

## 2.4 International Student Admissions

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The Graduate School can inform an international student of academic acceptance, but cannot grant official admission until certain critical documents are received and approved either by the International Admissions Specialist at the Graduate School or by the [Office of International Services \(OIS\)](#). International students (non-resident aliens) are those who have *neither* United States citizenship *nor* permanent resident status in the United States. U.S. permanent residents will be required to show proof of valid permanent residency if recommended for admission.

Applicants who are overseas internationals, U.S. permanent residents, or international students already residing in the U.S. on a visa that allows study, must send their paperwork to the International Admissions specialist at the Graduate School. Those applicants who will need to change their visa status to F-1 or J-1 prior to enrolling must send their paperwork to OIS. The OIS staff members also provide immigration and cross-cultural assistance to students on nonimmigrant visas throughout their program at NC State.

### A. Types of Admission for International Students

International graduate students are admitted to either full-time study in a specific graduate program or into the Graduate-Unclassified category as an international visitor. In addition to admission requirements listed elsewhere for graduate admission, applicants who are not U.S. citizens must complete and submit a Visa Clearance Form and/or a Certificate of Financial Responsibility (see additional sections below) before a final admission decision can be made. Criteria for international visitors are as follows:

1. International student visitors must state their educational objectives at NC State and the time expected to accomplish those objectives (normally one semester or one academic year). The educational objective may not be to seek a graduate degree at NC State.
2. They are expected to meet the same minimum academic admission requirements that apply to graduate students in full standing.
3. They are expected to meet the same TOEFL requirements that apply to international students who are admitted to Master's and doctoral programs if they plan to take courses. If they plan to register for research only, they are not required to take the TOEFL.
4. They must be recommended by the DGP of the program in which they plan to take courses or do research.
5. Special admission status may apply for a period not to exceed one year.

6. They may hold a research assistantship but may not hold a teaching assistantship (provided their nonimmigrant status allows on-campus employment).
7. They will not be eligible for out-of-state tuition remission.
8. Those in F-1 or J-1 status must maintain full-time enrollment and all other requirements based on their particular nonimmigrant status.

## **B. English Proficiency Requirements**

In order to be eligible for admission to the Graduate School all non-US citizen applicants (i.e., non-resident aliens **and** permanent residents) must demonstrate proficiency in English at a level necessary to be successful in a graduate program at NC State (see [Section 2.3](#)).

## **C. Visas**

Under immigration law, international students are divided according to their immigration classification. Each visa type has its own eligibility requirements and restrictions.

1. **F-1 Student** - is a resident of a foreign country who plans to return to their home country and who is coming to the U.S. temporarily and solely for the purpose of attending a school previously determined by the student. An F-1 student is required to demonstrate full financial support to obtain the F-1 visa and be admitted to the U.S. as a student. There are numerous requirements and restrictions regarding enrollment, employment, travel, etc., and detailed information is available from OIS.
2. **J-1 Exchange Visitor** – is a classification that serves a variety of educational purposes. Under this status, students, scholars, professors, and researchers may come to the U.S. temporarily for the purpose of educational exchanges under the sponsorship of an approved organization or institution. Students often enter the U.S. in J-1 Exchange Visitor status when they are participants in sponsored activities such as the Fulbright program.
3. **Other Visa Types**- in addition to F-1 and J-1, there are other visa types represented among the international student population at NC State, such as H-1B, TN, O, and E visas.

International applicants already in the U.S. who wish to study at NC State must indicate on the Visa Clearance Form (see below) whether they wish to remain in their current nonimmigrant status or wish to change their status. Because processing times at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services are sometimes long and there are many factors that must be taken in to consideration when deciding to change one's status, those in dependent status (F-2) are recommended to contact an OIS advisor early in the admission process. A link to the online **Visa Clearance Form** is issued when the Graduate School sends the academic acceptance letter; if the applicant is a foreign national in the U.S. The applicant should complete and return this form to the appropriate office listed on the form as soon as possible to enable the Graduate School to grant official admission. To finalize an international student's application, the Graduate School must receive a completed **Certificate of Financial Responsibility (CFR)** and/or a **Visa Clearance Form (VCF)** depending on their status. Once approved, the Graduate School or OIS will then issue Certificate of Eligibility Form I-20 for an F-1 visa or Form DS-2019 for a J-1 visa. The Certificate of Eligibility can be used as partial documentation to: apply for a visa overseas; request

admission/inspection at a U.S. port of entry; and as proof of nonimmigrant status when applying for certain benefits. International applicants can check on the status of their application/admission, including when the Certificate of Eligibility was issued by going to: <http://www.ncsu.edu/applygrad>. A lawful permanent resident of the U.S. ("Green Card holder" or "resident alien") is not required to demonstrate financial ability on the CFR and needs only to complete and submit the Visa Clearance Form.

#### **D. Certificate of Financial Responsibility**

The Certificate of Financial Responsibility (CFR) requires the candidate to provide evidence of ability to cover all expenses, including those of any accompanying dependents, for each year of study. Students must return the complete CFR to the Graduate School. Once the CFR and/or VCF are approved, the applicant will receive a Certificate of Eligibility Form I-20 (or DS-2019) and an official admission letter. Scholarship award letters are not acceptable substitutes.

#### **E. Health Insurance Requirement**

Hospitalization costs in the U.S. are high and having appropriate health insurance is a requirement for all international students at NC State in F-1 or J-1 status. All international students in F-1 or J-1 status must purchase the [University student health and accident insurance plan](#) (or opt out through the university's hard-waiver program if other acceptable health insurance has already been purchased) throughout their program of study at NC State. Those who do not maintain this required insurance will have a hold placed on their ability to register.

#### **F. Letters of Assurance for Research Participation**

The Board has determined that no international students are required to sign Letters of Assurance, such as those occasioned by the Export Control Act, as a condition of participating in research activities.

#### **G. Full-time Status Requirement**

International students in F-1 or J-1 status must carry a full course load in each regular semester to comply with the [US Citizenship and Immigration Services \(USCIS\)](#) regulations. Please refer to [Section 3.15](#) for information on determining full- and part-time status.

#### **H. Assistantship Limitations**

International students in F-1 or J-1 status may not hold assistantships or a combination of assistantships that exceed 20 hours of service work per week during Fall and Spring semester since this jeopardizes their student status with USCIS. However, these students can have appointments up to 1.0 FTE during the Summer sessions.

#### **I. Employment**

International students should consult with OIS before accepting any type of employment. Employment regulations vary by visa type.