Overview of the Process
The process of developing new graduate degree programs is a creative and challenging endeavor. It starts with extensive discussions among faculty and administrators to design the best program for the discipline(s) and then proceeds through University committees where the proposal is examined from a University-wide perspective. Many administrative offices on campus have an interest in how new programs are designed because of their responsibilities to provide accurate information to students, administrators, legislators, and state and national agencies. After receiving endorsement by all the appropriate University units, the proposal will then go to the UNC General Administration (UNC-GA) where it must be justified and evaluated from the University System's perspective.

At any step along the way, recommendations for improving/revising/expanding the proposal may be made by UNC-CH faculty, administrators and staff, and by UNC-GA. Such recommendations should be considered by the proposing department or curriculum as a means to build buy-in among all reviewers and ensure a new program’s success.

From the very beginning of the project, become thoroughly familiar with the formal guidelines for program development (both the Request for Authorization to Plan and the Request for Authorization to Establish) as outlined in the Academic Program Development Procedures found on UNC-GA’s website here: http://www.northcarolina.edu/aa_planning/degrees/index.htm

Consult Broadly
It is never too early to seek advice and guidance from others during the proposal process. Ongoing University-wide planning may provide important information and support that can enhance the process at the program level. Meet with faculty and chairs of other programs who may have developed similar proposals and obtain their advice on what to include and how to plan. It is appropriate to forward copies of drafts of your proposal documents to:

- Faculty colleagues in the interested programs
- Departmental and program administrators
- Dean’s Office of the appropriate school or college
- Dean and Senior Staff of the Graduate School

Requirements
- The Graduate School has found it best that the Request for Authorization to Plan (Appendix A) stage be based on the guidelines for the Request for Authorization to Establish (Appendix C). In this way, many of the difficult questions are answered early in the process, and a more realistic sense of what is possible at UNC-CH can be ascertained.
- This advice applies especially in the case of developing programs with significant interdisciplinary components. For further details on interdisciplinary, dual, or joint degree proposals, please see The Graduate School’s Policy on Transdisciplinary Programs of Study.
- If questions of budget, governance (inter- and intra-divisional), program need, material resources and building/laboratory needs, faculty affiliations, workload, staffing, student recruitment, student financial support and student services are addressed early in the process, there is less likelihood that major revisions will be required between the request to plan and the request to establish.
- It is also advisable to outline the curriculum, course offerings (new and established), new resource requests, external funding opportunities, optimization of existing resources, and all other budgetary items in a forthright and realistic fashion. Planning must be concrete and detailed.
- Examples of successful proposals are available at The Graduate School for examination.

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