Graduate Council Guidelines for Proposals to Establish Online Master's Degree Programs

The guidelines below are intended to serve as a resource for proposers preparing new online Master's degree program proposals and Senate reviewers tasked with reviewing these proposals. Proposers of new online Master's degree programs should address each of the items listed under the **Required Information** section below within the proposal requesting the new degree program.

The Graduate Council adopted these guidelines at their November 12, 2019 meeting. The guidelines were developed by the Senate Online Degrees *Ad Hoc* Group (Appendix 2 of the September 20, 2019 report), with additional requirements added by the Graduate Council.

Proposal Format
All proposals to establish new graduate degree programs at UC San Diego undergo review by the San Diego Division of the Academic Senate and the UC systemwide Academic Senate prior to a final decision from the UC Office of the President. The local Graduate Council leads the review process during Divisional review and the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) spearheads review for the systemwide Academic Senate. Both the Graduate Council and CCGA require that proposals for new graduate degree programs follow the format specified in Appendix B of the CCGA Handbook.[1] Proposals requesting the establishment of new online Master's degree programs must also follow this format.

- Within the guidelines stated in Appendix B, the Graduate Council, based on the *ad hoc* group's recommendations, requires that proposers include sufficient information to address common concerns arising from an online mode of instruction.
- Some of the questions included under the Required Information section for online degree program proposals are similar to questions included in CCGA's guidelines that apply to all degree programs. They are included here to emphasize that proposers of online Master's degree programs must address these questions in detail for reviewers to understand how the degree program is structured in an online format.
- Please note that for an online Master's degree program proposed as a self-supporting graduate professional degree program (SSGPDP),[2] CCGA also advises proposers to include sufficient information to address the questions provided in Appendix K of the CCGA Handbook.[1]

If you have questions about the review process or the proposal format, please contact Lori Hullings, Senate Associate Director, at lhullings@ucsd.edu or 858-534-0100.

Required Information
Proposers are required to address the following areas associated with offering a program in an online format.

I. Rationale
1. Within the stated aims and objectives of the program, clearly state: (1) the educational rationale for offering the proposed program in an online format; (2) the learning

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[1] https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/_files/committees/ccga/ccga-handbook.pdf
[2] https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/_files/SSDPDP%20Policy_7.12.2016.pdf

outcomes for the online degree program; (3) the target audience for the online degree program, including how the online format will benefit the target audience; (4) the core design characteristics of the program (e.g., the relationship between program size and program cost).
2. If the proposed online program augments or replaces an existing brick and mortar program, explain how the change to an online format will benefit the educational mission of UC San Diego.
3. Please explain how future revenues from the online Master's Degree program will be used to benefit the educational mission of UC San Diego.

II. Faculty Incentives and Compensation
1. Provide specific details about faculty incentive packages for program and course development.
    a. Explain how compensation for course creators aligns with the "Guidelines for Revenue Sharing Payments Related to Executed Online Course Development Agreements" (prepared by the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor). Link: https://digitallearning.ucsd.edu/_files/Online-Course-Development-Guidelines---August-2019.pdf
    b. Describe how faculty incentives will favor quality course design.
2. Provide specific details about how faculty will be compensated for program oversight and course instruction.
    a. Provide the plans for who will be teaching the courses for the program.
    b. If an SSGPDP, specify whether courses will be assigned as part of the instructors' assigned regular teaching load or overload. Please refer to the UCSD Guidelines for Teaching in Self-Supporting Programs: https://aps.ucsd.edu/_files/compensation/overloadguidelines.pdf and illustrate how the plan for teaching assignments, and revenue use, will be in compliance with the guidelines.
3. Explain how faculty compensation for teaching in the degree program reflects and supports the needs of the academic unit and does not diminish the academic unit's responsibilities to its full complement of state-supported and on-campus programs.
4. Explain how revenue will be returned to the department (and/or division), including to support new or existing faculty FTEs, in accordance with the UC San Diego guidelines: http://academicaffairs.ucsd.edu/sso/SAPD/Financial/. (Note: This link to the guidelines is subject to change; this Graduate Council document will be updated with the correct link on the Senate website if the link changes)

III. Quality Course Design
1. Identify the program's requirements for campus-level resources to support instructional and learning needs and provide evidence that the identified support will be provided. The explicit budget costs of these non-faculty instructional personnel should be shown.
2. Explain what learning management systems and digital technologies will be utilized and how students and instructors will engage with them. Describe what institutional resources are required to support these plans and provide documentation of the institution's commitment to provide support. Identify what divisions and personnel will provide this support.

3. Provide a rationale for the instructional design of the proposed program. All proposals should describe the level of engagement and consultation between the program (including individual faculty) and Digital Learning in the Teaching + Learning Commons.
4. Explain how scalable forms of feedback and guidance (e.g., TAs, peer review, automation, adaptive learning, etc.) will provide quality learning and assessment experiences for the target student population.
5. Identify all student support services required for the online degree program, and explain how these will be provided and resourced.

IV. Faculty and Teaching Assistant Involvement
1. Provide the names and roles of the faculty involved with each of the following: program design, course development, and course instruction. Describe their qualifications for developing and/or teaching in an online degree program.
2. Describe what approaches will be taken to support faculty-student interaction, student-teaching assistant (TA) interaction, student-student interaction, and instructor-TA interactions.
3. Describe the proposing academic unit's expectations of faculty and other teaching staff time commitments evaluated in the context of the academic unit's needs and resources (especially in consideration of existing on-campus programs).
4. Describe the proposing academic unit's processes for recruiting, training, and supporting TAs hired to support online courses.

V. Diversity
1. State the program's diversity goals in light of the program rationale (see 1. Rationale). Describe how these goals were determined and the resources used or offices consulted to develop the program's diversity goals. Also provide a plan for assessment of the success of the stated diversity goals. Specifically address what diversity means in an online context and how the proposed online format relates to the proposing academic unit's overall diversity goals, including its brick and mortar programs.
2. Describe specific features of the program's design, activities, and staffing structure aimed at both recruiting diverse learners and monitoring their success.
3. Describe how under-represented students will be supported, and whether fellowships aimed at promoting diversity will be deployed.

VI. Graduate Admissions
1. State how graduate admissions will be conducted and staffed in light of possible new student bodies or quantities of applications.
2. Explain what metrics the program will employ to evaluate student applications and strategies for reducing bias in application evaluation.

VII. Institutional Support: Mitigating Risks to Learners and UC San Diego
1. Describe how intellectual and financial risks to online learners will be mitigated.
2. Clearly list the institutional resources required to support the online program and provide documentation confirming commitments for institutional support. Specify how much support is required and the responsible academic or administrative unit(s) for providing the support.
3. Describe the resources required for supporting the non-academic needs of online learners, including support for withdrawing from classes, academic exceptions, and

supporting online learners with disabilities. Include documentation confirming an institutional commitment to support these services.

4. Explain whether and how the academic unit will differentiate the online program from on-campus programs, e.g. adopting "online" in the degree name and describing programs as "online" on University transcripts.

VIII. Program Assessment

1. Outline the evaluation plan for the program. The recommended evaluation plan for new online degree programs is an annual review during the first five years following establishment. These reviews should include: (1) completion rates for individual classes; (2) completion rates for the degree program; (3) average time to degree; (4) demographic information; (5) each statistic in 1-4 broken down by demographic category; (6) course, TA, and professor response surveys, including student comments and peer instruction reviews; (7) an evaluation from Digital Learning in the Teaching + Learning Commons; and (8) financial data (if an SSGPDP).

2. Explain how online classes, instructors, and TAs will be evaluated for both content and format.

3. Describe criteria, as concretely as possible, under which an academic unit would discontinue the online program – e.g. enrollment criteria, time to degree, class completion rate, degree completion rate, diversity, faculty involvement, etc.