

UNCC Admission & Financial Aid Website Redesign Report

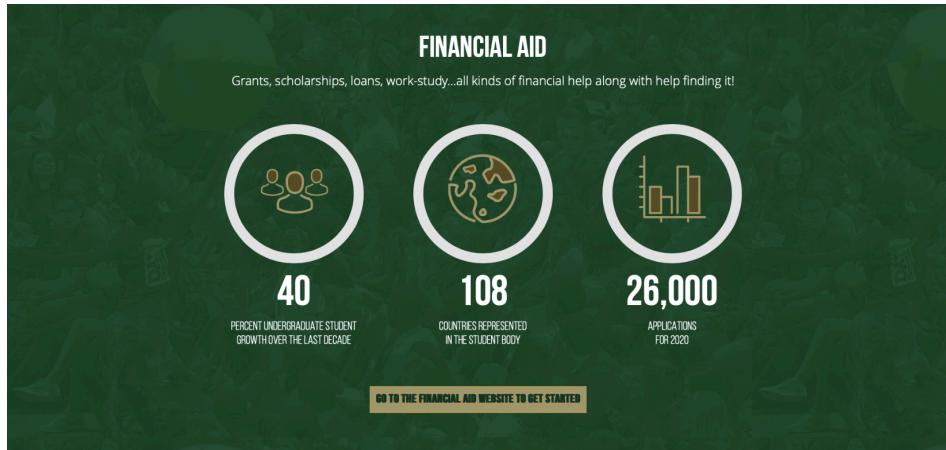
By: Hritika Kuceriya (hkucher@uncc.edu)

Chapter 1: Design Critique Learnings

Visual Design Critique

While the website maintained some visual consistency, multiple design issues were identified:

- **Inconsistent Layouts:** Several pages had uneven spacing, varying margins, and inconsistent use of images, making navigation visually confusing.



- **Distracting Backgrounds:** Sections such as the hero image had moving video backgrounds which distracted from the primary call-to-action.



- **Contrast and Scaling Issues:** Text was sometimes difficult to read against the background. Icons were disproportionately large in some places and almost absent in others.

Recommendations:

- Optimize white space to create a clean, breathable design.
- Redesign hierarchy by improving font size, color contrast, and scaling of visual elements.
- Replace distracting backgrounds with static, focus-driven images.

Interaction Design Critique

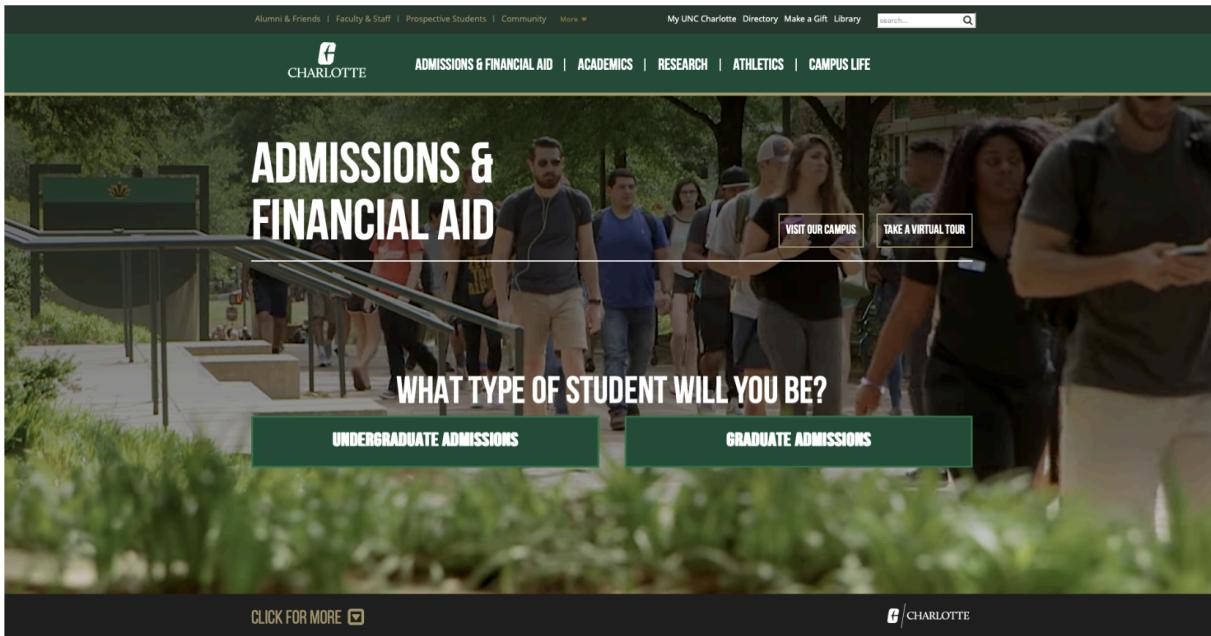
- **Button Inconsistency:** Buttons varied in size, color, and font weight across pages.
- **Poor Navigation Experience:** Navigation menus were nested too deeply.
- **Missing Feedback Cues:** Lack of form progress indicators or feedback during multi-step forms.

Recommendations:

- Standardize button styles sitewide.
- Introduce a sticky sidebar for easier access.
- Add visual cues like step indicators and hover effects.

Heuristic Evaluation Highlights

- **Weaknesses:** No "unsaved changes" warnings, missing tooltips, lack of contextual help.
- **Strengths:** Error fields were marked clearly in bright red; homepage link always available via logo.



Chapter 2: Personas and Interviews

Persona Introduction

Persona Focus: Name: David Luiz

Profile: Transfer student, determined but overwhelmed navigating financial aid processes independently.

Frustrations:

- Difficulty understanding grant/loan requirements.
- Overwhelmed by the sheer volume and technical language used on the website.
- Need clear guidance on credit transfer.

PERSONA TYPE : TRANSFER STUDENT



NAME	David Luiz
GENDER	Male
AGE	26
OCCUPATION	R
LOCATION	Austin, TX

Backstory

David, a dedicated student pursuing his Master's in Cybersecurity at North Carolina State University, is looking to transfer to the University of Texas at Austin to further enhance his academic and professional prospects. With a strong passion for cybersecurity and a keen interest in exploring advanced research opportunities, he believes that UT Austin's rigorous curriculum and esteemed faculty will provide the ideal environment for his growth.

Motivations

- Pursuit of Academic Excellence
- Financial and Logistical Considerations.
- Wanted Career Advancement.

Ideal experience

- Clear and Transparent Pathway.
- A financial aid guide for working professionals.

Quote

"It Doesn't Matter what others are doing, it matters what you are doing !!"

Frustrations

- Credit Transfer Complications.
- Lack of Tailored Orientations.
- Cultural and Campus Change

Interview Process

Participants were recruited from high-traffic student areas like the library and student union. Target participants were first-year undergraduates who experienced the admissions and financial aid processes firsthand.

Key Interview Questions:

1. Describe your overall experience with the website.
2. What challenges did you face while applying for financial aid?
3. How did you try to overcome confusing information?
4. What would improve your experience when using the website?

Persona Refinement: Interviews revealed recurring issues of:

- Navigation confusion
- Lack of structured information
- Inadequate real-time support

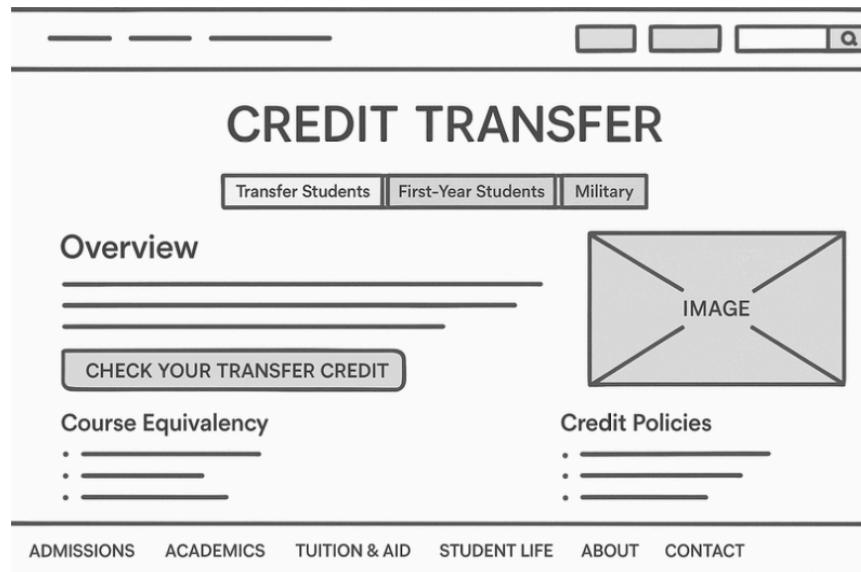
Chapter 3: Top Three Needs and Design Ideas

Identified Top Three Needs

1. **Simplified Navigation:** Users struggled to find essential pages due to nested menus.
2. **Step-by-Step Guidance:** Information presented was dense and overwhelming without clear sequences.
3. **Accessible Support Channels:** Limited live assistance (e.g., live chat or instant FAQ search).

Proposed Design Ideas

- **Navigation Improvement:** Implement a sticky sidebar with collapsible menus for major categories.
- **Guided Processes:** Introduce visual checklists, example form templates, and context-sensitive tooltips.
- **Support Resources:** Develop a support forum, integrate live chat, and organize monthly webinars explaining admissions and financial aid processes.



Chapter 4: Usability Testing

Participant Recruitment

Returning participants from the persona development phase were invited for usability testing. Consent was obtained for screen and voice recording.

Tasks Assigned

1. Navigate from the homepage to locate and start the admission application form.
2. Identify application deadlines.
3. Fill the financial aid form and resolve confusion using available support tools.

Follow-up Questions

- Was navigation intuitive?
- How confident did you feel filling the forms?
- Did you encounter points of frustration?

Usability Findings

- **Successes:** Participants easily found the new sticky sidebar and preferred the added tooltips.
- **Challenges:** Some still found certain financial aid terminologies confusing.

Changes Made After Testing

- Made tooltips even more specific.
- Increased font size for better accessibility.
- Simplified sidebar further by merging redundant links.
- Added "Start Here" beginner guides on key pages.

Chapter 5: High-Fidelity Prototypes and Changes

Evolution from Low to High Fidelity

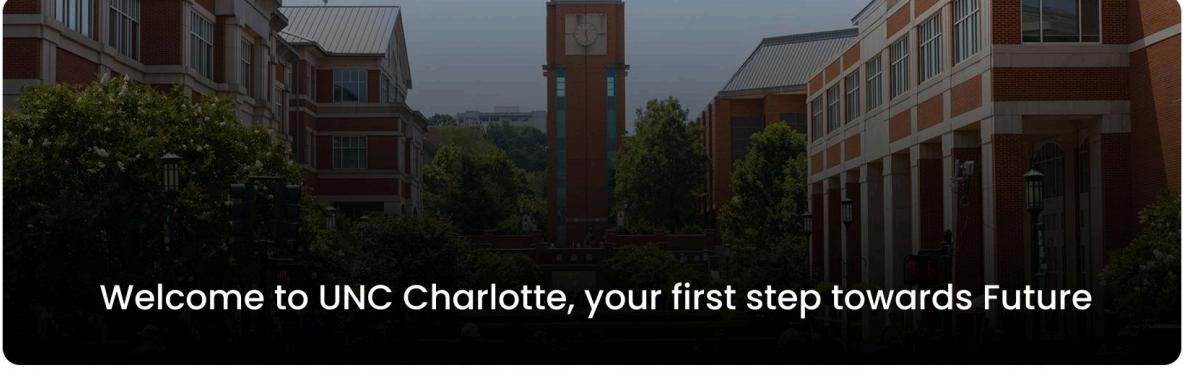
Low-Fidelity Wireframe: Focused mainly on basic structure: sidebar navigation, home link, and key CTA buttons.

Feedback-Driven Changes:

- Sidebar made collapsible and sticky.
- Pop-up hints embedded within application forms.
- Landing pages created for "Undergraduate Admissions," "Graduate Admissions," and "Financial Aid."
- Color palette adjusted for accessibility standards.

Highlights of High-Fidelity Prototype:

- "Start/Continue Application" buttons placed prominently on the landing page.
- Credit transfer page
- Financial aid section featuring application templates for international and domestic students.
- Forum and live chat access embedded directly within application steps.



Welcome to UNC Charlotte, your first step towards Future

Undergraduate Admissions

Graduate Admissions

About Us

At UNC Charlotte, we recognize that each student's path to higher education is both personal and transformative. Our goal is to offer tailored guidance and accessible resources to help you approach the admissions process with clarity and confidence. As North Carolina's premier urban research institution, we are committed to academic distinction, groundbreaking research, and cultivating a community that nurtures both personal and professional development. With a student body of over 29,000, more than 170 undergraduate majors, and esteemed faculty, UNC Charlotte provides an outstanding setting for learning, discovery, and success.

We know that the college application journey can bring a mix of excitement and uncertainty. That's why we aim to ensure the admissions process is straightforward, supportive, and inclusive for every prospective student. Whether you're applying as a first-year student, transferring from another institution, or seeking graduate-level education, our dedicated team is here to assist you at every stage. UNC Charlotte values diversity and is proud to foster an inclusive campus where individuals from all backgrounds are respected and encouraged. Our commitment is to create a dynamic learning environment that enables every student to achieve their fullest potential.





Home Admission Financial Aid Campus Life Student Center Resources Important Dates

UNC Charlotte Graduate Admissions

[Start / Continue Your Application](#)

Graduate Admissions: Unlock Your Potential at UNC Charlotte

Pursuing a graduate degree marks a pivotal moment in expanding your expertise, advancing professionally, and fulfilling personal and academic goals. At UNC Charlotte, we are dedicated to offering graduate students an outstanding academic journey, supported by renowned faculty, cutting-edge resources, and a welcoming, inclusive scholarly community. Our Graduate Admissions team is ready to assist you throughout the application process, ensuring a smooth and empowering transition into graduate-level education.

UNC Charlotte features more than 100 graduate programs, including master's, doctoral, and certificate options spanning a wide range of disciplines. Whether you're looking to deepen your knowledge in engineering, business, education, health sciences, the arts, or beyond, our programs are crafted to prepare you for success in a rapidly changing global landscape. Many of these programs emphasize research, hands-on learning, and interdisciplinary engagement, giving you the chance to address real-world issues and contribute meaningfully to academic progress.

Our graduate student body is both vibrant and diverse, drawing individuals from across the country and around the globe to our energetic urban campus. We are proud to cultivate an environment where diverse perspectives are valued, cultural richness is embraced, and meaningful relationships thrive.

[Visit Campus](#)

[Virtual Tour](#)

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Before You Begin

- [Guide On How To Apply](#)
- [Start Your Application](#)
- [Documents Required](#)
- [Talk To Us](#)

Aid Basics

- [Your Aid](#)
- [Your Bill](#)
- [Consumer Information](#)
- [Estimating Cost](#)
- [Forms & Publications](#)
- [Financial Aid FAQs](#)

Important Dates

- [Application Open Date](#)
- [Priority Deadline](#)
- [Awarding Date](#)
- [Billing Period](#)

Types of Aid

- [Co-op Education](#)
- [Federal Work-Study](#)
- [Scholarships](#)

Applying for Aid

- [FAFSA](#)
- [Summer School Aid](#)
- [Transient Study Aid](#)

[Chat With Us](#)


UNC Charlotte Financial Aid

[Go to FAFSA Application](#)
[Guide on How To Apply](#)

Financial Aid: Invest in Your Future at UNC Charlotte

At UNC Charlotte, we believe that financial barriers should never stand in the way of pursuing a quality education. Our Financial Aid Office is dedicated to helping students and their families navigate the financial aid process, providing personalized support and resources to make higher education accessible and affordable for all. Whether you're an undergraduate, graduate, or transfer student, we are here to ensure that you have the tools and knowledge needed to make informed decisions about funding your education.

UNC Charlotte offers a wide range of financial aid options, including scholarships, grants, work-study opportunities, and student loans, designed to meet the diverse needs of our students. Our scholarships recognize academic excellence, leadership, and community engagement, while grants provide vital support for students with financial need. The Federal Work-Study program allows students to earn money while gaining valuable work experience, and our student loan options are structured to help you invest in your future responsibly.

Our commitment goes beyond providing financial aid—we aim to empower students with the knowledge to make sound financial decisions. Through resources like our financial literacy programs, workshops, and one-on-one counseling sessions, you'll learn how to manage expenses, plan budgets, and prepare for life after graduation. Our goal is to equip you with the skills and confidence to take control of your financial well-being, both during your time at UNC Charlotte and beyond.

Navigating the financial aid process can feel overwhelming, but our experienced team is here to guide you every step of the way. From completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to understanding award letters and exploring additional funding opportunities, we provide clear, personalized support tailored to your unique situation.



How to Apply for Financial Aid: A Step-by-Step Guide

Navigating the financial aid process can feel overwhelming, but at UNC Charlotte, we are here to guide you every step of the way. Follow these simple steps to apply for financial aid and unlock the resources you need to make your education affordable.



Understanding Your Financial Aid Offer



Filling Up Your FAFSA Application



XYZ Info Video



ABC Tutorial



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Degree Intended to Pursue

Field Intended to Pursue

Concentration Intended

Previous Education ^

Institution Details

Grade Details

Grade Documents

Activities

Work Experience ^

Company Details

Documents

Activities

Test Scores ^

Aptitude Test Details

English Proficiency Details

Credit Transfer Check

Chat With Us

Person ^

First Name as given in your passport

First Name

Last Name as given in your passport

Last Name

Email ID

Email ID

Permanent Address

Full Address

This address corresponds to the one you have in your official documents e.g. Passport

Phone Number

Phone Number

Add + extension if you have an international number

Next Section

Video Tutorial :



A Step-by-Step Guide For Applications

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Degree Intended to Pursue
Field Intended to Pursue
Concentration Intended

Previous Education ^

Institution Details
Grade Details
Grade Documents
Activities

Work Experience ^

Employer Information
Documents
Activities

Test Scores ^

[Credit Transfer Check](#)
Aptitude Test Details
Language Requirements

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Credit Transfer Check

Use our Transfer Credit Advisor Tool to see how courses from other institutions transfer to UNC Charlotte.

[Graduate Transfers](#)[Military](#)[Undergraduate Transfers](#)

Overview

UNC Charlotte welcomes students from all backgrounds who are seeking to transfer previously earned academic credits. Whether you're transferring from a two-year community college, another four-year institution, or have military training, we're here to help you understand how your credits apply toward your degree.



**Hassle-Free Transfer To
UNC Charlotte**

Course Equivalency

- Searchable database for course matches
- Equivalency details for NC community colleges
- General education & major-specific course transfer info

[Explore Course Equivalency Database](#)

Credit Policies

- Minimum grade requirements for credit transfer
- Max transferable credits: 64 (from 2-year colleges)
- Policies on AP, IB, CLEP, military credit

[View Full Credit Transfer Policy](#)

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- [Check Application Status](#)

Important Dates

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- [Rolling Admission Deadline](#)
- [Last Date To Apply](#)
- [Decision Date](#)

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- [Admission Events](#)
- [Visit University](#)
- [Ambassador](#)

Additional Details

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- [Dual Enrollment](#)
- [Dual Degree](#)

Chat With Us

Got questions about admissions, financial aid, or transfer credits? Our team is here to help you—live and in real time.



Categories

- [Admissions](#)
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- [Transfer Credits](#)
- [Scholarships](#)
- [Academic Advising](#)
- [Other](#)

Chat with 49-er Assistant

49-er

👋 Hi! I'm 49-er, a Virtual Assistant. How can I help you today?

Type your message here ↴

Send

First Name

Email ID

Message

Message (if you want to schedule a call or Visit please mention such requests within Office Hours)

Thanks for reaching out! We'll reply within 1 business day.

FAQ Quick Links Below Chat

Application Deadlines

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Chapter 6: Interactive High-Fidelity Prototype

You can interact with the live high-fidelity prototype here:

<https://www.figma.com/proto/Jy5NK45LbPRHKkRMRK1Mp3/Wireframing-in-Figma?page-id=309%3275&node-id=313-1087&viewport=225%2C134%2C0.31&t=HfruGlyd177b6YZy-1&scaling=contain&content-scaling=fixed>

<https://www.figma.com/design/Jy5NK45LbPRHKkRMRK1Mp3/Wireframing-in-Figma?node-id=309-275&t=91TvBdZFoHGViJS-1>

Instructions:

- Navigation bar links for admissions, financial aid are clickable
- Undergraduate and graduate buttons are clickable
- When you click on Start or continue application it navigates to form
- There is a credit transfer tool in left menu which is also clickable
- Chat with us button on the left menu is also clickable