

**North Carolina Department of Transportation
Division of Highway
Traffic Engineering and Safety Systems Branch**

**STANDARD PRACTICE
for
Signing for Schools of Higher Education:
Colleges, Universities, and other Post High School Educational Institutions**

The purpose of this standard practice is to establish minimum guidelines for supplemental guide (directional) signing for Schools of Higher Education (*Colleges, Universities, and other post High School Educational Institutions*) along NCDOT roadways. This practice is intended to restrict signing along NCDOT roadways for Schools of Higher Education that do not generate a minimum level of traffic by unfamiliar motorists or that do not operate on a permanent campus. It is not intended to allow signing for the purpose of advertisement or promotion of educational facilities. The intent is to set reasonable guidelines to promote statewide consistency in responses to signing requests for Schools of Higher Education.

It is the standard practice of NCDOT to allow the installation of directional guide signs to qualifying colleges and universities, and other qualifying post High School Educational Institutions. If the school of higher education qualifies under the Standard Practice for Supplemental Guide Signs for Major Traffic Generators (TEPPL Topic T-13), then the request shall be evaluated under the requirements and criteria specified within that practice. Signs shall be designed, located, and erected according to the standards of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the North Carolina Supplement to the MUTCD, and the North Carolina Roadway Standard Drawings, and the standards and criteria herein.

CRITERIA

If right of way is available for sign installation(s) and if not prohibited by signing guidelines such as sign spacing along roadway, number of destinations permitted on sign, etc., signs may be erected along roadways by the NCDOT upon request, but only for schools of higher education that meet all of the following criteria:

- A school of higher education must be registered as such with the local government entity and have the correct certification/accreditation as required. The school of higher education must be an established campus in which the main grounds of the institution of education has buildings that are used for teaching classes and receiving visitors. To qualify for signing, the college or university shall own the majority of property. The property of such designation shall not be signed if the related campus is a rented or leased property.
- A school of higher education shall be accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and provide degree programs of the traditional academic variety (i.e. associate, bachelors, masters, and/or doctorate degree). A school of higher education shall grant a Bachelor degree in Arts, Bachelor degree in Science, Associate degree in Arts, or Associate degree in Science.

- A minimum of 75% of classes/courses offered must be taught at the location of the school requesting the signs. No more than 25% of the classes/courses shall be taught via the Internet or at off-site locations.
- To qualify for signing, the specific location of the college requesting signs shall meet all requirements herein. When evaluating a request from a satellite location, one location of a multi-site campus, or a branch campus, etc., the data from other campus locations of the college is not applicable to request.
- Schools of higher education shall meet the following minimum full time curriculum enrollment in programs/classes that provide traditional academics for receiving an associate, bachelors, masters, and/or doctorate degree.

Location of Sign	Minimum Full Time Curriculum Student Enrollment
Full Control of Access Highways	2,000
Any other roadway on NC State Highway System	1,000

- The signs for qualifying schools of higher education shall be limited to the closest freeway interchange or State Highway System roadway, not to exceed five miles and four turns from the school. The number of turns does not include the turn from the ramp or the turn into the entrance to the school. Distance may be increased one mile for every 1000 students over the minimum enrollment up to a maximum of 25 miles, providing the number of turns does not exceed four.
- Trailblazing signs/directional guide signs shall be erected as necessary at turns and to route traffic along access route as determined by the Division Engineer or designate. Costs for these signs and maintenance of these signs are paid for by the requester.
- If freeway signing is approved, and when more than two turns are required to reach the school from the freeway (not including the turn from the ramp or the turn into the entrance to the facility), route markers with directional arrows shall be installed to indicate the routing back to the freeway. This return trip route signing and maintenance of these signs shall be paid for by the requester.
- All requests for signing on partial and non-full control access facilities must be approved by the appropriate Division Engineer or designate having jurisdiction in the county in which the signs are proposed. All requests for signing on full control of access facilities shall be approved by the State Traffic Engineer or designate.
- Any school of higher education shall only be signed at one approved route via a freeway, expressway, or other interchange. Special requests for signing at additional interchanges may be submitted to the State Traffic Engineer by the institution with justification of need and supporting documentation. These special requests will be reviewed and approved on a case by case basis by the State Traffic Engineer. Additional signed interchanges shall not be located along the same route.
- Supplemental guide signs for schools of higher education should be minimized and combined with other supplemental guide messages when appropriate. Supplemental guide signs for schools of higher education are not allowed at interchanges where full control-of-access roadway exits or merges onto another full control-of-access roadway (freeway to freeway facilities).

- All documentation required to verify that qualification criteria are met shall be provided to the Department by the requester.
- The requesting institution must have a web site with clear and specific directions, preferably with a map, posted on the web page.
- If the request for signing is received from a third party and the facility qualifies, the Department shall validate the request with the official from the institution to determine if the institution is interested in pursuing the request. Approval and implementation of sign installations shall not proceed without the approval of the institution and execution of a reimbursable agreement between the requester and the Department.
- It is the responsibility of the qualifying school of higher education to secure/provide funding for all costs involved in field investigation, designing, administering, fabricating, installing, inspecting, and maintaining signs. A reimbursable agreement between the requester and the Department is required. If a qualifying school requests a name change on the sign, the school must pay all costs associated with changing the sign including new supports.
- The signs are subject to removal if payment for maintenance has not been made to the Department within 60 days of written request from the Department. Any removal cost associated with non-payment will be the responsibility of the requester. The agreement will be cancelled upon sign removal, and any request for reinstallation will be handled as a new request.
- Signing for educational facilities is considered supplemental to the overall signing system for freeways, expressways and conventional roads. Therefore, before a sign for a school is installed, sufficient space shall exist to accommodate the placement of the sign without interfering or conflicting with required signing.
- Sign designs shall conform to the attached standards for letter size and typical layout. The use of pictographs, logos, or symbols on guide signs are prohibited for any school of higher education.
- The Department has the responsibility and authority to relocate or remove signs on NCDOT highway right-of-way if a need for a higher priority regulatory, warning, or guide sign is identified. No refund or reimbursement will be made for removed signs.
- The NCDOT reserves the right to cover, relocate, or remove any signs for maintenance or construction operations, or when deemed to be in the best interest of the NCDOT or the traveling public, without advance notice. The NCDOT reserves the right to remove signs when roadway improvements or changes in the roadway cross section or configuration will no longer accommodate the existing signs. No refund or reimbursement will be made for removed signs. If existing signs no longer meet the Department's size and design requirements for an upgraded roadway and existing signs are removed, the facility may request to upgrade their signs, provided that minimum spacing is available on the upgraded roadway.
- This practice is not intended for use in removal of existing signs; however, when a new project is established for the North Carolina highway system, or when existing signs are in need of replacement, repair, or maintenance, conformance with this practice is required.

- As described in General Statute 136-30 (a), (b), and (d), the Department has the authority to control all signs within the right of way of the State Highway System.

§ G.S. 136-30. Uniform signs and other traffic control devices on highways, streets, and public vehicular areas. (a) State Highway System. - The Department of Transportation may number and mark highways in the State highway system. All traffic signs and other traffic control devices placed on a highway in the State highway system must conform to the Uniform Manual. The Department of Transportation shall have the power to control all signs within the right-of-way of highways in the State highway system. The Department of Transportation may erect signs directing persons to roads and places of importance. (b) Municipal Street System. - All traffic signs and other traffic control devices placed on a municipal street system street must conform to the appearance criteria of the Uniform Manual. All traffic control devices placed on a highway that is within the corporate limits of a municipality but is part of the State highway system must be approved by the Department of Transportation. (d) Definition. - As used in this section, the term "Uniform Manual" means the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways, published by the United States Department of Transportation, and any supplement to that Manual adopted by the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

SCHOOLS THAT DO NOT QUALIFY FOR SIGNING

- Colleges, Universities, and other schools of higher education that operate primarily by Internet (on-line) or other remote educational techniques.
- Colleges, Universities and other schools of higher education campuses that operate on majority leased or rented buildings and/or property.
- Academic Institutions that do not offer a minimum degree program of the traditional academic variety (i.e. Associate in Arts or Science, Bachelor of Arts or Science).
- Trade schools that do not offer an Associate in Arts or Science as a minimum degree program or other schools that offer only diploma or certificate degrees. (Ex: Schools for Barbering, Cosmetology, Racing, Truck Driving, Auto Mechanics, Aviation, Technical Skills, etc.)