

# ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM

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**SUBJECT** Revised Procedures for Developing  
Academic Degree Programs

**NUMBER** 406  
**DATE** November 7, 2000

The Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina has the responsibility to "determine the functions, educational activities, and academic programs of the constituent institutions" [G.S. 116-11(3)]. Therefore, in response to the changing environment for higher education, the board approved the following revised procedures for academic program development at its October 13, 2000 meeting. These new procedures, effective this date, supersede previous procedures, including those described in Administrative Memorandum 106 and all editions of the *Academic Program Development Procedures* manual published prior to 2000.

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# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR PLANNING AND ESTABLISHING NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

## A. PROGRAM DEFINITIONS

### 1. Degree Programs

Academic degree programs in the 16 constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina are offered at the following levels:

*Bachelor's degrees*, usually requiring four years of study beyond high school;

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

*First Professional degrees* in law, education, dentistry, medicine, pharmacy, and veterinary medicine (J.D., Ed.D., D.D.S., M.D., Pharm.D., and D.V.M.), 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 (CIP)<sup>1</sup> to classify its programs in the UNC Academic Program Inventory (API). The CIP classifies all university degree programs into 52 major **discipline divisions**. Currently UNC constituent institutions offer programs in 30 of these discipline divisions. These are:

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| 01. Agricultural Business and Production                      | 25. Library Science                                      |
| 02. Agricultural Sciences                                     | 26. Biological Sciences/Life Sciences                    |
| 03. Conservation and Renewable Natural Resources              | 27. Mathematics  |
| 04. Architecture and Related Programs                         | 30. Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies                      |
| 05. Area, Ethnic and Cultural Studies                         | 31. Parks, Recreation, Leisure and Fitness Studies       |
| 09. Communications  | 38. Philosophy and Religion                              |
| 11. Computer and Information Sciences                         | 39. Theological Studies<br>(Religious/Sacred Music only) |
| 13. Education   | 40. Physical Sciences                                    |
| 14. Engineering   | 42. Psychology   |
| 15. Engineering-Related Technologies                          | 43. Protective Services                                  |
| 16. Foreign Languages and Literatures                         | 44. Public Administration and Services                   |
| 19. Home Economics  | 45. Social Sciences and History                          |
| 22. Law and Legal Studies                                     | 50. Visual and Performing Arts                           |
| 23. English Language and Literature/Letters                   | 51. Health Professions and Related Sciences              |
| 24. Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities |  |

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<sup>1</sup>Robert L. Morgan, E. Stephen Hunt, and Judith M. Carpenter (1990). Classification of Instructional Programs. Washington: National Center for Education Statistics.

Discipline divisions are divided further into **discipline specialties**, which for the most part are represented by four-digit CIP codes. For example, the discipline division Engineering (14) consists of such discipline specialties as agricultural engineering (14.03), architectural engineering (14.04), chemical engineering (14.07), civil engineering (14.08), etc., while the discipline division Physical Sciences (40) includes such discipline specialties as astronomy (40.02), chemistry (40.05), geological sciences (40.06), and physics (40.08).

In a few cases, discipline specialties are indicated by six-digit CIP codes rather than at the four-digit level since the descriptions of areas are so dissimilar as to constitute different discipline specialties. These situations are found in the following codes and constitute an exception to the four-digit rule of thumb:

05. Area, Ethnic and Cultural Studies

05.01 Area Studies (05.0101 African Studies; 05.0102 American Studies; 05.0103 Asian Studies; etc.)

05.02 Ethnic and Cultural Studies (05.0201 Afro-American Studies; 05.0202 American Indian Studies; 05.0207 Women's Studies; etc.)

13. Education

13.12 General Teacher Education (13.1201 Adult and Continuing Teacher Education; 13.1202 Elementary Teacher Education; 13.1203 Junior High/ Intermediate/Middle School Teacher Education; 13.1204 Pre-Elementary/Early Childhood/Kindergarten Teacher Education; etc.)

13.13 Teacher Education, Specific Academic and Vocational Programs (13.1301 Agricultural Teacher Education; 13.1302 Art Teacher Education; etc.)

26. Biological Sciences/Life Sciences

26.06 Miscellaneous Biological Specializations (26.0601 Anatomy; 26.0603 Ecology; 26.0607 Marine/Aquatic Biology; 26.0609 Nutritional Sciences; etc.)

26.07 Zoology (26.0701 Zoology; 26.0702 Entomology; 26.0704 Pathology; 26.0705 Pharmacology; 26.0706 Physiology; etc.)

40. Physical Sciences

40.07 Miscellaneous Physical Sciences (40.0701 Metallurgy; 40.0702 Oceanography; 40.0703 Earth and Planetary Sciences; 40.0799 Miscellaneous Physical Sciences, Other)

51. Health Professions and Related Sciences

51.23 Rehabilitation/Therapeutic Services (51.2301 Art Therapy; 51.2302 Dance Therapy; 51.2303 Hypnotherapy; 51.2304 Movement Therapy; etc.)

### 3. Degree Programs

Discipline specialties (represented by the four-digit CIP codes) are the categories from which UNC **degree programs** are delineated (represented by the six-digit CIP codes). Each 6-digit CIP code distinguishes a single instructional program at the degree level specified by the institution. For example, the discipline division of Visual and Performing Arts is coded at the 50 level. The 4-digit sub-categories, the discipline specialties, include Dance (50.03), Dramatic/Theater Arts and Stagecraft (50.05), and Music (50.09). Within the 4-digit grouping of Dramatic/Theater Arts and Stagecraft (50.05), there are six instructional programs: Drama/Theater Arts, General (50.0501), Technical Theater/Theater Design and Stagecraft (50.0502), Acting and Directing (50.0503), Playwriting and Screenwriting (50.0504), Drama/Theater Literature, History and Criticism (50.0505), and Dramatic/Theater Arts and Stagecraft, Other (50.0599).

#### Definitions

Within the University's program inventory, the following definitions are provided for instructional program planning:

The thirty ***discipline divisions*** in the current UNC Academic Program Inventory (API) are the broad areas of study in which all University degree programs are classified. The discipline divisions are specified in the UNC API at the two-digit CIP code level.

The ***discipline specialties*** delineate further the discipline divisions and describe more specifically the areas of study from which the degree programs are categorized. Except in the cases cited previously, the discipline specialties are represented in the UNC API at the four-digit CIP code level.

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.

Although in general a discipline specialty is represented by a four-digit CIP, the level of disaggregation in some of the CIP codes (as exemplified above with Area Studies, Education, Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Health Professions and Related Sciences) is such that chief academic officers are urged to consult with the appropriate staff person in the Division of Academic Affairs before submitting any request for a new degree program if there are any questions about its classification or categorization.

#### 4. **Certificate of Advanced Study Programs (C.A.S.)**

In addition to degree programs, some of the constituent institutions offer specific courses of study for professional licensure in education which are not associated with the conferral of a particular degree. These programs usually require one year of study beyond the master's degree and provide a higher level of licensure for public school teachers and administrators. The basic licensure requirements for public school teachers and administrators are defined by the State Board of Education.<sup>2</sup> It is the policy of the Board of Governors to use the designation "Certificate of Advanced Study" with respect to all sixth-year programs established for public school personnel and to authorize no Ed.S. (Specialist in Education) degree programs beyond those now in existence.

#### 5. **Other Certificates**

In addition to the C.A.S., some of the constituent institutions offer other "certificates" that combine specific degree-credit courses at the graduate or undergraduate level to provide professional development for practitioners.

#### 6. **Teacher Licensure Areas (T.L.A.)**

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 a Certificate of Advanced Study. These may be at the entry level or advanced level of teacher licensure. When an institution receives authorization to offer a T.L.A. from the State Board of Education, the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs 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 the Senior Vice President<sup>3</sup> of the University their intentions or requests with respect to instructional program development for the following:

1. Notification of *intent to plan* a new undergraduate, master's, or C.A.S. program

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<sup>2</sup> North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Division of Teacher Education (Raleigh, NC, September 1993). Standards for the Approval of Teacher Education Institutions and Programs in North Carolina.

<sup>3</sup>Throughout this document, the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, acting with a delegation of authority from the President, is named as the University official who will make ultimate decisions or, where appropriate, recommendations to the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs.

2. Request for authorization to *plan* a new *degree program* at the doctoral or first professional level
3. Request for authorization to *establish* a new *degree program*
4. Request for authorization to *change* the *name* or *title* of an existing *degree program*
5. **Discontinuation** of a *degree program, C.A.S. program, or other certificates.*

Table 1 summarizes the academic program development review and authorization requirements for actions 1 through 5 above.

**TABLE 1**  
**ACADEMIC PROGRAM NOTIFICATION AND AUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS**

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO PLAN OR AUTHORIZATION TO PLAN**

Authority	Undergraduate, Master's, and C.A.S. Programs	Doctoral and First Professional Programs
Senior Vice President	Receives <i>Notification of Intent to Plan</i>	Receives <i>Request for Authorization to Plan</i> and makes recommendation to the BOG Planning Committee (annually)
BOG Planning Committee	Receives semi-annual reports on programs being planned	Grants <i>Authorization to Plan</i>

**AUTHORIZATION TO ESTABLISH**

Authority	Degree Programs	Certificates of Advanced Study and Teacher Certification Area	Other Certificates	New program in same 6-digit code as currently authorized program at same level (formerly tracks)	Change Program or Degree Title
Senior Vice President	Receives <i>Request for Authorization to Establish</i> and makes recommendation to BOG Planning Committee	Receives notification from chancellor of approval by State Board of Education	Receives notification from chancellor	Grants <i>Authorization to Establish</i> if program requires no additional resources	Approves program or degree title change
Planning Committee	Recommends <i>Authorization to Establish</i> to BOG	—	—	—	—
Board of Governors	Grants <i>Authorization to Establish</i>	—	—	—	—

**AUTHORIZATION TO DISCONTINUE/NOTIFICATION OF DISCONTINUATION**

Authority	Program	Certificate of Advanced Study	Other Certificates	Teacher Certification Areas
Senior Vice President	Receives request and makes recommendation	Receives notice of discontinuation	Receives notice of discontinuation	Receives notice of discontinuation
BOG Planning Comm.	Recommends discontinuation	Notified by SVP	—	—

Board of Governors	Authorizes discontinuation	—	—	—
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## 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 the Division of Academic Affairs at the Office of the President (OP).

### 2. Planning New Undergraduate, Master's, and C.A.S. Programs

Institutions wishing to plan new degree programs at the undergraduate or master's level or Certificates of Advanced Study (C.A.S.) must send a *notification of intent to plan* to the Division of Academic Affairs (OP). Such notification may be sent at any time, but at least six months prior to the proposed date of establishment, using the form developed for this purpose (Appendix A).

To assist institutions preparing to plan new programs, Academic Affairs staff will make available a link to the CIP taxonomy, an up-to-date Academic Program Inventory for UNC institutions, and a 10-year history of enrollment of majors and degrees awarded by program and institution within the UNC system. Institutions planning a new degree program will be expected to contact other institutions awarding the proposed degree during the planning process regarding their experience with program productivity (applicants, majors, job market, placement, etc.).

Upon receipt of the notification of intent to plan, Academic Affairs will 1) acknowledge receipt of the notification; 2) provide any additional information not yet posted regarding location of similar programs; and 3) add this program-planning activity to a list that will be maintained by Academic Affairs and made accessible to all UNC institutions. All UNC institutions will be expected to consult this list periodically to remain informed about programs being planned by other UNC institutions.

Following notification of intent to plan, the institution will have one year to complete planning and submit a request to establish the proposed program. If planning is not completed within the year, the campus may, under special circumstances, request a one-year extension. If the institution fails to complete the program plan within its allotted time, it must wait three years before resubmitting notification of intent to plan that program.

The program planning activity is intended as an opportunity for an institution to make the case for need and demand and for its ability to offer a quality program. This activity, by itself, does not guarantee that program authorization will be granted.

### 3. **Planning New Doctoral and First Professional Degree Programs**

Institutions wishing to plan new degree programs at the doctoral or first professional level must seek *authorization to plan* the program, using the appropriate form (Appendix B). Campus requests must be the result of comprehensive strategic planning. The formal request to plan must indicate how the proposed program fits into the institution's comprehensive strategic plan and address issues such as need, demand, potential duplication, readiness of the institution to offer the program, and potential costs. Requests for authorization to plan may be submitted annually by a fixed date established by the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

UNC chief academic officers and graduate deans, at their periodic meetings with the Senior Vice President, will be invited to discuss issues such as need and demand, opportunities for collaboration, etc. with respect to graduate education. The Senior Vice President, after appropriate consultation with the Graduate Council, will present recommendations regarding authorization to plan doctoral and first professional programs to the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs for approval.

Authorization to plan a new degree program does not in any way constitute a commitment on the part of the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs or the Board of Governors to approve a subsequent request to establish the program. Planning authorization signifies that the committee finds merit in the general proposition, that there may be sufficient need for the program, and that the suggested program is consistent with the assigned mission of the institution. Such authorization constitutes clearance for the institution to document and further justify the need and demand for the proposed program.

Following authorization to plan, an institution will have two years to complete its planning and submit a request to establish the proposed program. If the request to establish is not completed within this period, the campus may request a one-year extension. If the institution fails to submit a proposal within its allotted time, it must wait three years before resubmitting a request to plan that program. Similarly, if the request to plan is denied, the institution may not resubmit this request for three years.

### 4. **Planning New Degree Programs—Notification of the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs and the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools**

The Board of Governors' Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs will receive semi-annual reports, prepared by Academic Affairs, on the status of undergraduate and graduate programs being planned.

The General Substantive Change Policy for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges (COC) of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requires that the Commission receive *prior notification* one year in advance if an institution is planning to introduce a degree program at a more advanced level than previously authorized (e.g., a master's level institution planning its first degree program at the doctoral level). An institution may not initiate a degree program at a more advanced level without *prior approval* from SACS. When an institution receives authorization to plan a new degree program *at a more advanced level than those previously authorized*, a copy of the Office of the President's letter of authorization is sent to SACS and the chancellor of the institution is reminded to notify SACS. SACS may request additional information. The Commission on Colleges also requires *prior notification and prior approval* if an institution is adding a degree at the same level for which the institution is already accredited and the new program will result in a "significant modification in the nature and scope of the institution." The following procedures have been adopted to facilitate compliance with these policies and procedures.<sup>4</sup>

The UNC Academic Program Inventory (API) classifies all university degree programs into 30 major discipline divisions (see page 1). 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*, a copy of the letter of authorization (if the program is at the doctoral or first professional level) is sent to SACS, and the chancellor of the institution must also notify SACS of the potential substantive change. If SACS interprets this as a significant modification, it may request additional information. The institution should inform the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs of any communications from SACS regarding the substantive change policy as it relates to the planning of new programs, especially if it is determined that a program in a new discipline division constitutes a significant modification in the nature and scope of the institution.

#### 5. **Establishing New Degree Programs**

Requests for *authorization to establish* a new degree program (Appendix C) may be submitted at any time after "notification of intent to plan" has been submitted for undergraduate and master's programs and after planning authorization has been granted for doctoral and first professional programs.

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<sup>4</sup> Refer to the most recent editions of the Criteria for Accreditation manual and the most recently adopted "General Substantive Change Policy...for the Commission on Colleges" (revised December 1999) of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Hereinafter, the manuals are cited as SACS Criteria and COC Substantive Change.

In general it is expected that funding to support new degree programs will be provided through a combination of internal reallocations, enrollment increase funds, and external grants. Where appropriate (i.e., in cases where there is convincing evidence of potential for program success if initial support is provided) and when central funds are available, start-up funds will be provided, generally for no more than three years, with the expectation that the program will ultimately be self-sustaining and the start-up funds will be returned and recycled for the use of other UNC programs. In cases where the allocation of start-up funds is appropriate but they are not immediately available, recommendation of approval of the program may be delayed until such funds are available.

Following review and (where appropriate) consideration by the Graduate Council, the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs will recommend approval of the program to the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs and (through it) to the Board of Governors. In general, reviews will be completed within three to six months. Actual time will depend upon the quality of the proposal and the extent to which the proposal may need to be revised and resubmitted.

If the new program is *at a more advanced level than those previously authorized* for the institution, a copy of the Office of the President's letter of authorization will be sent to SACS, and the chancellor of the institution will also be reminded to notify SACS and to take the necessary measures to comply with its policies. If the new program is in a new discipline division and SACS has previously determined (upon being notified of authorization to plan) that this constitutes a *significant modification in the nature and scope of the institution*, a copy of the Office of the President's letter of authorization will be sent to SACS, and the chancellor of the institution will also be reminded to notify SACS and to take the necessary measures to comply with SACS policies.

After an institution receives authorization to establish a new degree program, it must submit two progress reports to the Senior Vice President. 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. Both reports will include information on the extent to which an institution has met projected enrollments and degrees conferred and, if start-up funds were provided, will report on the readiness of the program to continue once start-up funds are discontinued (generally, at the end of the third year). These reports will be submitted as a part of the institution's biennial long-range planning submission.

Requests for *authorization to establish a new degree program that would be properly classified with the same six-digit CIP code as a currently authorized program at the same level, provided it will require no additional resources*, may be made at any time by letter from the chancellor to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. (This category of program is comparable to what was formerly called a "track." To avoid the confusion that prevailed in the past

over this designation, that term will no longer be used. However, programs with the characteristics of a track [e.g., a common “core” of courses shared with the other program in that CIP code, but with sufficient differentiation to justify separate degree status] may be authorized by the Senior Vice President.) A copy of the curriculum of the current degree program should be submitted along with the curriculum of the proposed new degree program. It should be consistent with the guidelines for the number of semester hours in the program area (Section A.3). The format for requesting authorization to establish a new degree program in the same area as a previously authorized degree program is included in Appendix D. The Senior Vice President will respond to these requests after seeking such advice as may be necessary.

6. **Establishing Certificates of Advanced Study (C.A.S.) and Other Certificates**

*Authorization to establish new Certificates of Advanced Study* is delegated to the chancellor, who should notify the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs when the program has been approved by the State Board of Education and the date of program implementation established. The chancellor should also notify the Senior Vice President when other certificates (e.g., the combination of specific degree-credit courses to provide professional development for practitioners) are established, providing the title of the certificate and the title and level of courses included in the certificate. This will enable the Office of the President to maintain a complete inventory of certificates that are offered by individual campuses.

7. **Changing the Name or Degree Title of an Existing Degree Program**

Requests to *change the name or title* of an existing degree program, accompanied by an explanation of the reason for the proposed change, may be submitted to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at any time.

8. **Discontinuing Academic Degree Programs**

Requests for *authorization to discontinue a degree program* may be made by letter from the chancellor to the Senior Vice President at any time, giving the effective date of discontinuation and explaining the reason for the request. The Senior Vice President will request the concurrence of the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs and (through it) the approval of 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. Notice of discontinuation of C.A.S. programs or other certificates may be submitted to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at any time.

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