



MS CSIS Graduate Student Handbook

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Welcome to the Master of Science in Computer Science and Information Systems program at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. We are very excited that you have chosen our program and are joining our family. This handbook is designed to assist you as you complete your degree. An electronic copy may be found on our website at <http://csb.uncw.edu/mcsis/default.html>.

We have a very unique program that combines the disciplines of computer science and information systems. Faculty from both the Department of Computer Science in the College of Arts and Sciences and from the Department of Information Systems and Operations Management in the Cameron School of Business share in the development and delivery of the curriculum. There are very few programs like this in the country. As a result, our graduates, armed with a MS in CSIS, are highly marketable.

Some of the benefits of our program include:

- A diverse body of students from around the U.S. and the world
- Small classes with involved faculty
- High placement rate: 100% employed within 6 months, most before graduation
- High salaries for graduates: alumni at Boeing, IBM, EMC, PWC, AT&T, Fidelity, GE, etc.
- Low tuition: scholarships, assistantships, and out-of-state waivers available based on merit
- Established relationships with corporations such as EMC, IBM, AT&T, CISCO, Microsoft, GE, Credit Suisse, etc.

Furthermore, our faculty are dedicated to excellence in teaching coupled with active research and scholarly activities. The university is committed first and foremost to its teaching mission, and none of our faculty would be here if they were not excellent teachers. In addition to fulfilling our teaching mission, our faculty are very active in research in their fields, publishing numerous journal articles, conference papers, and book chapters as well as seeking and obtaining external grants to support research activities including student stipends.

As you enter the program, I urge you to take some time to get to know your colleagues as well as the faculty from both departments. Establishing strong personal relationships will make the experience far more rewarding.

Again, welcome to the program, and I look forward to meeting you. Please don't hesitate to stop by or email if you have any questions!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clayton S. Ferner".

Clayton S. Ferner, Ph.D.
MS CSIS Director

Table of Contents

- I. Program Overview
- II. Facilities
- III. Admission Requirements
- IV. Financial Support
- V. Degree Requirements
- VI. Advising
- VII. Thesis / Capstone Project
- VIII. Additional Academic Policies and Procedures
- IX. General Information

I. Program Overview

The Master of Science program in Computer Science and Information Systems (MS CSIS) is a combined effort by the Department of Computer Science in the College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of Information Systems and Operations Management in the Cameron School of Business. This interdisciplinary graduate program primarily targets students who majored in computer science or information systems and computer professionals with equivalent academic preparation. A secondary audience for the MS CSIS program includes students whose background is in related areas such as business, mathematics, or electrical engineering, or working professionals seeking to migrate to the CSIS arena.

The MS CSIS program is part of the Professional Science Master's (PSM) initiative (<http://www.sciencemasters.com>). PSM programs are innovative graduate degree programs designed to allow students to pursue advanced training in a science or mathematics, while simultaneously developing workplace skills highly valued by employers.

The interdisciplinary nature of this program provides a unique balance of advanced scientific knowledge, more commonly found in the computer science field, and the development of systems and solutions, applied in a business environment, more commonly considered the focus of the information systems field. This unique blend will provide a foundation for information technology (IT) professionals to have a broader perspective of the rapidly expanding and evolving science of technology and how it can be managed and leveraged to support and further commerce and trade activities. Only a select group of other graduate schools currently offer this unique mix of education and training.

The program requires 36 semester hours of graduate-level study that prepares the student to take on leadership roles in the development and implementation of computer and information systems. It includes six required core courses (18 hours) providing a mix of theoretical underpinning, technical skills, and information technology perspectives. Elective courses (12 hours) provide the opportunity for additional study in a variety of areas to be determined by the student and his/her academic advisor. Students choose elective courses based on their own interests (e.g., artificial intelligence, web development, information management, network security, etc.) Many students take a directed independent study course which involves individual investigation under faculty supervision beyond what is offered in existing courses. An integrative project or a thesis (6 hours), serves as the capstone experience.

Finally, the MS CSIS program encourages student internships with local and regional businesses. Most of our students complete an internship before graduation. Recent internship sites include GE-Hitachi Nuclear Energy, Corning, Wave Transit, VisionAir, PPD Inc., Construction Imaging Systems, DAK Americas, Credit Suisse, and UNCW's Information Technology Systems Division.

II. Facilities

The MS CSIS Graduate Program is housed in the Computer Information Systems classroom building that was designed to enable and foster interdisciplinary collaboration in information sciences and other technology areas across the university.

Highlights of the facility include:

- An interior that reflects technology that is student-centered, and teamwork-oriented
- Opportunity maximized for collaboration between academic departments
- Space for industry outreach and research collaboration
- Multidisciplinary, hands-on laboratories equipped with the latest information technologies
- Student "sandboxes" to facilitate team-based, collaborative learning
- High-speed wired and wireless network connectivity



III. Admission Requirements

- An application for graduate admission.
- Official transcripts of all college work (undergraduate and graduate).
- Certificates of training in computer science/information systems if applicable.
- Official scores on the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) or Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Scores more than five years old will not be accepted.
- Three recommendations from individuals in professionally relevant fields.
- Additional materials may be required by the UNCW Graduate School (e.g., TOEFL or IELTS scores for international students).
- Resume and letter of interest (i.e., why do you want to pursue the MS CSIS degree?)

Persons entering the program must have completed a basic core of computer science and information systems courses. Professional experience may be accepted for some of the prerequisite coursework. Professional experience, coursework from other institutions, or technical certificates must be approved by the MSCSIS Advisory Committee and will be evaluated on a case by case basis for any prerequisite substitution.

Applications can be completed and submitted online at:

<https://app.applyyourself.com/?id=UNCW-GRAD>

Application deadline for fall is **June 1st**. However, applicants interested in scholarships and a graduate assistantship are encouraged to apply by **March 1st**.

The application deadline for spring is **November 1st**.

IV. Financial Support

A variety of funds are available to MS CSIS students for financial support. Students are encouraged to apply for support during the application process. Granting of support is based on merit and financial need. You should also complete the FAFSA form that is available at <http://uncw.edu/finaid/apply.html>.

The University of North Carolina Wilmington provides three ways primarily for students to gain financial support while in the graduate program.

1. **Graduate Assistantships:** A limited number of graduate assistantships are available. Students typically work either 20 hours per week (a full-time assistantship) or 10 hours per week (a half-time assistantship). Graduate assistantships currently pay \$11,000 and \$5,500 per academic year respectively. Assistantship interest should be indicated on the application form. When the application package is reviewed, a faculty committee will also decide on assistantship awards. Students who are accepted into the MS CSIS program and offered an award will have several weeks to either accept or decline the award. Students who are awarded assistantships are notified of their work assignments prior to the beginning of the fall and spring semesters.

2. **Tuition Remissions:** Limited out-of-state tuition remission funds are available. Out-of-state tuition remission reduces tuition and fees to in-state rates for fall and spring semesters. Students receiving a tuition remission are required to work as a graduate assistant. Compensation for graduate assistants is outlined in number one above. Students awarded an out-of-state tuition remission are expected to begin the process to claim in-state residency for their second year in the program. Consult the Graduate Programs Office for clarification.
3. **Scholarships:** A variety of scholarships based on need and merit are also available.
 - UNCW scholarships: The application is more than 20 pages long. Each question is in reference to something specific in a scholarship. You may choose to complete as much or as little of the information as you want. Please note that if you omit any information, you are eliminating your eligibility for a scholarship.
 - Cameron School of Business scholarships: This is the same application as the UNCW scholarships above; however, the questions specific to business scholarships start on page 10.

To access the scholarship system: Sign into [SeaNet](#) (Secure login for Faculty, Staff and Students), Click on **Financial Aid Tab**. You will not be able to access the system until 24 hours after you have paid your enrollment deposit (\$50). The scholarship application is open during the spring semester for applications for the next academic year.

- The Graduate School also provides a block of funds to the MS CSIS program for award during the application process. The MS CSIS committee awards these scholarships at the same time admission decisions are made.
- Scholarship opportunities offered by the UNCW Graduate School can be found at: <http://uncw.edu/gradschool/currentstudents/scholarshipsandfellowships.html>
- Some scholarships having a specific criterion of financial need that may only be awarded to students who have completed the [FAFSA](#) (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

V. Degree Requirements

Total required hours for graduation: 36.

Grades required: A student must have no less than a 3.0 GPA on all graduate-level courses. Grades of A, B, C, F, S, U and W are permanent grades and can be changed only by the instructor with the approval of the appropriate dean in cases of arithmetical or clerical error or as a result of protest of grade. Plus (+) or minus (-) grades may be awarded at the discretion of the faculty.

1. **Transfer of grades:** Up to 12 hours of graduate-level credit can be transferred from another accredited institution. Grades earned on transfer work should be equivalent to a "B" or better, and courses must be acceptable by the student's advisory committee. Grades of "C" may be transferred into UNCW, at the discretion of the MSCSIS director. Grades of "C" transferred counts toward the limit of two "C" grades earned while a graduate student (i.e., students are dismissed upon earning the third grade of "C").

Prerequisites: Applicants to the MS CSIS must have a strong overall academic record and have successfully completed the undergraduate level prerequisites in computer science and information systems courses or their equivalent: two programming courses and a course in each of data structures, database, software engineering or analysis and design, data communications or networking, accounting, marketing, finance, and management.

There are three ways to satisfy prerequisite courses:

2. Register and successfully complete the required undergraduate course at UNCW or another accredited institution, whether a community college or four-year program (don't forget to consider courses offered through Web-based offerings). Courses taken for undergraduate credit do not compute in the graduate GPA. However, any grade of "C" earned in any prerequisite course counts toward the limit of two "C" grades earned while a graduate student (i.e., students are dismissed upon earning the third grade of "C").
3. Students may choose to "pass out" of a required undergraduate course by taking the standardized College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) exam. CLEP exams are currently available for marketing, management, and accounting. <http://uncw.edu/testingervices/national/clep.html>. Students must provide a copy of their CLEP scores directly to the Cameron School of Business Graduate Programs Office.
4. Professional experience may be accepted in lieu of the prerequisite coursework. Professional experience and/or technical certifications will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for any prerequisite substitution.

To request that professional experience be accepted in lieu of an undergraduate prerequisite, please submit a formal written request via the "Request for Waiver of Undergraduate Prerequisite Form" to the MS CSIS Graduate Coordinator. The written request should include:

- A resume that contains relevant work experience and a description of the tasks assigned and projects completed.
- Using a recent syllabus for the relevant undergraduate course, perform a topic-by-topic comparison and describe how related professional experience fulfills the subject matter.

The following courses are the UNCW equivalents for the prerequisites listed above. You will need to meet with your advisor to determine if you need any of these prerequisites.

Programming:

CSC 131 – Introduction to Computer Science OR
MIS 216 - Introduction to Business Application Development

Advanced Programming: (select one)

CSC 231 – Introduction to Data Structures OR
MIS 316 - Computer Applications and Concepts (Visual Basic.Net)

Data Structures:

CSC 231 – Introduction to Data Structures

Database: (select one)

CSC 455 - Database Management Systems
MIS 315 - Management of Databases

Software Engineering or Systems Analysis: (select CSC 450 OR MIS 411)

CSC 450 - Software Engineering
MIS 411 - Systems Analysis

Communications: (select one)

CSC 344 - Computer Networks
MIS 323 - Business Telecommunications

Business Foundation Courses:

ACG 201 - Financial Accounting OR BUS 505 Principles of accounting
MKT 340 - Principles of Marketing OR BUS 540 Marketing Decision Making
MGT 350 - Principles of Management OR BUS 559 Management Foundations
FIN 335 - Financial Management OR BUS 535 Corporate Finance

Required Core Courses:

- CSC 532 - Design and Analysis of Algorithms I
- MIS 534 - Information Security Management
- CSC 544 - Network Programming
- CSC 550 - Software Engineering
- MIS 555 - Database Management Systems
- MIS 565 - Analysis, Modeling, and Design

Course Descriptions:

Refer to Graduate Catalog for a list of course descriptions:

<http://catalogue.uncw.edu/index.php?catoid=40>

Select Current Catalog Year and type CSC or MIS in search bar on the lower left side of the page.

Course Waiver or Substitution: A student may request a waiver of a required course if a good reason exists. You may also request a substitution of a course for another degree requirement. These requests must be approved by the MS CSIS Graduate Coordinator and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Graduate Regular Term: Full-time status requires a minimum enrollment of nine credit hours. However, a student may also be considered full-time when enrolled for fewer than nine hours if the student holds a teaching or research assistantship, or is enrolled for one to three hours of thesis or research project credits. Half-time status begins with at least three credit hours. Summer counts as one regular term.

Graduate Summer Term: Full-time status requires a minimum enrollment of four credit hours. However, a student may also be considered full-time when enrolled for fewer than four hours if the student holds a teaching or research assistantship, or is enrolled for one to three hours of thesis or research project credits. Half-time enrollment status begins with three credit hours. One to three hours of thesis work may also qualify the student as half-time if approved in writing by the graduate dean. Summer counts as one regular term.

Adding and Dropping Courses: Courses may be added or dropped only during the official drop-add period, which is noted on the Office of the Registrar Web site <http://www.uncw.edu/reg/>.

Withdrawal from a Course: A student may withdraw from a course with no grade during the first week of the semester. From the second through week twelve of any semester, a student who withdraws will receive a grade of “W” which does not affect the grade point average. After that deadline, a grade of “WF” is assigned.

Degree Time Limit: You have five years from the date of your initial acceptance as a student in the Graduate School to complete your degree. When extenuating circumstances warrant, the Graduate School may grant you an extension. You will not be permitted to register beyond five years without prior approval of the Dean of the Graduate School.

Non-degree Credit: Graduate courses taken at UNCW as a non-degree student before formal admission to graduate studies will meet course requirements for a graduate degree only if offered and approved by the graduate coordinator and the dean of the graduate school. A maximum of 10 hours may be applied toward the degree.

Retention: Graduate students in good standing (maintaining satisfactory grades and making substantial progress toward the completion of their degree) may be continuously eligible to enroll for a period up to five (5) years of the date of their first registration for graduate study at UNC Wilmington. Under exceptional circumstances, students may address an appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School for an extension of time up to one year.

Three grades of “C” (including “C+”) or one grade of “F” results in your dismissal from the graduate program. Further, if your GPA falls below a 3.0 at anytime, you are placed on academic probation and have three subsequent courses to bring your GPA up to at least 3.0. In addition, you must have at least a 3.0 GPA to begin any capstone project and/or thesis work.

You must have no less than a 3.0 GPA on all graduate-level courses. Grades of A, B, C, F, S and W are permanent grades and can be changed only by the dean of the Graduate School in cases of arithmetical or clerical error or because of a protest of grade.

Re-enrollment: Should you have a break in enrollment of either a fall or spring semester (not summer), you must file a Leave of Absence form with the dean of the Graduate School. The re-enrollment form is available in the UNCW Graduate School Office.

Graduate Catalog: The graduate catalog can be found on-line: <http://catalogue.uncw.edu/index.php?catoid=40> The Graduate Catalog is the governing guide for all UNCW graduate programs and any discrepancies between this handbook and the graduate catalog will be decided in favor of the catalog.

VI. Advising

Your Adviser: Your initial academic advisor will be the MS CSIS Director. You should meet with your adviser prior to the beginning the program, and he or she will help you get answers to questions you might have about the program and assist you with a curriculum plan. Throughout your studies, your adviser helps you develop your academic schedule; gives advice about when you should take certain classes, your options and responsibilities, and about classes outside the CSIS area that might be relevant to your program, and provides support for your decisions concerning course choices. In general, your academic adviser is there to guide you to successful completion of your degree program. See your adviser at least once per term.

Changing advisers: Within two terms (or three at the most), you should decide whether to stay with your original academic adviser through completion of your thesis or project or change advisers. You might have found someone more compatible, or whose research interests more closely parallel your own, or perhaps your own research interests may have evolved. You are free to change your adviser at any time with the permission of the MS CSIS Director. Be sure that the faculty member you choose to work with agrees to be your new adviser. Generally, you will change advisers to the chair of your research project/committee once you are ready to begin your capstone experience.

Your thesis/project adviser is the chair of your thesis/project committee and will help guide your proposal and see you through completion of your work. Your thesis/project advisor must be a graduate faculty member from either the CSC area or the MIS area. Select someone with whom you have a mutually respectful relationship, someone who is interested in your area of study and can contribute to your work. Your adviser does not have to be experienced in every aspect of your work; other committee members can contribute expertise in some areas.

VII. Thesis vs. Capstone Project ¹

Students in the MS CSIS program may choose to complete a master's thesis or a capstone project. One of the most common questions students have is, “what is the difference between a thesis and a capstone project?”

A capstone project requires background analysis and involves an applied project that results in solving a specific business or scientific problem. These projects may include software applications as part of their solution. A capstone project often addresses practical questions (such as how best to solve a real-world business problem). While projects may not constitute original research, they nonetheless require significant background analysis. This background analysis may include, but is not limited to, conducting literature and state-of-the-art research, exploring comparable technologies, reviewing best practices and models, examining similar projects, exploring costs and benefits, and an analysis of findings. Therefore, each project must be accompanied by a technical report that describes or documents the background analysis performed, the methodologies used in the background analysis, references to work that was reviewed through the analysis, and lessons learned in the process.

A thesis requires an extensive literature survey on existing works and has the potential to generate new knowledge or improve upon existing techniques. One of the primary goals of masters-level thesis work is to teach students how to do research. Two definitions of a thesis include:

- “[a thesis] give[s] the student training in planning, carrying out and presenting an independent piece of work and to provide contact with research and development.”
- “...[a] thesis is a scholarly treatment of a subject or an investigative treatment of a problem, which is sufficiently limited in scope to ensure thoroughness.”

The primary difference between the thesis option and the project option is that a thesis is a “scholarly treatment”. The literature review is more thorough, the experimental design and analysis is more complete.

In summary, a capstone project differs from a thesis in one significant way: A thesis presents research that contributes to the scholarly literature of computer science and/or information systems. A project, in contrast, contributes to the computer science and information systems professions via applied research and/or creative accomplishment. With a capstone project, the student spends the vast bulk of his/her time investigating solution(s) to real world problems. With a thesis option, the student spends more time on 1) experimental design and implementation and 2) crafting a thesis document.

Each semester a capstone orientation is held to make you familiar with the process and establish program expectations. You should attend a session held the semester prior to your first research project/capstone credit hours.

¹ All prerequisite courses must be completed prior to completing 18 graduate hours of coursework.

VIII. Additional Academic Policies and Procedures

Policy Statement on Illegal Drugs: In accordance with policy adopted by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina and the Board of Trustees of UNCW, disciplinary proceedings against a student, faculty member, administrator, or other employee will be initiated when the alleged conduct is deemed to affect the interest of UNCW. The penalties that may be imposed range from written warnings with probationary status to expulsion from enrollment and discharge from employment.

The full text of the policy appears in both the electronic and print forms of the Code of Student Life <http://uncw.edu/studentconduct/>

Release of “Directory Information”: The University of North Carolina Wilmington routinely has made public certain information about its students. Typically, UNCW releases the names of students who are selected by the various honorary societies, receive scholarships, make the Dean’s List, hold offices, or are members of athletic teams. The annual commencement program publishes the names of persons who have received degrees from UNCW during the year.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (see below) defines the term “directory information” to include the following information: the student’s name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student. The university will make public information about each student limited to these categories in ways such as those described above. Of course, information from all these categories is not made public in every listing.

Students who do not wish to have any or all of such “directory information” made public without their prior consent must notify the Office of the Registrar of this fact in a signed and dated statement specifying items not to be published. This notice must be received by the Office of the Registrar by the end of the registration period for the semester or session of first enrollment or, after an absence, of re-enrollment and by the end of each fall registration thereafter.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): Certain personally identifiable information about students (“education records”) may be maintained at The University of North Carolina General Administration, which serves the Board of Governors of the University system. This student information may be the same as, or derivative of, information maintained by a constituent institution of the university; or it may be additional information. Whatever their origins, education records maintained at General Administration are subject to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

FERPA provides that a student may inspect his or her education records. If the student finds the records to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights, the student may request amendment to the record. FERPA also provides that a student’s personally identifiable information may not be released to someone else unless (1) the student had given a

proper consent for disclosure or (2) provisions of FERPA or federal regulations issued pursuant to FERPA permit the information to be released without the student's consent.

A student may file with the U.S. Department of Education a complaint concerning failure of General Administration or an institution to comply with FERPA.

The policies of the University of North Carolina General Administration concerning FERPA may be inspected in the office at each constituent institution designated to maintain the FERPA policies of the institution. Policies of General Administration may also be accessed in the Office of the Secretary of The University of North Carolina, General Administration, 910 Raleigh Road, Chapel Hill, NC.

Further details about FERPA and FERPA procedures at General Administration are to be found in the referenced policies. Questions about the policies may be directed to Legal Section, Office of the President, The University of North Carolina, General Administration, Annex Building, 910 Raleigh Road, Chapel Hill, NC (mailing address P.O. Box 2688, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-2688; Telephone: 919-962-4588).

Student Conduct: The filing of an application of admission shall be construed as both an evidence and pledge that the applicant accepts the standards and regulations of the University of North Carolina Wilmington and agrees to abide by them. Each student, by the act of registering, is obligated to obey all rules and regulations of the university as stated in the Code of Student Life, the university catalogue and other university publications. The university reserves the right to ask for the withdrawal of any student who refuses to adhere to the standards of the institution.

Academic Honor Code: The University of North Carolina Wilmington is committed to the proposition that the pursuit of truth requires the presence of honesty among all involved. It is therefore this institution's stated policy that no form of dishonesty among its faculty or students will be tolerated. Although all members of the university community are encouraged to report occurrences of dishonesty, honesty is principally the responsibility of each individual.

Academic dishonesty takes many forms, from blatant acts of cheating, stealing, or similar misdeeds to the more subtle forms of plagiarism, all of which are totally out of place in an institution of higher learning. Reporting and adjudication procedures have been developed to enforce the policy of academic integrity, to ensure justice, and to protect individual rights. Complete details may be found in the current Code of Student Life.

Class Attendance: Students are expected to be present at all regular class meetings and examinations for the courses in which they are registered. All faculty members are responsible for setting policy concerning the role of attendance in determining grades for their classes. It is the responsibility of the students to learn and comply with the policies set for each class in which they are registered.

IX. GENERAL INFORMATION

Parking: Auxiliary Services is located in the Warwick Center. Students are given parking permit information during orientation. The cost of the parking permit is added to the student's tuition bill.

Orientation: Prior to the start of classes, all MS CSIS students are required to complete MS CSIS orientation. The orientation is held on campus in various UNCW facilities. The primary objective of orientation is to introduce you to the MS CSIS program and begin team building with your peers.

Team-Building Activities: During orientation, you will participate in team-building activities either in the UNCW on-campus outdoor course or in the team-building exercises in the Student Recreation Center. These team-building exercises build self-confidence, trust, collaborative skills, and an understanding of team concepts. This is the first stage of student team development in the program.

E-Mail Accounts and Listservs: UNCW strongly encourages the use of campus e-mail for all communication. A class distribution list, or e-mail listserv, is maintained by the Graduate Programs Office. When students enroll for the MS CSIS program, they are assigned an e-mail account by UNCW. Students, faculty and administrators of the MS CSIS program are on the listserv. Anyone who is subscribed to the listserv may post a message. The listserv is intended to facilitate classes; MS CSIS study groups and administration of the MS CIS program. To send an e-mail to the listserv, use the following address: MSCSIS_grad@lists.uncw.edu.

Study Rooms: Your UNCW I.D. will allow you 24/7 access to the Computer Information Systems building. This building contains a computer lab, iPrint center, and three "sandbox" study rooms equipped with plasma screens, webcams and white boards. To use these rooms, you must make a reservation. Reservations can be made by e-mailing the Graduate Programs Office avondoli@uncw.edu

Health Insurance: Health insurance is required for all UNCW students who meet the following three criteria:

- Enrolled in a minimum of 6 credit hours per semester for undergraduates or 1 credit hour for graduate students
- Enrolled in a degree-seeking program and
- Eligible to pay the UNCW student health fee

The student health insurance website with complete plan details as well as the enrollment and waiver system is: http://uncw.edu/healthservices/shc_studentins.htm

Establishing North Carolina Residency: Under North Carolina law, legal residence means more than simply living in the state. More specifically, it means maintaining a domicile (permanent home of indefinite duration) as opposed to a temporary residence incident to enrollment in a college, university or technical institute of the state. As a starting point, if you have living parents, your domicile is presumed to be that of your parents but it may be changed to qualify you for in-state tuition if your legal residence can be demonstrated. Marriage does not prevent you from

becoming a legal resident for tuition purposes, nor does marriage ensure that you will become a resident. To determine whether you can become a legal resident of North Carolina for tuition purposes, you must demonstrate intent to make North Carolina your permanent dwelling place of indefinite duration by performing residentiary acts. These acts should be undertaken immediately upon your arrival to campus and North Carolina (preferably within the first month).

Some important residentiary acts are:

1. Convert your automobile registration to North Carolina
2. Obtain a North Carolina Driver's License (or NC Identification Card from the Driver's License office)
3. Register to vote in North Carolina and vote when possible
4. List your personal property at the New Hanover County Tax Office for taxation
5. File a North Carolina tax return as a resident at the next appropriate time
6. Convert your banking, club/organization membership, etc., to North Carolina

These actions **begin** the one-year (12 month) waiting period to attain residency.

To become a North Carolina resident you must demonstrate that you are financially independent of your parents or guardian if your parents or guardian are non-residents of North Carolina and demonstrate a visible means of support substantiating the claim of financial independence. If you have not been entirely self-supporting during the last 12 months, a completed affidavit will be required from your parent(s) to indicate the amount of support provided. Further and equally important, once you have clearly established the residency intent and financial independence, you must maintain a North Carolina residence for **12 months** immediately before the semester the in-state status can be made effective. The **only exceptions** to the required 12-month residency period apply in some, but not all, cases to individuals marrying a North Carolina resident who has maintained residency 12 months or longer and to individuals whose parents have been North Carolina residents 12 months or longer and who are legal dependents of their parents. If you desire a residence change, you must complete a Residence and Tuition Status Application and submit it to the dean of the Graduate School. Applications can be obtained from the Graduate School. **No status change can be made without submission of this application.**

The 12-month residency waiting period must be completed before the first day of the semester in which in-state residency is being requested. You must submit your application up to 60 days **before** the start of the semester in which your in-state status can become effective, although the entire 12-month residency period may not have been satisfied at the time your application is filed. To avoid being billed as an out-of-state resident, you should file a status change before the tuition bills are due so that the Graduate School will have time to process the application and notify Student Accounts as to your status change. A decision on your residency status will be mailed to you approximately 10 days after the application is reviewed by the Graduate School. If you are denied North Carolina residency for tuition purposes, you may appeal the decision. You can, and should, appeal to clarify points and to present additional arguments in your favor.