

Article 14.

General Provisions as to Tuition and Fees in Certain State Institutions.

§ 116-143. State-supported institutions of higher education required to charge tuition and fees.

(a) The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina shall fix the tuition and fees, not inconsistent with actions of the General Assembly, at the institutions of higher education enumerated in G.S. 116-4 in such amount or amounts as it may deem best, taking into consideration the nature of each institution and program of study and the cost of equipment and maintenance; and each institution shall charge and collect from each student, at the beginning of each semester or quarter, tuition, fees, and an amount sufficient to pay other expenses for the term.

(b) In the event that said students are unable to pay the cost of tuition and required academic fees as the same may become due, in cash, the said several boards of trustees are hereby authorized and empowered, in their discretion, to accept the obligation of the student or students together with such collateral or security as they may deem necessary and proper, it being the purpose of this Article that all students in State institutions of higher learning shall be required to pay tuition, and that free tuition is hereby abolished. Notwithstanding this section, neither the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina nor its Board of Trustees shall impose any tuition or mandatory fee at the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics without the approval of the General Assembly, except as provided in subsection (e) of this section.

(c) Inasmuch as the giving of tuition and fee waivers, or especially reduced rates, represent in effect a variety of scholarship awards, the said practice is hereby prohibited except when expressly authorized by statute.

(d) Notwithstanding the above provision relating to the abolition of free tuition, the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina may, in its discretion, provide regulations under which personnel may during the period of normal employment enroll in The University of North Carolina free of charge for tuition and fees, provided such enrollment does not interfere with normal employment obligations and further provided that such enrollments are not counted for the purpose of receiving General Fund appropriations as follows:

- (1) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, a full-time faculty member of the rank of full-time instructor or above and any full-time staff member of The University of North Carolina may enroll in not more than three courses per year.
- (2) A full-time or part-time campus law enforcement officer may enroll in the number of courses per year determined by regulation.

(e) The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina may approve, upon the recommendation of the Board of Trustees of the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, the imposition of fees not inconsistent with actions of the General Assembly for distance education services provided by the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics to nonresidents and for students participating in extracurricular enrichment programs sponsored by the School. (1933, c. 320, s. 1; 1939, cc. 178, 253; 1949, c. 586; 1961, c. 833, s. 16.1; 1963, c. 448, s. 27.1; 1965, c. 903; 1971, c. 845, ss. 6, 10; c. 1086, s. 2; c. 1244, s. 12; 1973, c. 116, s. 1; 1977, c. 605; 1981, c. 859, s. 41.4; 2006-66, ss. 9.11(i), 9.12; 2009-451, ss. 9.21, 9.22(a); 2011-145, s. 9.13(a); 2013-360, s. 11.7(b); 2014-100, s. 11.9(a); 2021-20, s. 1.)

§ 116-143.1. Provisions for determining resident status for tuition purposes.

(a) As defined under this section:

- (1) A "legal resident" or "resident" is a person who qualifies as a domiciliary of North Carolina; a "nonresident" is a person who does not qualify as a domiciliary of North Carolina.
- (2) A "resident for tuition purposes" is a person who qualifies for the in-State tuition rate; a "nonresident for tuition purposes" is a person who does not qualify for the in-State tuition rate.
- (3) "Institution of higher education" means any of the constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina and the community colleges under the jurisdiction of the State Board of Community Colleges.
- (4) "Authority" means the State Education Assistance Authority created by and authorized to act under Article 23 of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes.

(b) To qualify as a resident for tuition purposes, a person must have established legal residence (domicile) in North Carolina and maintained that legal residence for at least 12 months immediately prior to his or her classification as a resident for tuition purposes. Every applicant for admission shall be required to make a statement as to his length of residence in the State.

(c) To be eligible for classification as a resident for tuition purposes, a person must establish that his or her presence in the State currently is, and during the requisite 12-month qualifying period was, for purposes of maintaining a bona fide domicile rather than of maintaining a mere temporary residence or abode incident to enrollment in an institution of higher education.

(d) An individual shall not be classified as a resident for tuition purposes and, thus, not rendered eligible to receive the in-State tuition rate, until he or she has provided such evidence related to legal residence and its duration as may be required by the coordinated and centralized residency determination process administered by the Authority in accordance with this Article acting on behalf of officials of the institution of higher education from which the individual seeks the in-State tuition rate.

(e) When an individual presents evidence that the individual has living parent(s) or court-appointed guardian of the person, the legal residence of such parent(s) or guardian shall be prima facie evidence of the individual's legal residence. This presumption may be reinforced or rebutted relative to the age and general circumstances of the individual by the other evidence of legal residence required of or presented by the individual. An individual may offer evidence of graduation from a North Carolina high school to reinforce or rebut the presumption that the individual's domicile is the same domicile as the individual's living parent or guardian; however, evidence of graduation from a North Carolina high school alone shall not establish legal residence in the State. The legal residence of an individual whose parents are domiciled outside this State shall not be prima facie evidence of the individual's legal residence if the individual has lived in this State the five consecutive years prior to enrolling or reregistering at an institution of higher education.

(f) In making domiciliary determinations related to the classification of persons as residents or nonresidents for tuition purposes, the domicile of a married person, irrespective of sex, shall be determined, as in the case of an unmarried person, by reference to all relevant evidence of domiciliary intent. For purposes of this section:

- (1) No person shall be precluded solely by reason of marriage to a person domiciled outside North Carolina from establishing or maintaining legal residence in North Carolina and subsequently qualifying or continuing to qualify as a resident for tuition purposes;

- (2) No persons shall be deemed solely by reason of marriage to a person domiciled in North Carolina to have established or maintained a legal residence in North Carolina and subsequently to have qualified or continued to qualify as a resident for tuition purposes;
- (3) In determining the domicile of a married person, irrespective of sex, the fact of marriage and the place of domicile of his or her spouse shall be deemed relevant evidence to be considered in ascertaining domiciliary intent.

(g) Any nonresident person, irrespective of sex, who marries a legal resident of this State or marries one who later becomes a legal resident, may, upon becoming a legal resident of this State, accede to the benefit of the spouse's immediately precedent duration as a legal resident for purposes of satisfying the 12-month durational requirement of this section.

(h) No person shall lose his or her resident status for tuition purposes solely by reason of serving in the Armed Forces of the United States outside this State.

(h1) Any member of a North Carolina National Guard unit who is a nonresident shall be eligible to be charged the in-State tuition rate and shall pay the full amount of the in-State tuition rate and applicable mandatory fees. This subsection applies to members in a reserve or active duty status.

(i) A person who, having acquired bona fide legal residence in North Carolina, has been classified as a resident for tuition purposes but who, while enrolled in an institution of higher education, loses North Carolina legal residence, shall continue to enjoy the in-State tuition rate for a statutory grace period. This grace period shall be measured from the date on which the culminating circumstances arose that caused loss of legal residence and shall continue for 12 months; provided, that a resident's marriage to a person domiciled outside of North Carolina shall not be deemed a culminating circumstance even when said resident's spouse continues to be domiciled outside of North Carolina; and provided, further, that if the 12-month period ends during a semester or academic term in which such a former resident is enrolled at an institution of higher education, such grace period shall extend, in addition, to the end of that semester or academic term.

(j) Notwithstanding the prima facie evidence of legal residence of an individual derived pursuant to subsection (e), notwithstanding the presumptions of the legal residence of a minor established by common law, and notwithstanding the authority of a judicially determined custody award of a minor, for purposes of this section, the legal residence of a minor whose parents are divorced, separated, or otherwise living apart shall be deemed to be North Carolina for the time period relative to which either parent is entitled to claim and does in fact claim the minor as a dependent for North Carolina individual income tax purposes. The provisions of this subsection shall pertain only to a minor who is claimed as a dependent by a North Carolina legal resident.

Any person who immediately prior to his or her eighteenth birthday would have been deemed under this subsection a North Carolina legal resident but who achieves majority before enrolling at an institution of higher education shall not lose the benefit of this subsection if that person:

- (1) Upon achieving majority, acts, to the extent that the person's degree of actual emancipation permits, in a manner consistent with bona fide legal residence in North Carolina; and
- (2) Begins enrollment at an institution of higher education not later than the fall academic term next following completion of education prerequisite to admission at such institution.

(k) Notwithstanding other provisions of this section, a minor who satisfies the following conditions immediately prior to commencement of an enrolled term at an institution of higher education, shall be accorded resident tuition status for that term:

- (1) The minor has lived for five or more consecutive years continuing to such term in North Carolina in the home of an adult relative other than a parent, domiciled in this State; and
- (2) The adult relative has functioned during those years as a de facto guardian of the minor and exercised day-to-day care, supervision, and control of the minor.

A person who immediately prior to his or her eighteenth birthday qualified for or was accorded resident status for tuition purposes pursuant to this subsection shall be deemed upon achieving majority to be a legal resident of North Carolina of at least 12 months' duration; provided, that the legal residence of such an adult person shall be deemed to continue in North Carolina only so long as the person does not abandon legal residence in this State.

(l) Any person who ceases to be enrolled at or graduates from an institution of higher education while classified as a resident for tuition purposes and subsequently abandons North Carolina domicile shall be permitted to reenroll at an institution of higher education as a resident for tuition purposes without necessity of meeting the 12-month durational requirement of this section if the person reestablishes North Carolina domicile within 12 months of abandonment of North Carolina domicile and continuously maintains the reestablished North Carolina domicile at least through the beginning of the academic term(s) for which in-State tuition status is sought. The benefit of this subsection shall be accorded not more than once to any one person.

(m) Notwithstanding subsection (b) of this section, a person who is a full-time employee of The University of North Carolina, or is the spouse or dependent child of a full-time employee of The University of North Carolina, and who is a legal resident of North Carolina, qualifies as a resident for tuition purposes without having maintained that legal residence for at least 12 months immediately prior to his or her classification as a resident for tuition purposes. (1971, c. 845, ss. 7-9; 1973, cc. 710, 1364, 1377; 1975, c. 436; 1979, cc. 435, 836; 1981, cc. 471, 905; 1987, c. 564, s. 19; 1989, c. 728, s. 1.3; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1030, s. 32; 2004-130, s. 2; 2005-276, s. 9.25(a); 2011-183, s. 83; 2016-57, s. 2(a); 2019-139, s. 3.)

§ 116-143.2. Expired.

§ 116-143.3. Tuition of qualifying federal services members and their spouses and dependents.

- (a) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this section:
- (1) Abode. – The place where a person actually lives, whether temporarily or permanently; the term "abide" shall mean to live in a given place.
 - (2) Armed Forces. – The United States Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy; the North Carolina National Guard; and any reserve component of the foregoing.
 - (2a) Dependent. – A spouse or dependent child.
 - (3) Repealed by Session Laws 2007-484, s. 15, effective August 30, 2007.
 - (4) Qualifying federal services member. – Any of the following:
 - a. A member of the Armed Forces who is on active duty for a period of more than 30 days, as defined in 10 U.S.C. § 101.

b. A member of the Foreign Service, as defined in 22 U.S.C. § 3903, who is on active duty for a period of more than 30 days.

(b) Any qualifying federal services member admitted to an institution of higher education, as defined in G.S. 116-143.1(a)(3), but not qualifying as a resident for tuition purposes under G.S. 116-143.1 shall be charged the in-State tuition rate and applicable mandatory fees for enrollments while the qualifying federal services member's permanent duty station is in this State. In the event the qualifying federal services member is reassigned outside of North Carolina or retires, the member shall continue to be eligible for the in-State tuition rate and applicable mandatory fees so long as the member is continuously enrolled in the degree or other program in which the member was enrolled at the time the member is reassigned. In the event the qualifying federal services member is an active duty member of the Armed Forces and receives an Honorable Discharge from military service, the member shall continue to be eligible for the in-State tuition rate and applicable mandatory fees so long as the member establishes residency in North Carolina within 30 days after the discharge and is continuously enrolled in the degree or other program in which the member was enrolled at the time the member is discharged.

(b1), (b2) Repealed by Session Laws 2004-130, s. 1, effective August 1, 2004.

(c) Any dependent of a qualifying federal services member with a permanent duty station in this State shall be eligible to be charged the in-State tuition rate, if the dependent qualifies for admission to an institution of higher education, as defined in G.S. 116-143.1(a)(3). In the event the qualifying federal services member is reassigned outside of North Carolina or retires, the dependent shall continue to be eligible for the in-State tuition rate and applicable mandatory fees so long as the dependent is continuously enrolled in the degree or other program in which the dependent was enrolled at the time the member is reassigned or retires. In the event the qualifying federal services member is an active duty member of the Armed Forces and receives an Honorable Discharge from military service, the dependent shall continue to be eligible for the in-State tuition rate and applicable mandatory fees so long as the dependent establishes residency within North Carolina within 30 days after the discharge and is continuously enrolled in the degree or other program in which the dependent was enrolled at the time the member is discharged.

(c1) A dependent child who resides with a member of the Armed Forces who is reassigned outside of the State incident to active military duty shall remain eligible to be charged the in-State tuition rate if all of the following are met:

- (1) At the time the dependent child applies for admission to the institution of higher education, as defined in G.S. 116-143.1(a)(3), the dependent child both:
 - a. Is enrolled in a North Carolina high school.
 - b. Meets the requirements of subsection (c) of this section.
- (2) Upon admission, the dependent child enrolls in the institution of higher education no later than the fall academic semester immediately following notice of admission and remains continuously enrolled.

(d) The person applying for the benefit of this section has the burden of proving entitlement to the benefit.

(e) A person charged less than the out-of-state tuition rate solely by reason of this section shall not, during the period of receiving that benefit, qualify for or be the basis of conferring the benefit of G.S. 116-143.1(g), (h), (i), (j), (k), or (l). (1983 (Reg. Sess., 1984), c. 1034, s. 57; 1985, c. 39, s. 1; c. 479, s. 69; c. 757, s. 154; 1987, c. 564, s. 7; 1997-443, s. 10.2; 2003-284, s. 8.16(a); 2004-130, s. 1; 2005-276, s. 9.38; 2005-345, s. 14; 2005-445, s. 7; 2007-484, s. 15; 2011-183, s. 84; 2021-9, s. 2(a); 2023-134, ss. 8A.9(a), 8A.10(b).)

§ 116-143.3A. Waiver of 12-month residency requirement for certain veterans and other individuals.

(a) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this section:

- (1) Abode. – Has the same meaning as G.S. 116-143.3(a)(1).
- (2) Armed Forces. – Has the same meaning as G.S. 116-143.3(a)(2).
- (3) Veteran. – A person who served active duty for not less than 90 days in the Armed Forces, the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service, or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and who was discharged or released from such service.

(b) Waiver of 12-Month Residency Requirement for Certain Individuals. – Any veteran, dependent of a veteran, or other individual who qualifies for admission to an institution of higher education as defined in G.S. 116-143.1(a)(3) is eligible to be charged the in-State tuition rate and applicable mandatory fees for enrollment, to the extent required by 38 U.S.C. § 3679, without satisfying the 12-month residency requirement under G.S. 116-143.1, provided the individual meets all of the following criteria:

- (1), (2) Repealed by Session Laws 2019-201, s. 5(a), effective August 23, 2019.
- (3) The individual's abode is North Carolina.
- (4) The individual provides the institution of higher education at which the individual intends to enroll a letter of intent to establish residence in North Carolina.
- (5) The individual meets the definition of a "covered individual" under 38 U.S.C. § 3679(c).

(c) through (c2) Repealed by Session Laws 2019-201, s. 5(a), effective August 23, 2019.

(d) Repealed by Session Laws 2021-111, s. 2, effective August 23, 2021.

(e) The individual applying for the benefit of this section has the burden of proving entitlement to the benefit. (2015-116, s. 1; 2015-264, s. 65.5; 2015-268, s. 3.9; 2017-57, s. 10.11; 2017-155, s. 4; 2019-201, s. 5(a); 2021-111, s. 2.)

§ 116-143.4. Admissions status of persons charged in-State tuition.

A person eligible for the in-State tuition rate pursuant to this Article shall be considered an in-State applicant for the purpose of admission; provided that, a person eligible for in-State tuition pursuant to G.S. 116-143.3(c) shall be considered an in-State applicant for the purpose of admission only if at the time of seeking admission he is enrolled in a high school located in North Carolina or enrolled in an adult high school equivalency diploma program in an institution located in this State. (1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 907, s. 1; 2014-115, s. 28(g).)

§ 116-143.5: Repealed by Session Laws 2011-145, s. 9.13(b), effective July 1, 2011.

§ 116-143.6. Full scholarship students attending constituent institutions.

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if the Board of Trustees of a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina elects to do so, it may by resolution adopted consider as residents of North Carolina all persons who receive full scholarships to the institution from entities recognized by the institution and attend the institution as undergraduate students. The aforesaid persons shall be considered residents of North Carolina for all purposes by The University of North Carolina.

- (b) The following definitions apply in this section:
 - (1) "Full cost" means an amount calculated by the constituent institution that is no less than the sum of tuition, required fees, and on-campus room and board.
 - (2) "Full scholarship" means a grant that meets the full cost for a student to attend the constituent institution for an academic year.
- (c) This section shall not be applied in any manner that violates federal law.
- (d) Repealed by Session Laws 2021-180, s. 8.7(a), effective July 1, 2021, and applicable beginning with the 2021-2022 academic year.
- (e) In administering this section, the electing constituent institution shall maintain at least the current number of North Carolina residents admitted to that constituent institution.
- (f) A change in residency status under this section shall not impact the financial aid amount a student is able to receive as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. (2005-276, s. 9.27(a); 2010-31, s. 9.25; 2021-180, s. 8.7(a).)

§ 116-143.7. Repealed by Session Laws 2019-68, s. 1, effective July 1, 2019, and applicable beginning with the 2019-2020 academic year.

§ 116-143.8: Repealed by Session Laws 2015-116, s. 2, effective July 1, 2015.

§ 116-143.9. Fixed tuition payment.

- (a) There is established the fixed tuition payment program. The rate of tuition of any freshman or transfer undergraduate student who is admitted to any constituent institution of The University of North Carolina and deemed to be a North Carolina resident for purposes of tuition shall be guaranteed as provided by this section. The program shall have the following components:
 - (1) A guarantee that the rate of tuition approved by either the Board of Governors or the Board of Trustees of the constituent institution will remain constant or decrease during the tuition period.
 - (2) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, the tuition period shall be (i) eight consecutive academic semesters for a student seeking a baccalaureate degree in a four-year program or 10 consecutive academic semesters for a student seeking a baccalaureate degree in a program officially designated by the Board of Governors as a five-year program, not including any summer sessions, or (ii) the appropriate balance of a designated program length after making the proper adjustments for a student who transfers to the constituent institution.
 - (3) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, the student must remain enrolled continuously at the constituent institution during the entire tuition period.
 - (4) At the end of the tuition period, the cost of tuition for any additional academic semesters reverts to the amount of the current tuition for that constituent institution.
- (b) The tuition period may be tolled if the student is able to demonstrate that any of the following have substantially disrupted or interrupted the student's pursuit of a degree: (i) a military service obligation, (ii) serious medical debilitation, (iii) a short-term or long-term disability, or (iv) other extraordinary hardship. The Board of Governors shall establish the appropriate procedures to implement this subsection.

(c) The Board of Governors shall adopt the policies needed to implement this section and shall also determine what the fixed tuition rates and the tuition periods shall be for undergraduate transfer students who are North Carolina residents for purposes of tuition. (2016-94, s. 11.4(a); 2019-68, s. 2.)

§ 116-143.10. Cap on student fees.

Notwithstanding G.S. 116-143 and G.S. 116-11(7), the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina and the Board of Trustees at each constituent institution may increase the cumulative total of all undergraduate student fees approved by either the Board of Governors or the Board of Trustees by no more than three percent (3%) per academic year. (2016-94, s. 11.4(b).)

§ 116-143.11. NC Promise Tuition Plan; State "buy down" of certain financial obligations; annual report.

(a) The NC Promise Tuition Plan shall be established and implemented as provided by this section. Notwithstanding G.S. 116-143 and G.S. 116-11(7), the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina shall set the rate of undergraduate tuition for Elizabeth City State University, the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Fayetteville State University, and Western Carolina University as follows: the rate of tuition for students deemed to be North Carolina residents for purposes of tuition shall be five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per academic semester and the rate of tuition for nonresident students shall be two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) per academic semester.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the State shall "buy down" the amount of any financial obligation resulting from the established tuition rate that may be incurred by Elizabeth City State University, the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Fayetteville State University, and Western Carolina University.

(c) When implementing the provisions of this section, the Board of Governors shall give due consideration to maintaining the unique historical character of each institution, including service to students who are first generation, college-going, economically disadvantaged, or minority.

(c1) This section does not apply to the rate of tuition charged for digital learning student credit hours provided with the support of a nonprofit corporation established by The University of North Carolina System Office pursuant to G.S. 116-30.20.

(d) By October 1 of each year, the Board of Governors and the chancellors of Elizabeth City State University, the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Fayetteville State University, and Western Carolina University, respectively, shall submit a report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the House Appropriations Committee on Education, the Senate Appropriations Committee on Education/Higher Education, and the Fiscal Research Division on the amount of any financial obligation resulting from the established tuition rate incurred at each constituent institution and at least the following information for the fiscal year:

- (1) The amount required to offset the forgone tuition receipts at each of the four constituent institutions as a result of the tuition rate established by this section and how those funds were allocated to each constituent institution.
- (2) The number of enrolled resident students at each constituent institution.
- (3) The number of enrolled nonresident students at each constituent institution. (2016-94, s. 11.4(c); 2018-5, s. 10.5; 2021-180, s. 8.25(a); 2022-6, s. 2.11.)

§ 116-144. Higher tuition to be charged nonresidents.

Unless provided otherwise by law, the Board of Governors shall fix the tuition and required fees charged nonresidents of North Carolina who attend the institutions enumerated in G.S. 116-4 at rates higher than the rates charged residents of North Carolina and comparable to the rates charged nonresident students by comparable public institutions nationwide, except that a person who serves as a graduate teaching assistant or graduate research assistant or in a similar instructional or research assignment and is at the same time enrolled as a graduate student in the same institution may, in the discretion of the Board of Governors, be charged a lower rate fixed by the Board, provided the rate is not lower than the North Carolina resident rate. (1933, c. 320, s. 3; 1983, c. 761, s. 112; 2016-94, s. 11.4(c2).)