Process for the approval of new academic degree programs at Duke University

Schools and authorized University Institutes can propose the creation of new Masters and Ph. D. degree programs by submitting a prospectus for the new degree program to the Provost office.

The attached “Substantive Change Checklist” should accompany the submission of the prospectus. The Provost’s office will then determine if the program also requires SACS approval before it can be implemented.

A. The Prospectus needs to contain the following information:

Abstract (one page - this is a SACS requirement and is needed on file)
Address the anticipated initial date of implementation; projected number of students, if applicable; description of primary target audience; projected life of the program (single cohort or ongoing); instructional delivery methods and, if the program involves the initiation of an off-campus site (and if so its physical address) and whether the program will be offered in partnership (through memoranda of understanding) with other academic or foreign institutions (academic and non-academic).

Background Information
Provide a clear description of the nature and purpose of the degree program in the context of Duke’s and School’s mission and goals and whether the proposed degree program or similar program is offered on the main campus or at other approved off-campus sites.

Rationale for the degree (assessment of need)
Present the rationale for the degree program, including an assessment of need; documentation of how faculty were involved in the review and approval of the new site or program, including information about faculty votes. (This section will be updated prior to submission to SACS to reflect university processes that follow the internal processes of the school/institute).

Program details
Provide a description of the proposed program, including the specific outcomes and learning objectives of the program, a schedule of proposed course offerings. In the case involving the initiation of a branch campus, indicate the educational program(s) to be offered. Describe any differences in admission, curriculum, or graduation requirements for students enrolled at the new site(s), or any special arrangements for grading, transcripts, or transfer policies. Describe administrative oversight to ensure the quality of the program or services to be offered.

Faculty
Provide a complete roster (using the attached SACS Faculty Roster format) of those faculty employed to teach in the program(s), including a description of those faculty members’ academic qualifications and other experiences relevant to the courses to be taught in the program in question, course load in the new program, and course work taught in other programs currently
offered. Provide a narrative with supporting evidence that the number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the program; and describe the impact of the new initiative on faculty workload.

For distance learning programs, describe processes in place to ensure that students have structured access to faculty and document compliance SACS policy “Distance and Correspondence Education” (also attached). For graduate programs, document scholarship and research capability of faculty; for doctoral programs, document faculty experience in directing student research.

Library and learning resources
Describe library and information resources—general as well as specific to the program—and staffing and services that are in place to support the initiative. If reliant upon other libraries, describe those collections and their relevance to the proposed program(s) and include a copy of formal agreements in an appendix. Relative to electronic resources, describe how students and faculty will access information, training for faculty and students in the use of online resources, and staffing and services available to students and faculty. If you are citing electronic databases accessed through consortial or statewide groups, please describe the discipline-specific suites of resources and not just the name of the consortium (such as Viva, Tex-Share, Galileo, Louis, etc.). For doctoral programs, document discipline-specific refereed journals and primary source materials.

Physical resources
Provide a description of physical facilities and equipment to support this initiative. Assess the impact that the proposed change will have on existing programs and services, including student support services.

Financial support
Provide a business plan that includes all of the following:
   a. a description of financial resources to support the new program, including a budget for the first year (a three-year budget is requested for a new branch campus)
   b. projected revenues and expenditures and cash flow
   c. the amount of resources going to institutions or organizations for contractual or support services
   d. the operational, management, and physical resources available for the new program.

Provide contingency plans in case required resources do not materialize.

Evaluation and assessment
Describe how the institution assesses overall institutional effectiveness as well as the means used to monitor and ensure the quality of the degree program(s), off-campus site(s), or other aspects of the new program. Summarize procedures for systematic evaluation of instructional results, including the process for monitoring and evaluating programs at the new site, as well as using the results of evaluation to improve institutional programs, services, and operations. For
compressed time frames describe the methodology for determining that levels of knowledge and competencies comparable to those required in traditional formats have been achieved. What are the prospects for program growth and subsequent implications for faculty, finances and physical resources.

Appendices
Appendices may include items such as copies of library and other cooperative or contractual agreements, the actual Faculty Roster document, course descriptions, and other items of documentation to support the narrative. Letters of support and when appropriate, resolutions from other faculty governance groups.

B. Review Process

Initial Process depending on type of degree.

New Ph.D. programs and non-Professional MA/MS degrees are first examined by the graduate school. Discussion by the Executive Committee of the Graduate Faculty focuses on issues such as intellectual merit, academic structure, feasibility, and sustainability of the program. Approval for ECGF and endorsement of the Dean are needed to be considered by the Provost and faculty governance at the University level.

Professional Master degrees are vetted and approved by governance structures within the relevant school(s). Approval by School faculty governance bodies and endorsement of the Dean(s) are needed to be considered by the Provost and faculty governance at the University level.

The above processes would also apply for the delivery of a currently approved degree at a new site, e.g., China.

University Process

The program documents and endorsement letter as described above are reviewed by the Provost office. Once the Provost office completes the initial review, and determined that all necessary information has been provided, then the proposal will be discussed by the Academic Programs Committee (APC). APC could endorse the proposal, recommend to the Provost the degree program not be established and why, or recommend that changes be made before the proposal is considered further.

If the request to the Provost is for approval of a new site for an existing degree, then APC will discuss the proposal to make sure that the program is appropriate for the proposed site, and GPC will consider the strategic importance of the site in terms of Duke’s overall global strategy. Site approval requires approval from both committees.
For Professional Masters programs, prior to discussion by APC, the proposal will be examined by the Masters Advisory Council (MAC). MAC charge is to assure APC that any infrastructure issues associated with the new program (e.g., career services, student counseling, etc.) are adequately addressed in the proposal.

Upon approval by APC, the Provost will recommend the program to the Academic Council. Generally ECAC will discuss the program prior to bring into the full council for a vote. The Council would then consider the proposal at its monthly meetings and vote on whether to recommend creation of the degree program. Approval of new degrees generally requires two Council meetings, with the vote taken at the second meeting.

Upon approval by the Academic Council, the degree proposal will be discussed by the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees. If the Academic Affairs Committee is supportive, the committee would recommend to the Full Board that a resolution be passed establishing the degree program.

C. Accreditation

Once the degree program is approved by APC, prospectuses for those programs that fall within the substantive change category of the Department of Education will be simultaneously submitted to SACS for approval.