

Guidelines for Academic Program Development

A. Academic Programs

1. Degree Levels Offered

Post-secondary academic degree programs in the 16 constituent universities of the University of North Carolina are offered at the following levels:

Associate of Applied Science degrees, normally requiring two years of full-time study beyond high school; offered only at North Carolina State University in the field of Agriculture;

Arts Diploma, available only from the UNC School of Arts and based on completion of the appropriate arts curriculum;

Bachelor's degrees, normally requiring four years of full-time study beyond high school;

Master's degrees, usually requiring one or two years of study beyond the bachelor's degree;

Intermediate or specialist degrees, an advanced degree falling between a master's degree and a doctoral degree;

First Professional degrees in law, education, dentistry, medicine, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, nursing, and physical therapy (J.D., Ed.D., D.D.S., M.D., Pharm.D., D.V.M., D.N.P., and D.P.T), for which the bachelor's degree and sometimes the master's degree are prerequisites and usually requiring three or four years of study beyond the bachelor's degree;

Doctoral degrees (Ph.D., D.M.A., and Dr.P.H.), for which the bachelor's degree and sometimes the master's degree are prerequisites and usually requiring three or four years of study beyond the bachelor's or master's degree.

2. Degree Program Classification

The University of North Carolina uses the Classification of Instructional Programs: 2010 Edition (CIP)¹ to classify its programs in the UNC Academic Program Inventory (API). The CIP classifies all post-secondary degree programs into 47 major discipline divisions.

Currently UNC constituent institutions offer programs in 31 of these discipline divisions. These are:

¹Classification of Instructional Programs: 2010 Edition; National Center for Education Statistics.

*Replaces 400.1.1.1[G] originally adopted 05/06/09

01	Agriculture, Operations, and Related Sciences	25	Library Science
03	Natural Resources and Conservation	26	Biological and Biomedical Sciences
04	Architecture and Related Services	27	Mathematics and Statistics
05	Area, Ethnic, Cultural, Gender, and Group Studies	30	Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies
09	Communication, Journalism and Related Programs	31	Parks, Recreation, Leisure and Fitness Studies
11	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	38	Philosophy and Religious Studies
13	Education	40	Physical Sciences
14	Engineering	41	Science Technologies/Technicians
15	Engineering Technologies, and Engineering- Related Fields	42	Psychology
16	Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics	43	Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting, and Related Protective Services
19	Family and Consumer Sciences / Human Sciences	44	Public Administration and Social Service Professions
22	Legal Professions and Studies	45	Social Sciences
23	English Language and Literature / Letters	49	Transportation and Materials Moving
24	Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities	50	Visual and Performing Arts
		51	Health Professions and Related Programs
		52	Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services
		54	History

Discipline divisions are divided further into discipline specialties, which for the most part are represented by six-digit CIP codes. For example, the discipline division Engineering (14) consists of such discipline specialties as General Engineering (14.0101), Aerospace, Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering (14.0201), Architectural Engineering (14.0401), Chemical Engineering (14.0701), and Civil Engineering (14.0801), etc. UNC actually uses a twelve-digit classification code so degree level and specialized information can be represented in the CIP.

3. Programs

Degree Programs

A degree program is a program of study in a discipline specialty that leads to a degree in that distinct specialty area at a particular level of instruction. All degree programs are categorized individually in the University's academic program inventory at the six-digit CIP code level. As a general rule, in order to be considered for degree program status, a course of study should require at least 27 semester hours in the proposed program area at the undergraduate level; at least half the number of hours required for the degree at the master's level; and at least 21 hours in the proposed program area at the doctoral level. Anything less than this within an existing degree program should be designated a concentration, a decision that can be made at the campus level. For teacher education programs, the President may issue regulations and/or guidelines setting parameters for required second academic concentrations.

Certificate Programs

*Replaces 400.1.1.1[G] originally adopted 05/06/09

A certificate program provides an organized program of study that leads to the awarding of a certificate rather than a degree. IPEDS has established the following standards for reporting certificates:

A post-baccalaureate certificate is awarded for an organized program of study equivalent to 18 semester credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree. It is designed for persons who have completed a baccalaureate degree, but do not meet the requirements for a master's degree.

A post-master's certificate is awarded for an organized program of study equivalent to 24 semester credit hours beyond the master's degree, but does not meet the requirement of academic degrees at the doctoral level.

Campuses may offer other certificate programs that do not meet these IPEDS reporting requirements.

Teacher Licensure Programs

Constituent institutions with teacher education programs approved by the State Board of Education may offer specific course clusters in approved teacher licensure areas which meet licensure requirements of the State Board of Education but do not lead to the conferral of a particular degree or certificate. These may be at the entry level or advanced level of teacher licensure. When an institution receives authorization to offer teacher licensure in a specific area from the State Board of Education, General Administration should be notified. A current inventory of teacher licensure programs approved by the State Board of Education is available from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

B. Academic Program Development Requiring Authorization or Action Beyond the Campus Level

The chancellors of the constituent institutions shall communicate to General Administration of their intentions or requests with respect to instructional program development for the following:

1. Request for authorization to plan any new degree program.
2. Request for authorization to establish any new degree program (including distance education programs).
3. Request for authorization to change the name or title of an existing degree program.
4. Request for authorization to discontinue a degree program.
5. Notification of intent to establish or discontinue a certificate or teacher licensure program.

Forms are available on the Academic Planning website for use by constituent institutions.

C. Procedures for Program Development or Modification

1. Campus Program Development Procedures

Each institution must have a clearly defined process for campus review and approval of proposals to plan and, once planning is completed, a process for approving requests to establish new academic degree programs. The appropriate campus committees and authorities must approve any notification or request to plan or establish a new degree program before submitting it to General Administration.

To assist institutions preparing to plan new programs, the Academic Affairs staff will make available a link to the CIP taxonomy and the Academic Program Inventory for UNC institutions. Institutions planning a new degree program will be expected to contact other UNC institutions awarding the proposed degree during the planning process regarding their

*Replaces 400.1.1.1[G] originally adopted 05/06/09

experience with program productivity (applicants, majors, job market, placement, etc.) and to actively explore collaboration possibilities.

2. Planning and Establishing New Degree Programs

Campuses must submit requests for all new degree programs on the two planning documents Appendix A – Request for Authorization to Plan a New Degree Program and Appendix C – Request for Authorization to Establish a New Degree Program. The complete review, evaluation, and approval procedures to be followed (from the initial submission of the Appendix A document to the final BOG approval to establish upon the recommendation of the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs) are summarized in the attached three flowcharts: Process for Planning and Establishment of New Baccalaureate Degree Program, Process for Planning and Establishment of New Masters Degree Program, and Process for Planning and Establishment of New Doctoral Degree Program.

As seen in the Appendix A and Appendix C documents, major considerations in the planning and evaluation of new degree program proposals are student demand for the program, societal demand (availability of employment for graduates of the program), budget and source of funding for the proposed program (especially if enrollment growth funding should not become available), collaboration possibilities with other degree programs within UNC, and relationship of the new degree program to the approved institutional mission.

As indicated in the flowcharts, UNC General Administration may approve authorization to plan proposed programs (Appendix A) that clearly meet the above major considerations. Authorization to plan a new degree program does not in any way constitute a commitment on the part of General Administration or the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs to approve a subsequent request to establish the program. Planning authorization signifies that UNC-GA and the committee find merit in the general proposition, that there may be sufficient need for the program, and that the suggested program is consistent with the approved mission of the institution. Such authorization to plan constitutes clearance for the institution to document and further justify in Appendix C the need and demand for the proposed program and to describe in detail the campus' ability and the resources needed to offer a quality program.

Following authorization to plan, an institution will have up to four months to complete its planning and submit a request to establish the proposed program. If Appendix C is not completed within this period, the campus may submit a request to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs for a time extension.

If an institution plans to offer all or a portion of a proposed degree program to students off-campus or online, the institution must complete Appendix G – Request for Authorization to Establish a New Distance Education Degree Program or Site, and submit it with Appendix C. (If a degree program has not been approved by the Board of Governors, its approval for alternative, online, or distance delivery must wait until BOG program approval is received.)

3. Planning New Degree Programs - Notification of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Institutions should notify the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges (COC) each time they receive authorization to establish a new degree program. The institution should first receive authorization to establish the new degree program from the Board of Governors, and then, if necessary, seek approval from SACS prior to implementation.

*Replaces 400.1.1.1[G] originally adopted 05/06/09

The SACSCOC classifies institutions according to the highest degree level offered by the institution. The Substantive Change Policy for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges of SACS requires submission of an application or a prospectus, and approval by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees (Substantive Change Procedure One) prior to initiating certificates or programs of study at a different level than those previously approved by SACSCOC. An institution requesting a level change should complete an Application for a Member Institution Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level. Applications are reviewed by SACSCOC Board of Trustees twice a year: during meetings in June and in December. An institution may not initiate a degree program at a different level without prior approval from SACS.

The Commission on Colleges also requires prior notification and prior approval (Substantive Change Procedure One) if an institution is adding a degree at the same level for which the institution is already accredited and the new program is a “significant departure” from current programs. (The suggested timeframe for contacting COC prior to the date of implementation is six months.)

The UNC Academic Program Inventory (API) classifies all University degree programs into 31 major discipline divisions by CIP code. Each campus also has an inventory of authorized programs listed by discipline division and degree program title. Planning a program in a different discipline division than those currently authorized is interpreted as a potential substantive change. When an institution begins to plan a program in a new discipline division, the campus should notify SACS of the potential substantive change; if SACS interprets this as a significant departure, the institution will need to complete the Substantive Change Procedure One process when authorization to establish the program is received from the Board of Governors.

The institution should inform General Administration (by responding to the questions on the first page of Appendix A and C) as to whether the proposed program constitutes a substantive change as defined by SACS.

4. Changing the Name or Degree Title of an Existing Degree Program

Requests to change the name or degree title of an existing degree program, accompanied by an explanation of the reason for the proposed change, may be submitted to General Administration at any time.

5. Changing the Classification of Instructional Program Code (CIP)

Any change in the CIP Code for an authorized degree program requires General Administration approval.

6. Discontinuing Academic Degree Programs

Requests for authorization to discontinue a degree program may be made by the chancellor to General Administration at any time, giving the effective date of discontinuation and explaining the reason for the request. An appropriate Teach-Out Plan for currently-enrolled students must accompany the request to discontinue. General Administration will request approval from the Board of Governors. Students enrolled in discontinued degree programs must be allowed to complete their courses of study within a reasonable period of time. Upon receiving approval to discontinue a degree program, the institution must immediately notify SACS (see Item 7 below).

Notice of discontinuation of certificates may be submitted to General Administration at any time.

7. Discontinuing Academic Degree Programs - Notification of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

*Replaces 400.1.1.1[G] originally adopted 05/06/09

Discontinuing any academic degree program is a SACSCOC Procedure Three Substantive Change. As soon as approval to discontinue a degree program is received from the Board of Governors, the institution should provide to SACSCOC at the same time the following two pieces of information: (1) notification of the impending discontinuation of the degree program, and (2) a Teach-Out Plan for approval. Teach-Out Plans must be approved by SACSCOC prior to implementation.

*Replaces 400.1.1.1[G] originally adopted 05/06/09