

2026 Winter NC State Campus GEARS Program FAQ for Undergraduate Students

1. Program Overview

North Carolina State University is a public research university in the United States. This 4 week long immersive campus opportunity is an intensive research skills program. The participants will be assigned to existing research teams, and finish a small task during these 4 weeks. The participants will present at a poster symposium upon their successful completion of their research accomplishment at the end of this program. The participants will gain research experience, and learn how to communicate with diverse teams. We will issue a certificate of completion and evaluation letter to the participants. This is a very valuable opportunity for students who are interested in research, or plan to study overseas in the future.

2. Who can apply to this program?

Undergraduate students who are interested in the opportunity to develop their research skills on our campus. We have research projects in the following majors:

- Computer Science
- Communication
- Biological Engineering and Agricultural Engineering
- Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
- Crop and Soil Sciences
- Data Science
- Forestry and Environmental Resources
- Physics and Bioinformatics
- Industrial and Systems Engineering
- Mathematics
- Mechanical Engineering
- Aerospace Engineering
- Nuclear Engineering
- Textiles
- Psychology
- Electrical Engineering

We may add more research projects, please check the latest information utilizing the information at this link: [Undergraduate GEARS Projects](#)

3. Application information:

- We prioritize admission of students from NC State Partnership Schools who are:
 - undergraduate Grade 2 or above with a GPA 3.0+ for the undergraduate GEARS program
 - can communicate conversationally in English, please provide at least one of the following English proficiency proof:
 - TOEFL – iBT: >85
 - Previous Paper Version (PBT): 563
 - IELTS: 6.5
 - Duolingo: 100 (Please register the online test here, you will receive your score in 3 days: <https://englishtest.duolingo.com/>)
- Please provide your resume and indicate your research experience if you have any

- The application deadline is October 30, it is a very selective program, please apply as early as possible

4. Can you provide more information on the research program overall?

- This is not a summer/winter camp, it is an intensive research skills experience
- During the scientific research experience, you will join a university research project/team and work on actual scientific research projects
- You will choose 2 research projects when you apply based on your major and career direction/interests, we will place you in one of the projects that you've indicated
- Research project examples:

Research Topic	Research Projects Available	Prerequisites	NCSU Department
Artificial Intelligence-based Multiscale Materials Modeling	Our research focuses on understanding the mechanical, thermal, mass transport and their interactions with imperfections in a variety of engineering and biological materials from the atomistic to the engineering scale. The mentees will be exposed to hands -on experiences in atomistic and artificial intelligence-based multi scale modeling of material, material synthesis, characterization and testing.	Students with backgrounds in mechanics of materials, computer science, materials science and engineering, physics, and mathematics are all welcome to apply.	Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering
Intelligent Code Analysis in VS Code	In these projects, we will develop code analysis tools as VS Code extensions for software engineers and computer science students. The mentees will have opportunities to accumulate experiences in app development using Javascript and Typescript.	Javascript, Typescript	Computer Science

5. How many students in one research project ?

3-4 on average

6. What type of schedule can I expect during this program?

Week 1	RDU Airport pickup Orientation, welcome lunch/breakfast, campus tour, library tour Introduction to scientific research methods Meet professors and research teams and join the lab Read related information Start scientific research, 10-20 hours Cultural Activities: Raleigh City Center and Museum Tours
Week 2	20-30 hours of scientific research Lecture on academic poster presentation skills Prepare for final presentation Cultural activities: outlet shopping, sporting event
Week 3	20-30 hours of scientific research Prepare for final presentation Lecture on Application for American Postgraduate and Doctoral Programs Cultural Activities: Visit to UNC & Duke University
Week 4	20-30 hours of scientific research Final presentation symposium Graduation Ceremony and Farewell Reception RDU Airport Dropoff

The above is an example schedule, the final program schedule will be confirmed and shared with admitted participants prior to participant arrival.

7. What happens after my acceptance into the program, what type of visa do I need and what are the steps for visa issuance?

1. Apply to the [undergraduate GEARS campus program at this link](#) ([view available projects](#))
2. Starting from the week of October 13th, we will issue GTI program acceptance notifications via email to qualified students who have been successfully placed in a project.
3. After you have confirmed your participation by submitting your full program payment within 3 days of the offer, participants will then be entered into our Global Home system to begin the process to apply for a J-1 non-degree student visa.
4. After the internal processing is complete, you will receive an email with a link to a secure e-form to submit documents (resume/cv, passport bio page, program information, proof of funding and confirmation of your understanding of the assigned scholar category and health insurance requirements) required by the NC State Office of International Services (OIS).
5. After successful documentation processing, you will receive a DS-2019 form containing your SEVIS ID via email.

* It often takes around 2 full weeks for your documents to be processed by OIS. Be sure that all information is submitted carefully and correctly as you will not be able to make corrections independently.

6. After receiving your SEVIS ID, you will then schedule a visa interview at a nearby US consulate and complete the SEVIS fee prior to your appointment.

* Be sure to email us once you have scheduled this appointment to let us know when it has been scheduled for. Be sure to keep in communication with us on the status (approval, denial, wait and estimated time) of your visa as updates arise. Since the visa queue and processing time are currently long, please apply as early as possible.

8. How do I apply for a US visa?

Please go to the US embassy/consulate website and get detailed information.
<https://www.ustraveldocs.com/cn/en/nonimmigrant-visa/>

9. What type of visa do I need to apply for?

Please apply for a J-1 visa. Once you have applied, be sure to let our team know the date, time and location of your interview (interview should take place prior to Dec 5th, 2025 when possible, and certainly should be scheduled *by* this date). Feel welcome to explore different consulates with shorter processing times. Keep in close contact with us on the outcome of your interview

10. Where will I live? The US address? Who will be our contact person?

If your housing is arranged by the GTI (limited space available, deposit may be required), you will be staying nearby NC State's campus at 1520 Blue Ridge Road, Raleigh, NC 27607 or another hotel nearby campus. Participants are welcome to explore alternative accommodations and will be required to manage all logistical, transport and financial arrangements independently. Additionally, the GTI will provide information on any booking codes/discounts arranged at other local hotels (when available). Ms. Chanelle Gobena-McArthur will be your contact person, phone number is 919-513-0105, cmmcarth@ncsu.edu.

11. If the visa officer asks me “why are you coming to the US” during the visa interview, how can I answer it?

Please answer this question honestly. You will come to the US for a short-term research skills seminar at NC State University. This seminar will last for 4 weeks.

12. If during the visa interview the visa officer asks me “will you earn credit from this seminar?”, how can I answer it?

You will not earn credit from NC State, and NC State will not issue an official transcript for you. This is a short term seminar.

13. If the visa office asks me “will you come back to your home country when you finish your seminar”, how can I answer?

Please answer this question honestly. I will come back to my home country once this seminar is over.

14. The seminar will start on January 22 to February 20, can I arrive earlier or leave late?

Please come and leave according to the date on our invitation letter. If you come earlier or leave late, we will try our best to arrange the accommodation, but you have to pay extra money for it. And we are afraid we cannot arrange any activities during these days.

15. Can I arrive at a nearby airport on January 22? Will someone pick me up there?

Please arrive via the Raleigh airport on January 22, the airport name is Raleigh-Durham International Airport; it is also known as RDU. If you arrive at another airport or on another day, we are sorry that we cannot send the driver to pick you up there. Once you have secured your flight, communicate your flight number and arrival date/time with our team.

16. Can I choose my arrival time on January 22 at the Raleigh airport? Will someone pick me up if I arrive in the early morning or late night?

Please arrive during business hours from 8:30 AM-5:00 PM if possible; but if you cannot find a flight arriving during this time, let us know your flight information in advance, we will do our best to assign a driver to pick you up, even if you come in the early morning or late evening.

17. What type of health insurance do I need for this program?

You are required to find a policy that meets the minimum [health insurance requirements for J-1 visitors](#) as determined by our Office of International Services (OIS). OIS recommends the GeoBlue Insurance for NC State Scholars and more information is provided on their Health Insurance for J-1 Exchange Visitors webpage. Participants are responsible for exercising due diligence when evaluating policies to meet the NC State University health insurance requirements for J-1 visitors.

18. What are the outcomes of this program?

- Program Certificate of Completion
- NC State Professor Evaluation Letter
- Poster Presentation Symposium (research accomplishment)
- Gain research experience from a first-class U.S. university
- Practice work and research in a multicultural setting
- Deeply understand the admission process of Master/PHD program

19. Where can I learn more about this program?

We will hold 4 zoom info sessions at the dates and times listed below:

Info Session I: Friday 10/10 at 9:30a

Info Session II: Wednesday 10/22 at 9:30a

Info Session III: Thursday 11/6 at 8:30a (online program only)

Info Session IV: Monday 11/24 at 8:30a (online program only)

Meeting Room: 851 388 1946 Passcode: 26WGEARS

Contact Information:

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