

Overview of Graduate School Council Role in Reviewing New Graduate Certificate and Graduate Degree Program Proposals

The Graduate Council plays an important role in the University's process for developing and implementing new graduate certificate and degree programs. Below is a brief description of the Council's role for each kind of program:

New Graduate Certificate Programs

A graduate certificate program is a linked series of credit bearing graduate courses that constitutes a coherent body of study. It is designed to enhance the education of matriculated graduate students and professional students or to provide continuing education to graduate non-matriculated (GNM) students. Graduate certificate programs require a minimum of 15 quarter-credits, the successful completion of which yields notation on the student's transcript.

The proposal for a new graduate certificate will go through a development and review process, facilitated by staff in the Graduate School Office of Academic Affairs and Planning as outlined in the guidelines found at: <https://grad.uw.edu/for-faculty-and-staff/creatingmodifying-programs/guidelines-for-new-graduate-certificate-program-proposals/>. The two-step process guides the proposing unit in developing a proposal that will address issues such as demand/need for the program, purpose of the program, curriculum and course evaluation/student assessment, governance and structure, admissions and graduation standards, and budget.

The first step in development of a new graduate certificate program is development of the Planning Notice of Intent (PNOI). The PNOI provides a brief overview of the proposed program and is circulated for a 14-day comment period to tri-campus stakeholders the proposing academic unit identifies. After the comment period has occurred and no issues of significance are raised, the unit is directed to develop the full proposal.

The academic unit submits the draft proposal to the Office of Academic Affairs and Planning for review. Once the proposal is revised and all supporting documentation is determined, it will be scheduled for consideration by the Graduate School Council.

The process for the development and review of new graduate certificate proposals differ at the three UW campuses and reflects faculty governance and oversight of academic programs of each campus.

The Council's Role:

1. The Council's role as a multi-disciplinary body of duly elected faculty is to either:
 - a. Provide the Dean of the Graduate School with a formal recommendation to advance the proposal to the Board of Regents for formal approval; or
 - b. To provide the Graduate School with concrete feedback it can communicate back to the proposing unit that outlines specific issues that must be addressed in the proposal before the Council can recommend advancement to the Board of Regents.

New Graduate Degree Programs

The Graduate School has a defined process for the development and review of new graduate degree programs. Following is the link to the guidelines for the two-step process of developing new graduate degrees: <https://grad.uw.edu/for-faculty-and-staff/creatingmodifying-programs/guidelines-for-new-degree-programs/>. The link also includes flow charts for the review process at UW Seattle, UW Tacoma, and UW Bothell campuses.

What's important to keep in mind is that proposals that come before the Council for consideration will have already undergone an extensive review process that includes review by staff in the Office of Academic Affairs and Planning in the Graduate School, a 14-day tri-campus comment period by stakeholders, and peer review by external experts in the particular field.

The Council's Role:

2. The Council's role as a multi-disciplinary body of duly elected faculty is to either:
 - a. Provide the Dean of the Graduate School with a formal recommendation to advance the proposal to the Board of Regents for formal approval; or
 - b. To provide the Graduate School with concrete feedback it can communicate back to the proposing unit that outlines specific issues that must be addressed in the proposal before the Council can recommend advancement to the Board of Regents.

[Revised – June 2016]