

Guidelines for New Graduate Degree Program Proposals

Overview

The Graduate Council is charged with making recommendations to the San Diego Divisional Representative Assembly and systemwide Academic Senate's Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) concerning the establishment of new graduate degrees and programs. The following guidelines are intended to assist departments and programs (hereafter referred to as "departments") in preparing new degree proposals that include the information necessary for deliberation and approval.

This document provides general guidance and information about the review process for new graduate degree program proposals. These guidelines also provide guidance on how to prepare specific types of proposals: proposals to establish new graduate degrees that are not currently offered at UC San Diego, new areas of specialization that are added to existing graduate degree programs, contiguous undergraduate and graduate degree programs, and dual degree programs with partner institutions (section forthcoming).

This document includes the following sections:

(click on the links below to access each section within this document)

- [Review Process Overview](#)
- [General Guidance about Proposal Preparation \(for all proposals\)](#)
- [New Higher Degrees \(Master's and Doctoral Degrees\)](#)
- [Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs \(SSGPDPs\)](#)
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- [Online Master's Degree Programs](#)
- [New Specializations for Existing Master's and Doctoral Degrees](#)
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For questions about the review process or the proposal format, please contact the [Graduate Council Analyst](#). Academic Senate staff and the Graduate Division are available to provide departments with preliminary feedback on draft proposals. For more information please contact the [Graduate Council Analyst](#) and the [Assistant Dean of Graduate Academic Affairs](#).

Review Process Overview

The Graduate Council recommends that departments submit their proposals at least one and a half years before the desired effective term. For example, if a program wishes for an effective date of Fall Quarter 2023, the Graduate Council recommends that the department submit its proposal at the start of Spring Quarter 2022. CCGA advises that its review typically takes four to six months to complete and can take longer.

[Table 1](#) provides an overview of the reviewers and approvers for each proposal type.

1. Administrative Review

All new degree program proposals are required to undergo administrative review prior to submission to the Graduate Council. Procedures and the administrative routing sheet are available on the Graduate Division's [website](#).

2. Submission to the Graduate Council

Proposals should be submitted electronically in PDF format to the [Graduate Council Analyst](#). If the Department Chair/Program Director is not sending the submission directly, they should be copied on the e-mail.

3. Submission Deadlines

The Graduate Council's meeting schedule and deadlines for proposal submission are available on the Graduate Council's [webpage](#).

4. Divisional Academic Senate Committee Review

If the proposal is complete, it will be included on the agenda of the next appropriate Graduate Council meeting. Please note that decisions on proposals may take more than one meeting to finalize.

The Graduate Council will send a copy of the proposal to the Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) and any other relevant committees or agencies for review. Comments received from these bodies are advisory to the Graduate Council.

If the Graduate Council has questions about the proposal, it will contact the department to seek clarification and possibly submission of a revised proposal.

5. Divisional Academic Senate Approval

Following the Graduate Council's approval, the Council will forward the proposal to the Divisional Senate Chair for placement on the Representative Assembly agenda for final local approval. (See [Table 1](#) for types of proposals that only require local approval)

6. Systemwide Senate Review

At the systemwide Academic Senate level, the proposal is reviewed by CCGA. CCGA review typically takes several months and includes exchanges with the local campus proposers, evaluation by external reviewers, and sometimes a site visit by the CCGA lead reviewer. More information about the CCGA review process is included in the [CCGA Handbook](#). (See [Table 1](#) for types of proposals that require systemwide approval)

If a proposal represents a new degree type on campus (i.e., the campus is not authorized to offer per the Standing Order of the Regents; this typically applies to new Master of “X” degrees), the Assembly of the Academic Senate or Academic Council must approve the new degree type.

7. Approval from the UC Office of the President¹

CCGA submits its letter of approval to the UCOP Academic Affairs. The President or their designated representative (usually the Provost and Senior Vice President – Academic Affairs) reviews the proposal and issues the final letter of approval to the campus.

Table 1. Overview of Required Reviewers and Final Approvers (see note below)

Proposal Type	Administrative Review	San Diego Senate Review				Systemwide Review			
		GC	UGC	CPB	RA	CCGA	UCPB	Academic Assembly	UCOP
Higher Degree Programs (new Master’s and Doctoral Degrees)	X	X		X	X	X		X*	A
SSGPDPs	X	X		X	X	X	X	X*	A
Joint Doctoral Programs	X	X		X	X	X	X	X*	A
Online Master’s Degree Programs	X	X		X	X	X	X	X*	A
New Specializations for Existing Master’s and Doctoral Degrees	X	X			A				
Bachelor’s/Master’s Degree Programs	X	X	X		A				
Dual Degree Programs	X	X			X	X			A

Key

GC – Graduate Council; UGC – Undergraduate Council; CPB – Committee on Planning and Budget; RA – Representative Assembly; CCGA – Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs; UCPB – UC Committee on Planning and Budget; UCOP – UC Office of the President

X= Required Step in the Review Process (*Academic Assembly approval is only required for a new degree type not currently offered at UC San Diego, e.g. a new Master of “X” title)

A=Final Approver

Note: Table 1 provides a general overview of the required reviewers and final approvers for each proposal type. The Graduate Council or CCGA may determine that additional Senate or administrative reviewers are needed for an individual proposal based on the information provided.

¹ If 50% or more of the courses for the proposed program of study will be offered via distance or online instruction, the proposal will also require approval from UC’s accrediting body, WSCUC (WASC Senior College and University Commission). Please contact the Office of Undergraduate Education for more information.

General Guidance for Proposal Preparation (for all proposals)

Detailed information about proposal format is provided in the sections for each type of degree program being proposed. Below is additional information that applies to all types of program proposals:

1. **Degree Title and Requirements:** If the degree type already exists at UCSD (e.g. M.A., M.S., M.A.S., Ph.D.), the proposed program of study must conform to the requirements specified in the [San Diego Senate Regulation](#) for the degree. For new degrees types (e.g. Master of X), departments must define the degree requirements and submit a draft Senate Regulation for the degree.
2. **Contributions to Diversity:** The Graduate Council and CCGA require that proposals address how the program will advance UC's goals for diversity and how the program will identify, recruit, and retain underrepresented minority students and faculty. The Graduate Council encourages proposers to be specific in articulating its diversity goals and plans for assessment.
3. **Governance:** Describe the faculty oversight structure for the degree program. Faculty bylaws are required for new interdisciplinary programs.
4. **Resources and Related Programs:**
 - a. Specify the academic resources/staffing required to support the new program and outline how the department/program plans to provide these.
 - b. Comments from all department chairs with graduate programs closely related to or affected by the proposed program should be included as an appendix.
5. **Courses:**
 - a. If the proposal includes courses offered by other departments, the proposing department is required to contact those departments for a letter assessing the impact of the proposal on the unit's academic and administrative resources. The responses must be included in the appendices.
 - b. Draft course approval forms for new courses must be included as an appendix.
 - c. If any courses will be designated as distance education ("R") courses, departments must follow the San Diego Division's [UC San Diego Policy on Distance Education Courses](#).
6. **Catalog Copy:** The proposal must include proposed catalog copy for the proposed degree program. Catalog copy files for existing departments and programs are available on the San Diego Senate's website: <http://senate.ucsd.edu/catalog-copy/>.

Proposal Guidelines for New Higher Degrees (Master's and Doctoral Degrees)

DEFINITION

A program of study leading to a master's (e.g. MS, MA or Master of 'X') or doctoral degree. Program costs may be covered by state funds or program revenue. Students may receive University fellowship support or be responsible for covering the standard tuition and fee rates established by the University of California.

APPROVAL PROCESS

- *Campus:* [Administrative Review](#), Graduate Council, Committee on Planning and Budget, Representative Assembly
- *Systemwide:* CCGA, Academic Council or Academic Assembly (for new degree types), UCOP

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals must adhere to proposal specifications in [Appendix B: Format for the Graduate Degree Program Proposal](#) of the CCGA Handbook. *Proposers should address all bullets and questions in each proposal section included in Appendix B.*

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

San Diego's Graduate Council offers additional guidance and specifications below, which is intended to serve as a supplement to Appendix B.

1. **Capstone Projects:** For Master's degree programs (excluding MA or MS degrees) proposing capstone projects instead of a Master's thesis or comprehensive examination: Please refer to Appendix I in the [CCGA Handbook](#) for guidance on what elements CCGA is looking for in a proposed capstone.
2. **Participating Faculty:** Proposers are asked to provide letters of support from the proposed program's core participating faculty.
3. **Appendices:** San Diego's Graduate Council advises departments to include the following:
 - a. UCSD letters of support/commitment (required if applicable)
 - b. UC Review letters (required) - Section 1, #6 of Appendix B requires proposers to send copies of their proposal to the chairs (or program directors) of all departments (or programs) on other UC campuses offering similar degrees, using the sample cover letter provided at the end of Appendix B. All responses should be included with the proposal.
 - c. External Review letters (optional) - CCGA encourages, but does not require, proposers to solicit rigorous reviews that address the issues spelled out in the sample letters provided in Appendix E of the CCGA Handbook and respond to any concerns raised in such reviews before passing their proposals along to campus Graduate Councils. The Graduate Council finds that when departments solicit external reviews, it improves the quality of the proposal and provides campus and systemwide reviewers with an additional means to assess the quality of the proposed program. However, soliciting external reviews prior to submitting the proposal does not guarantee a faster review.

- d. Catalog copy
- e. Draft course approval forms for new courses (required if applicable)
- f. Suggested UC and External Referees (strongly recommended) - Please provide the names and contact information for four UC (outside of UCSD) and four external referees.
- g. Draft Senate Regulation for the degree (required if applicable)
- h. Draft faculty bylaws (required if applicable)
- i. Faculty Vitae (optional as a separate PDF file)

RESOURCES

- [UC Compendium: Universitywide Review Processes for Academic Programs, Academic Units, & Research Units](#)
- [CCGA Handbook](#)

Proposal Guidelines for New Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs (SSGPDPs)

DEFINITION

Self-supporting graduate professional degree programs (SSGPDPs) allow the University of California (UC or University) to: (1) serve additional students above and beyond those supported through resources provided by the State; and (2) fulfill demonstrated higher education and workforce needs. Models of self-supporting graduate professional degree programs include, but are not limited to, those that serve non-traditional populations, such as full-time employees, midcareer professionals, international students with specialized goals, and/or students whose professional education is supported by their employers. Many SSGPDPs are: (1) offered through an alternative mode of delivery, such as online or hybrid instruction; (2) alternatively-scheduled (e.g., during evenings, weekends, and/or summers); and/or (3) offered in alternative locations (e.g., off-campus).

Self-supporting means that all program costs, both direct and indirect, are covered by revenues generated by the program such as student charges or from alternative revenues that are not disallowed funds. According to the UC Policy on Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs, graduate programs ineligible for self-supporting status include the following: all academic master's degree programs leading solely or primarily to a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree, and all Ph.D. programs.

Approval Process

- *Campus:* [Administrative Review](#), Graduate Council, Committee on Planning and Budget, Representative Assembly
- *Systemwide:* CCGA, Academic Council or Academic Assembly (for new degree types), UCOP

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals must adhere to proposal specifications in [Appendix B: Format for the Graduate Degree Program Proposal](#) of the CCGA Handbook. *Proposers should address all bullets and questions in each proposal section included in Appendix B.*

The department must also ensure that the proposal addresses all of the information specified in the [UC Policy on Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs](#) and Appendices K (for all SSGPDPs) and M (for MAS degrees only) of the [CCGA Handbook](#).

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

San Diego's Graduate Council offers additional guidance and specifications below:

1. **Capstone Projects:** For Master's degree programs (excluding MA or MS degrees) proposing capstone projects instead of a Master's thesis or comprehensive examination: Please refer to Appendix I in the [CCGA Handbook](#) for guidance on what elements CCGA is looking for in a proposed capstone.

2. **Participating Faculty:** Proposers are asked to provide letters of support from the proposed program's core participating faculty.
3. **Resources and Related Programs:** Provide sufficient financial information for reviewers at the campus and systemwide levels to assess the likelihood that the SSGPDP within three years will meet all these criteria using funds from charges to the program's students primarily and, if necessary, funds from other sources allowed by SSGPDP policy.
4. **Financial Accessibility:** SSGPDPs must have a financial accessibility goal for their student population and a student financial support plan for achieving this goal. It is expected that the plan will address access for students from a wide range of income levels. Examples of possible student financial support include scholarships or grants from the program's own resources (i.e., return-to-aid from student charges), privately raised funds, participation in federal and/or private loan programs, or other external support. For the purposes of state and federal student financial aid programs, "student charges" has the same meaning as "tuition."
5. **Appendices:** San Diego's Graduate Council advises departments to include the following:
 - a. UCSD letters of support/commitment (required if applicable)
 - b. UC Review letters (required) - Section 1, #5 of Appendix B requires proposers to send copies of their proposal to the chairs (or program directors) of all departments (or programs) on other UC campuses offering similar degrees, using the sample cover letter provided at the end of Appendix B. All responses should be included with the proposal.
 - c. External Review letters (optional) - CCGA encourages, but does not require, proposers to solicit rigorous reviews that address the issues spelled out in the sample letters provided in Appendix E of the CCGA Handbook and respond to any concerns raised in such reviews before passing their proposals along to campus Graduate Councils. The Graduate Council finds that when departments solicit external reviews, it improves the quality of the proposal and provides campus and systemwide reviewers with an additional means to assess the quality of the proposed program. However, soliciting external reviews prior to submitting the proposal does not guarantee a faster review.
 - d. Catalog copy (required)
 - e. Draft course approval forms for new courses (required if applicable)
 - f. Suggested UC and External Referees (strongly recommended) - Please provide the names and contact information for four UC (outside of UCSD) and four external referees.
 - g. Draft Senate Regulation for the degree (required if applicable)
 - h. Draft faculty bylaws (required if applicable)
 - i. Faculty Vitae (optional as a separate PDF file)

Resources

- [UC Compendium: Universitywide Review Processes for Academic Programs, Academic Units, & Research Units](#)
- [CCGA Handbook](#)
- [UC Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs Policy](#)

Proposal Guidelines for Joint Doctoral Programs

DEFINITION

A Joint Doctoral Degree program is offered by two campuses (either between UC San Diego and another UC or CSU campus or between UC San Diego and another institution). Completion of the program leads to the award of a single degree issued jointly by participating institutions. Joint doctoral programs are designed to combine intellectual and physical resources in a discipline where a program is being proposed.

APPROVAL PROCESS

- *Campus:* [Administrative Review](#), Graduate Council, Committee on Planning and Budget, Representative Assembly
- *Systemwide:* CCGA, Academic Council or Academic Assembly (for new degree types), UCOP
- The proposal must also undergo the established review and approval processes at the partner institution. For information about the process to initiate the process for establishing a joint doctoral program, contact the [Graduate Division](#).

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals must adhere to proposal specifications in [Appendix B: Format for the Graduate Degree Program Proposal](#) of the CCGA Handbook. *Proposers should address all bullets and questions in each proposal section included in Appendix B.* For joint doctoral programs with CSU, the department must also ensure that the proposal addresses all of the information specified in Appendix U of the [CCGA Handbook](#).

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

San Diego's Graduate Council offers additional guidance and specifications below, which is intended to serve as a supplement to Appendix B.

1. **Program of Study:**
 - a. Specify whether requirements will be completed at UC San Diego or the other institution.
 - b. Specify the residency requirements.
 - c. Specify the doctoral committee composition requirements.
2. **Participating Faculty:** Proposers are asked to provide letters of support from the proposed program's core participating faculty.
3. **Resources and Related Programs:** Specify the academic resources/staffing required to support the new program and outline the resource commitments from each institution. The proposal should be explicit about the location of registration and payment of fees throughout the program, and the location of student support services, including assistance in securing financial support.
4. **Appendices:** San Diego's Graduate Council advises departments to include the following:
 - a. UCSD letters of support/commitment (required if applicable)
 - b. UC Review letters (required) - Section 1, #5 of Appendix B requires proposers to send copies of their proposal to the chairs (or program directors) of all departments (or programs) on other UC

campuses offering similar degrees, using the sample cover letter provided at the end of Appendix B. All responses should be included with the proposal.

- c. External Review letters (optional) - CCGA encourages, but does not require, proposers to solicit rigorous reviews that address the issues spelled out in the sample letters provided in Appendix E of the CCGA Handbook and respond to any concerns raised in such reviews before passing their proposals along to campus Graduate Councils. The Graduate Council finds that when departments solicit external reviews, it improves the quality of the proposal and provides campus and systemwide reviewers with an additional means to assess the quality of the proposed program. However, soliciting external reviews prior to submitting the proposal does not guarantee a faster review.
- d. Catalog copy (required)
- e. Draft course approval forms for new courses (required if applicable)
- f. Suggested UC and External Referees (strongly recommended) - Please provide the names and contact information for four UC (outside of UCSD) and four external referees.
- g. Draft Senate Regulation for the degree (required if applicable)
- h. Draft faculty bylaws (required)
- i. Faculty Vitae (optional as a separate PDF file)

RESOURCES

- [UC Compendium: Universitywide Review Processes for Academic Programs, Academic Units, & Research Units](#)
- [CCGA Handbook](#)

Proposal Guidelines for Online Master's Degree Programs

DEFINITION

An online Master's degree program offers 50% or more of the proposed program of study's content via distance or online instruction.

APPROVAL PROCESS

- *Campus:* [Administrative Review](#), Graduate Council, Committee on Planning and Budget, Representative Assembly
- *Systemwide:* CCGA, Academic Council or Academic Assembly (for new degree types), UCOP
- *WSCUC:* Online degree programs also require approval from UC's accrediting body, WSCUC (WASC Senior College and University Commission). Please contact the Office of Undergraduate Education for more information.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals must adhere to proposal specifications in [Appendix B: Format for the Graduate Degree Program Proposal](#) of the CCGA Handbook. *Proposers should address all bullets and questions in each proposal section included in Appendix B.*

The department must also ensure that the proposal addresses all of the information specified in the Graduate Council's [Guidelines for Proposals to Establish Online Master's Degree Programs](#). Online Master's degree programs that are proposed as self-supporting professional graduate degree programs are also advised to refer to this document's [Guidelines for SSGPDPs](#).

Additional Guidance

San Diego's Graduate Council additional guidance is provided in the [Guidelines for Proposals to Establish Online Master's Degree Programs](#).

Proposal Guidelines for New Specializations for Existing Master's and Doctoral Degrees

DEFINITION

A specialization can either be: 1. An interdisciplinary field of study, which is relevant to two or more existing doctoral degree programs; or 2. A specialized course of study offered within an existing degree program. Students in a specialization must satisfy all degree requirements specified by their home department and a curriculum related to the specialization's area of study. Specializations are recognized as part of the degree title.

APPROVAL PROCESS

- *Campus:* [Administrative Review](#), Graduate Council, Representative Assembly

PROPOSAL FORMAT

1. **Cover Memo:** Include a brief cover memo from the relevant department chair/program director(s) addressed to the Graduate Council.
2. **Executive Summary:** Provide a concise outline of the proposed specialization.
3. **Request:** Provide details on the request for the specialization and how the area of emphasis relates to participating degree programs.
 - a. Include the degree title as it will appear on the diploma and the proposed effective date.
 - b. Include sections on the aims and objectives of the specialization, program administration, and faculty participation.
4. **Rationale and Justification:** A thorough justification and academic rationale for the changes. Departments/programs should articulate why the specialization is needed and how it benefits students.
5. **Admissions:** Include the admissions process for entry into the specialization and projected enrollments.
6. **Curricular Requirements:** A detailed statement of the academic requirements to complete the specialization. The proposal should address how the proposed specialization impacts the following:
 - a. Course requirements, such as: (1) "core" courses, (2) emphasis courses (if required), and (3) electives (if appropriate). Please identify all current and new courses that will be included in the specialization. Include the specialization requirements for each participating department.
 - b. All required examinations; including field, qualifying, and/or final exams, as well as thesis and/or dissertation/capstone requirements.
 - c. Doctoral committee composition – describe how specialization faculty will be represented on doctoral committees.
 - d. Teaching requirements (if applicable).
 - e. Time to Degree
7. **Contributions to Diversity**
8. **Resources and Related Programs**

9. **Graduate Student Support (as applicable):** Include detailed plans for providing graduate student support.
10. **Supplementary Proposal Requirements**
 - a. Statements from Participating Departments/Programs
 - b. Letters of Support (if applicable)
 - c. Catalog Copy
 - d. Draft Course Approval Forms

Proposal Guidelines for Bachelor's/Master's Degree Programs²

DEFINITION

A contiguous program of study where UC San Diego undergraduate students are provided a pathway to admission to complete a Master's degree offered by the department (or occasionally in a Master's degree offered in a different department but in a related field). The Bachelor's and Master's degrees are not formally integrated degree programs and the degree requirements for each must be fulfilled without overlap. Departments are authorized to waive unit requirements for the Master's degree. Up to one half of the quarter units of credit required for the Master's degree may be waived on the basis of upper-division and graduate coursework completed with a letter grade of B- or better while an undergraduate at UC San Diego. Waived coursework is not included in calculating a student's grade point average.

APPROVAL PROCESS

- *Campus:* [Administrative Review](#), Undergraduate Council, Graduate Council, Representative Assembly

PROPOSAL FORMAT

1. **Cover Memo:** Include a brief cover memo from the relevant department chair/program director(s) addressed to the Graduate Council.
2. **Executive Summary:** Provide a concise outline of the proposed Bachelor's/Master's program.
3. **Request:** Provide details on the request for the Bachelor's/Master's program and any transition measures required to implement these.
 - a. Include the proposed effective date.
 - b. Include sections on the aims and objectives of the Bachelor's/Master's program, program administration, and faculty participation.
4. **Rationale and Justification:** A thorough justification and academic rationale for the Bachelor's/Master's must be provided. Departments/programs should articulate why the program is needed and how it benefits students.
5. **Admissions:** Include the admissions process for entry into the Bachelor's/Master's program and projected enrollments.
6. **Curricular Requirements.** A detailed statement of the academic requirements to complete the Bachelor's/Master's Program must be provided. The proposal should address how the proposed program impacts the following:
 - a. Course requirements, such as: (1) "core" courses, (2) emphasis courses (if required), and (3) electives (if appropriate).
 - b. All required examinations; including field, qualifying, and/or final exams, as well as thesis and/or dissertation/capstone requirements;

² These proposal guidelines apply to creating a Bachelor's/Master's program for an existing undergraduate major and an existing Master's degree. For proposals for a Bachelor's/Master's program that requires the creation of a new Master's degree, departments are advised to follow the proposal guidelines for a new Master's degree.

- c. Time to Degree
- 7. **Contributions to Diversity**
- 8. **Resources and Related Programs**
- 9. **Graduate Student Support (as applicable).** Include detailed plans for providing graduate student support.
- 10. **Supplementary Proposal Requirements**
 - a. Statements from Participating Departments/Programs
 - b. Letters of Support
 - c. Catalog Copy
 - d. Draft Course Approval Forms

Proposal Guidelines for Dual Degree Programs³

DEFINITION

A program of study offered collaboratively between UC San Diego and another institution that leads to the award of two separate degrees from each of the participating institutions.

APPROVAL PROCESS

- *Campus:* [Administrative Review](#), Graduate Council, Representative Assembly
- *Systemwide:* CCGA, UCOP

PROPOSAL FORMAT

- Proposals are expected to address the questions provided in Appendix W: Consideration in CCGA's Review of Dual Degree Proposals of the [CCGA Handbook](#), addressing all bullets and questions in each section.

RESOURCES

- [WSCUC Dual Degrees Policy](#)

³ These proposal guidelines apply to creating a dual degree program with an existing Master's degree. For proposals for dual degree program that requires the creation of a new Master's degree, departments are advised to follow the proposal guidelines for a new Master's degree and also address the proposal requirements for a dual degree program.