

Developing New Graduate Degree Programs

at

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Campus [academic program development guidelines](#) must follow the framework provided by the UNC System and the Board of Governors. The **Academic Program Development Procedures** and templates are found on the UNC System [website](#). Academic actions requiring approval from the UNC System are:

- Request for Preliminary Authorization to plan a new degree program (master's and doctoral)
- Request to Establish a new degree program (master's and doctoral)
- Request for authorization to change the name or delivery of an existing degree program
- Discontinuation of a degree program or other certificate/licensure programs

Request for Preliminary Authorization

Proposals for new Master's degrees or Doctoral degrees (research or applied) must submit a *Request for Preliminary Authorization for New Academic Degree Program* (using the *Request to Establish* as a guide).

- The Department or Curriculum must create the proposal and have it approved through all internal, departmental, or program processes.
- The Dean of the appropriate College or School must approve the proposal prior to submission to The Graduate School.
- The Academic Policy Committee and the Administrative Board of The Graduate School must approve the proposal prior to submission to the Office of the Provost.
- The Office of the Provost will review the proposal, request any changes, and report on progress to the Faculty Council as appropriate.
- Upon approval by the Provost, the Chancellor will review, approve, and update the Board of Trustees and Chief Financial Officer as appropriate.
- The Chancellor will authorize submission of the proposal to the UNC System.

Notification to the UNC System may be sent at any time, but programs should plan on a year-long planning process at minimum prior to the proposed date of establishment. Special tuition and fee requests take additional time.

Please see the sample timelines for the order and expected response times for the approval stages. Note that doctoral degrees take longer to approve due to the state's Graduate Council review and the external review process.

The UNC System's approval of the *Request for Preliminary Authorization* and permission to submit the *Request to Establish* does not constitute a commitment on the part of the Board of Governors to approve the program. UNC System Academic Planning maintains a [listing](#) of all programs being planned system-wide.

Request to Establish

All Master's or Doctoral degree program proposals approved for planning must submit a *Request to Establish* for New Academic Degree Program.

The proposal should be reviewed once again by the same campus units that reviewed the *Request for Preliminary Authorization* before it is submitted with approval by the Provost, Chief Financial Officer, and Chancellor to the UNC System. A report summarizing progress can be provided by the Chancellor to the Faculty Council or Board of Trustees as appropriate.

All proposals should ensure they address the following key areas:

- A) Budget information, especially addressing how the new program will be implemented, supported, and sustained if there should be no enrollment growth funding;
- B) Student demand for the program;
- C) Societal need for the program (i.e., employment opportunities for graduates);
- D) Collaboration opportunities considered/investigated with other institutions; and
- E) How the proposed program supports the campus' Institutional Mission.

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After collecting all feedback from the Graduate Council and external reviews (where appropriate), the UNC System will recommend approval of the program to the Board of Governors' Committee on Educational Planning, Policies & Programs, and through it, to the full Board. In general, reviews will be completed within three to six months.

Special tuition and fee requests beyond the base graduate tuition rate take additional time. They must follow the annual campus tuition and fee review and approval process, including review and approval by the UNC System and Board of Governors' Committee on Budget and Finance (following academic approvals as described above).

Once complete, the UNC System will notify the Chancellor, who will inform the University and campus offices involved. The program, The Graduate School, and the Office of the University Registrar work collaboratively to institute the necessary procedures for admission and enrollment of students in the new degree program.

Reports on Progress to Implement the New Program

Reports on the progress of program implementation must be submitted twice to the UNC System. The first such report will cover the first one to two years of implementation, and the second report will cover the first three to four years of operation of the program.