North Carolina Driver’s License, Learner’s Permit or State ID

http://www.ncdot.org/dmv/driver_services/drivingpublic/applying.html

In the USA, a driving license serves two purposes: permission to drive and identification. To drive legally in North Carolina you must have a valid (non-expired):
- A NC driver’s license, OR
- A driver’s license from another U.S. state, OR
- A driver’s license issued by the government of your home/resident country

(Anyone whose legal residence is outside the state of North Carolina is considered a “non-resident” and can drive on their home country or home state license.) North Carolina does not recognize the International Driving License (IDL). Remember to check in with Duke Visa Services Office before going to the DMV office. If you are on an F-1 or J-1 visa, your SEVIS information must be active before applying.

Wait 10 days after registering with Duke Visa Services before going to DMV office to get a learner’s permit or state id or driver’s license.

PREPARING FOR THE TEST

Driving handbooks (rules of the road) are available to borrow from I-House for $1 or can be found online on North Carolina DMV website.

http://www.ncdot.org/dmv/driver_services/drivershandbook/

Tests can be taken in English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean or Spanish.

REQUIREMENTS FOR A NORTH CAROLINA DRIVER’S LICENSE

1. Proof of Identity. All items listed below are required
   - Passport (with valid visa date)
   - I-20 for F-1 & F-2; DS-2019 for J-1 & J-2; I-797 for H-1 & H-4
   - Social Security Number card (only if you have an SSN)
   - I-94 card (should be stapled inside your passport). If you were not issued a paper I-94 card upon entry to the U.S., please visit
   http://www.cbp.gov/I94 to print off your electronic arrival/departure record as evidence of your I-94.

2. Proof of Residency (pick one—must be the original, not a photocopy)
   - Utility bill or bank statement addressed to you at a street address, not a box number or your signed lease agreement
   - Undergraduates living in dorms must go to the Housing Assignments Office at: 218-B Alexander Avenue Tel. 684.4304 or email: housing@studentaffairs.duke.edu, to obtain a letter stating your Duke address.

3. Proof of Automobile Liability Insurance
   - An original liability insurance policy binder
   - Your Auto insurance card with: your name, policy number, issued and expiration date

4. Passing the tests: For an original driver’s license, you will be tested on
   - Vision
   - Traffic signs
   - Knowledge of motor vehicle laws
   - Driving skills (on-road test in your car with a DMV examiner).

5. Pay the fee of $4 per year for a new license by cash or check (NO DEBIT/CREDIT CARDS) – maximum number of years is 8.

REQUIREMENTS FOR A LEARNER’S PERMIT

1. Proof of Identity: Same as for NC Driver’s License – see above
2. Proof of Residency: Same as for NC Driver’s License – see above
3. Pass a computerized test of vision, traffic sign identification, and knowledge of motor vehicle laws. The driving test is not required.
4. Pay the fee of $15 by cash or check (NO DEBIT/CREDIT CARDS)
REQUIREMENTS FOR A STATE IDENTIFICATION CARD (non-driver identification card)

1. **Proof of Identity**: Same as for NC Driver’s License – see above
2. **Proof of Residency**: Same as for NC Driver’s License – see above
3. **Pay** the fee of $10 by cash or check (NO DEBIT/CREDIT CARDS)

REQUIREMENTS FOR A RESTRICTED OR FLEET LICENSE (License for use with rental cars ONLY)

1. All requirements are the same as the full driver’s license except: it does not require auto insurance but can only be used with rental cars. If you use a rental car, you must purchase liability auto insurance from the rental car agency. NOTE: If you are caught driving a private car with the restricted license, you will be subject to the same punishment as driving without a license.

**EFFECTIVE September 2009:** All applications for State ID, Learner’s Permit or Driving License are being sent to the Raleigh Department of Motor Vehicles office for Homeland Security verification on the day you apply. This means that there is a 7 – 14-day delay in getting your card (which will be mailed to your home address in Durham/Chapel Hill). If you do not receive your State ID or License within 14 days of applying, you may call 919.861.3555 for assistance.

PLEASE NOTE: After you apply, your ID or License will be mailed to your home address – it will arrive in a plain, white envelope with the words Mail Service Center in the left-hand corner. Many people mistake this letter for junk mail, so look carefully at all mail if you are waiting for your ID or license.

**EFFECTIVE September 2007:** You must have a North Carolina State ID Card, a North Carolina Learner’s Permit or North Carolina License before you can register your car in the State of North Carolina. The DMV offices listed above are where you can obtain these items. Please refer to our handout Registering your Car in North Carolina.

**DEPENDENTS (J-2, F-2, H-4):** It is taking 2-3 weeks longer for you to receive one of these documents compared to the primary visa holder.

**More information...**

**Getting to the DMV**

I-House organizes trips once a month to the DMV in the I-House van. To find out when the next trip is, go to: [http://studentaffairs.duke.edu/ihouse/ihouse-services](http://studentaffairs.duke.edu/ihouse/ihouse-services) Scroll down to Trip to Department of Motor Vehicles.

**Take DATA Bus to the Roxboro Road Dept. of Motor Vehicles**

To get to the DMV, walk to ERWIN Road. You can wait at the bus stop in front of Duke Hospital. Then take Data Bus #6 or DATA Bus #11 downtown. Or take the Bull City Connector bus to the downtown. At the downtown station, get on DATA Bus 7 (Fayetteville Road & South Point Mall). Tell the bus driver that you are going to the Roxboro Road DMV and that you need to get off at Walmart at MLK Parkway. When the driver lets you off at this bus stop, cross the street over to the Shopping Plaza. Around the corner you will see KROGER grocery store. The DMV is to the right of the Kroger Grocery Store. You can just ask someone if you don’t see it as it doesn’t really stand out.

**Short-Term Auto Insurance Policy**

You may purchase auto liability insurance for six months without a car. (Non-owner’s Car Insurance). See the handout, Auto Insurance, to obtain a list of Auto Insurance companies. A Non-Owners Auto Insurance Policy costs around $1200 per six months. One must pay the entire amount upfront. Not all Auto Insurance Companies offer this, so call around to find out who does. Ask for your options and price.

**Driving School**

Driving schools provide classes and practice for inexperienced drivers. For a fee, they will also provide a car if you want to get your North Carolina Driver’s License. You must purchase non-owners Auto Insurance as well. See the handout Driving Lessons for more information.

**Extending your NC License to include your grace period (30 days for F-1; 60 days for J-1)**

First go to Duke Visa Services Office to obtain the DMV letter. Then you must take your license to the DMV no fewer than 20 days before the expiration date. For example, if your NC Driver’s License expiration date is July 30th, you must go to DMV by July 10th to ask for an extension to cover you during your grace period (if you are staying in USA). Be sure to bring all three pages of your I-20 or your DS-2019 when you go to DMV.

**Extending your NC License for Optional Practical Training (OPT)**

OPT approved documents must be shown in order to extend the expiration date on your NCDL. For spouses, they can come in to DMV without the approval documents IF they bring the principal visa holder with them to DMV. Principal Visa Holder must also bring his/her EAD card.

**Seatbelt Laws**

[http://www.buckleupnc.org/laws_cps.cfm](http://www.buckleupnc.org/laws_cps.cfm)

All drivers and passengers, in the rear seat as well as in the front seat, ages 16 and older must wear their seat belts. Children less than age 16 are covered by the NC Child Passenger Safety Law, which requires that children be restrained in a rear-facing, baby car seat until the age of 2 years or a booster seat until they reach the age of 8 years or 80 pounds. Children under 12 years old should sit in the backseat; and all children under 16 must wear both a lap and shoulder belt. You will be ticketed and receive points on your driving license if you are found without the proper restraints.