waive/Decline of NCSU RA-TA Coverage](#)

## Waiving Coverage on the University Mandatory Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP)

Students eligible for the NCSU RA-TA plan (GSSP eligible students only) will be automatically waived from the University Mandatory Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) without any further action. Student Blue (BCBSNC) manages both NC State student health insurance plans (NCSU RA-TA and Mandatory Plan) and reconciles membership between the two on a regular basis. Nonetheless, if the student would like to manually waive out of the University Mandatory Student Health Insurance Plan using their alternate coverage (NCSU RA-TA plan) for added peace of mind or to prompt accelerated removal of the University Mandatory Health Insurance Plan charge from their student billing account, they can do so.

Please note: When Student Blue (BCBSNC) does *administratively* waive NCSU RA-TA members from the University Mandatory Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) it occasionally prompts an automated email to the student's official NC State email address. This email might indicate that your waiver request has been "approved" despite the fact that you never manually completed a waiver request for the University Mandatory Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). Please be certain to take notice of the information in these emails – if they reference the "Student Health Insurance," "SHI," or the "1-888-351-8283" customer service number (specific to the SHIP policy), the email is probably in regards to waiver from the University Mandatory Health Insurance Plan because of your enrollment in the NCSU RA-TA health insurance plan.

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<sup>28</sup> Please make sure that your mailing address is up-to-date as soon as you gain access to MyPack Portal. If an old address is transmitted to Student Blue because your address is outdated in MyPack Portal, it is necessary for the student to contact Student Blue to update this information in their systems, as well as in MyPack Portal.

<sup>29</sup> The sponsoring appointment department/program/PI/advisor should not require, suggest, or encourage that a student waive/decline health insurance available to them, if that student needs health insurance coverage and does not have alternate coverage that they would prefer.

If you have questions about your GSSP eligibility and enrollment in the NCSU RA-TA plan, please contact your department [Graduate Services Coordinator](#) – they have access to the system used to transmit membership to Student Blue each coverage month (“Graduate Support” MyPack Portal (SIS) – “Insurance” tab/section – [Graduate Services/Financials](#) personnel only).

Please make certain to take all correspondence from Student Blue (BCBSNC) seriously. If you have questions about any communications from the insurance company, please call the [NCSU RA-TA customer services representatives](#) at 1-800-579-8022 or contact your [Graduate Services Coordinator](#) regarding your GSSP eligibility.

## Dependent Enrollment

Once the eligible student is enrolled in the NCSU RA-TA health insurance plan, the student [can apply for coverage of desired dependents](#) directly through Student Blue (1-800-579-8022). Dependent coverage is at the student’s expense and is not covered by the Graduate Student Support Plan.

Application for Dependents: [www.bcbsnc.com/content/studentblue/ncsu-ta/index.htm?page=enroll](http://www.bcbsnc.com/content/studentblue/ncsu-ta/index.htm?page=enroll)

## Termination from the NCSU RA-TA Plan

Eligibility for the NCSU RA-TA health insurance plan (and overall eligibility for all GSSP benefits) are continually reassessed throughout the semester. If a student fails to meet all [GSSP eligibility requirements](#), at all times, they will be *terminated* from coverage at the end of the closest billing cycle.<sup>30</sup> <sup>31</sup> Only students that currently (actively) meet all GSSP eligibility requirements can be enrolled in the NCSU RA-TA health insurance plan. Please speak with your department [Graduate Services Coordinator](#) if you have questions regarding your GSSP eligibility or health insurance coverage.<sup>32</sup>

\* Important Note: Appointments that extend, at least, 5 days into the health insurance billing cycle (effective termination on the 6<sup>th</sup> or after) are eligible for coverage for that month.

## Planning Ahead

Managing overall eligibility for the Graduate Student Support Plan is the student’s responsibility. Please become familiar with the start and end dates of your qualifying graduate appointment, how many credit hours constitutes full-time enrollment each semester, and how you are progressing toward completion of your graduate degree. Your department [Graduate Services Coordinator](#), [Director of Graduate Programs](#), and advisor can help with these things. Please be certain to plan ahead to manage how you will transition from one health insurance plan to another if you will be ineligible for the NCSU RA-TA plan (or GSSP) in the future.

The Graduate School is not involved, at all, after a student is no longer eligible for/covered under the Graduate Student Support Plan. The options listed below are only meant to serve as possible options that students can seek out and manage independently. The Graduate School simply manages university-level eligibility and administers payment for the NCSU RA-TA policy. It is the employing department/program/unit’s responsibility to assist the student with questions regarding when their Graduate Student Support Plan benefits (health insurance and tuition) will begin and end.

- a) If the student meets the [eligibility requirements for the University Mandatory Student Health Insurance Plan](#) (SHIP – managed through the Student Health Center), you can enroll in that plan by contacting Student Blue directly at 1-800-579-8022 within 30 days of the date on which the student’s previous coverage (on the NCSU RA-TA plan) terminated.

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<sup>30</sup> NCSU RA-TA monthly billing cycle: 1<sup>st</sup> of the month to last day of the month (example: November coverage/billing cycle = 11/1 – 11/30) – the last day of coverage being the last day of the month.

<sup>31</sup> Appointments that extend, at least, 5 days into the health insurance billing cycle (effective termination on the 6<sup>th</sup> or after) are eligible for coverage for that month.

<sup>32</sup> It is the student’s responsibility to become familiar with GSSP eligibility and manage that eligibility and how it affects their benefits (i.e., tuition and health insurance). It is the graduate appointment sponsoring department/advisor/principal investigator’s responsibility to clearly convey the start and end dates of the student’s graduate appointment. Please contact your department [Graduate Services Coordinator](#) if you have questions about your eligibility or GSSP benefits.

The student should be able to enroll in the University Mandatory Plan for the duration of the current semester for a prorated amount. Please be aware that the Graduate School does not manage eligibility for this plan. Please contact the [Student Health Center](#) if you would like to confirm eligibility or if you have questions about the University Mandatory Health Insurance Plan.

b) If you no longer a student, you can:

1. Shop for health insurance coverage at [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov) (within 60 days of coverage loss)
2. Contact Student Blue at 1-800-579-8022 to see if you are eligible for enrollment in the University Mandatory Student Health Insurance Plan for the duration of the current semester or a prorated amount.
  - i. University Mandatory Plan Semester Coverage Periods:  
Fall = 8/1 – 12/31  
Spring = 1/1 – 7/31

Contacting Student Blue at 1-800-579-8022 is the best way to determine what options, if any, are available to you for continuing health insurance coverage with Student Blue (BCBSNC).

The NCSU RA-TA health insurance plan and the University Mandatory Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) are both student based plans (not employer based). COBRA coverage is not an option with the NCSU RA-TA plan.

### Other Important Policies Regarding NCSU RA-TA Plan Eligibility

- An eligible student supported **solely** on a graduate teaching assistantship (A138 job code) active through May 5<sup>th</sup> will continue to receive coverage on the NCSU RA-TA health insurance plan through the summer months (May 1<sup>st</sup> – July 31<sup>st</sup>) despite not being actively appointed on the graduate teaching assistantship over the summer months (prohibited for the A138 job code). Determination of students eligible for such summer coverage is made beginning the end of April. The student should contact their [teaching assistantship sponsoring department](#) if they have questions about their inclusion in NCSU RA-TA coverage based on this provision.
- Graduate students supported on all other GSSP qualifying assistantship job codes (including combination appointments with research and teaching components) and fellowships will only continue to receive coverage on the NCSU RA-TA plan through the summer months for as long as their appointment extends through the summer period.
- For graduate students supported on both a teaching assistantship and a research assistantship (where the research assistantship alone meets the minimum stipend requirements for GSSP eligibility), summer health insurance coverage will be continue into the summer months only if the research assistantship remains active during the summer months. If the research assistantship is subsequently terminated or its stipend reduced below the minimum annualized stipend level, the teaching assistantship sponsoring department can contact the Graduate School/GSSP and request that summer health insurance coverage extend through the summer months based on the teaching assistantship.
- New graduate students to the NCSU RA-TA plan with qualifying appointments beginning in the summer that would like begin coverage on the NCSU RA-TA plan before the standard fall semester start date (8/1), must meet all GSSP eligibility requirements for the upcoming semester (pre-registered full-time, active qualifying graduate appointment, active in on-campus master's or PhD program) before the appointment sponsoring department can request (emailing the Graduate School) an early health insurance start date.
- If a student does not establish GSSP eligibility in a timely manner each semester (before end of Census Day), the Graduate School may not be able to add the student to the NCSU RA-TA plan for the semester. In this case, the student would need to enroll in the University Mandatory Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) at his or her own expense.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Students can also shop for health insurance coverage on the [healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov) website.

## **Tuition**

Graduate students that meet the eligibility requirements for GSSP tuition support will receive sponsorship for in-state tuition (ISTA) and, if applicable, tuition remission (TR) for a limited number of fall and spring semesters only.<sup>34</sup> <sup>35</sup>The GSSP does not cover any academic fees or “off-model” tuition (premium tuition, tuition increments, etc.). GSSP tuition sponsorship strictly follows the “stair-step” tuition schedule found at the [Cashier’s Office – Graduate Tuition](#) website. The GSSP eligible graduate student is responsible for all paying academic fees, off-model tuition, and other expenses on their student bill in a timely manner. Your sponsoring program/department/advisor may pay for academic fees or off-model tuition on a student’s behalf, but those payments are facilitated at the department level. Please speak with [your department](#) if you have questions about sponsorship outside of eligible GSSP benefits.

In order to receive applicable GSSP tuition support for the entire semester, the student’s eligibility must extend through the semester (this includes the duration of the student’s qualifying graduate appointment). If the qualifying appointment does not extend past November 30<sup>th</sup> for fall or April 30<sup>th</sup> for spring, tuition support will be prorated according to the qualifying appointment end date. The prorated portion of tuition associated with the segment of the semester in which the student is not appointed to a GSSP qualifying appointment (duration of ineligibility) will be applied to the student’s billing account.<sup>36</sup> It is the student’s responsibility to pay this prorated portion of semester tuition if the sponsoring department/PI/advisor chooses not to pay these remaining expenses.

## **Deadlines**

All GSSP eligibility requirements should be active and in place before 5:00 pm on [Census Day](#) each semester (10<sup>th</sup> day of classes), at the latest. Ideally, all GSSP eligibility requirements (pre-enrolled, future graduate appointment entered, etc.) should be in place by 8/1 for fall and 1/1 for spring in order for the student to be included on the first lists transmitted to Student Blue for enrollment/continuation on the NCSU RA-TA health insurance plan. Membership/eligibility lists must be sent to Student Blue in advance of the upcoming health insurance coverage/billing cycle start date (16<sup>th</sup> of any given month) so that BCBSNC has adequate time to process all membership actions (adds, drops, continuations) and mail out appropriate documents (coverage letters, policy cards, etc.) ahead of the upcoming coverage period.

Students cannot receive applicable tuition support or coverage on the NCSU RA-TA health insurance plan until all [GSSP eligibility requirements](#) are established in HR and SIS. Please make sure that you take care of your GSSP eligibility as far in advance as possible each semester to prevent delays in receiving applicable benefits. If you have questions regarding your GSSP eligibility, please contact your [department Graduate Services Coordinator](#).

## **Important NC State Calendars for Graduate Students**

[Graduate Student Academic Calendar](#) – The Graduate School

[Other University Calendars](#) – Office of Registration & Records

[Billing | Tuition & Fees](#) – Cashier’s Office

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<sup>34</sup> GSSP tuition eligibility is only available for the fall and spring semesters – no summer session tuition is sponsored through the GSSP.

<sup>35</sup> Please be aware that if a GSSP eligible student also has other third party tuition sponsorship, external to the GSSP (excluding department GA-1 payments), that third party tuition sponsorship may take priority over GSSP tuition sponsorship. In other words, other concurrent third party sponsorship may be used for tuition payment in the place of or before any GSSP sponsorship will be applied. It is the student’s responsibility to work with their sponsoring agencies (including their department) to manage their benefit administration.

<sup>36</sup> Dates used for prorating each semester are as follows and comply with University Contracts & Grants policy.

Fall: 8/16 – 12/31 (138 days)

Spring: 1/1 – 5/15 (135 days) (136 days – leap years)

## Important Contacts

The administration, faculty, and staff within your academic department are the best and most resourceful points of contact regarding your eligibility for the Graduate Student Support Plan.

If you have questions regarding Graduate Student Support Plan eligibility, enrollment, graduate appointments (assistantships or fellowships), registration, degree plans, or any other topic related to your graduate studies, please speak with your [Graduate Services Coordinator](#), [Director of Graduate Programs](#), or advisor.

Graduate Services Coordinators: <https://grad.ncsu.edu/about/people/gsc/>

Directors of Graduate Programs: <https://grad.ncsu.edu/about/people/dgp/>

If you have questions regarding your health insurance – benefits, adding dependents, claims, address/name changes, policy information inquiries, etc., please contact [Student Blue](#) directly using one of the methods below. The Graduate School does not have information regarding your individual policy information, benefits, claims, or dependent enrollment.

Student Blue  
PO Box 2073  
Durham, NC 27702

1-800-579-8022

[email@studentbluenc.com](mailto:email@studentbluenc.com)

[www.bcbsnc.com/content/studentblue/ncsu-ta/index.htm](http://www.bcbsnc.com/content/studentblue/ncsu-ta/index.htm)

Graduate Student Support Plan | The Graduate School at NC State

[ncstate-gssp@ncsu.edu](mailto:ncstate-gssp@ncsu.edu)

Mailing:

[The Graduate School](#)  
NC State University  
1000 Main Campus Drive, Rm 2300A  
Campus Box 7102  
Raleigh, NC 27695