

# APPENDIX Y: STEPS IN THE PROCESS OF APPROVING NEW ACADEMIC DEGREES AND CHANGING THE NAME OF A UNIT

*Approved by Provost and ECAC September 20, 2000  
Amended October 22, 2015*

## **New Academic Degrees**

Final approval of all new academic degrees must come from the Board of Trustees. In the normal course, consideration of degree proposals takes between several months to a semester. In situations where the merits are absolutely clear and a reason to expedite is present, the approval process after the proposal emerges from the school or institute may be completed in somewhat less than two months, but such a tight schedule is not optimal to full faculty consideration. It is therefore best if the initiators of new degree proposals first determine the date of the Board of Trustees meeting at which they would want the proposal considered and work backwards with the appropriate faculty review committees to develop a calendar that is feasible for all involved.

While there is no fixed “recipe” for a degree proposal, a typical proposal would normally include:

- Introduction of Proposed Degree
- Rationale for the Degree/Program
- Relationship to Existing Programs (including whether proposal marks a potential “substantive change” for Duke<sup>1</sup>)
  - At Duke (Graduate, Undergraduate, Professional)
  - At Other Institutions
- [Substantive Change Checklist](#)
- Statement of Resources Needed
- Review of Resources (personnel, finances, library materials) Available
- Statement of Additional Resources Required
- Potential or Actual External Funding
- Five-Year Student, Faculty and Resource Projection
- Students
- General Characteristics of Applicant Pool
- Opportunity Available to Graduates
- Degree Requirements (hours, courses, prerequisites, examinations, papers, internships, experience)
- Descriptions of New Courses to be Offered and Identification of Teaching/Supervisory Faculty (with vitae)
- Where relevant, Administrative Structure/Oversight of the Degree Program

The normal process for initiation and consideration of new degree proposals should follow the steps listed below. It is essential that the Provost be kept fully apprised of all considerations going on at the school levels concerning new academic degrees:

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<sup>1</sup> “Substantive change” is a technical term defined by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) as “a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.” There are 15 different kinds of substantive change as outlined in the relevant policy: <http://www.sacscoc.org/SubstantiveChange.asp>. Questions about this policy should be addressed early on with the Executive Vice Provost at 919-684-2631.

Initiation of a new degree/program proposal normally begins within an existing academic unit (i.e., departments, divisions, other degree-granting subunits, or schools) and should first be vetted by the entire faculty or the designated governing bodies of that unit's faculty, as appropriate, and by faculty of other relevant units in the case of interdisciplinary degrees.

The unit forwards the complete proposal and a letter of support from the chair to the relevant dean or director. If the Provost has not yet been informed about the proposed program, the dean or director should do so at this point.

The dean or director presents the proposal to the school's or institute's governing body for its approval.

If the degree is an undergraduate or professional degree, the dean or director then forwards the proposal to the Provost. If it is a graduate degree, the proposal must first be submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School for consideration by the Executive Committee of the Graduate Faculty. It would then be forwarded to the Provost.

Guidelines for graduate and professional degrees and certificates can be found at <https://provost.duke.edu/sites/all/files/New%20Proposals%20for%20Graduate%20and%20Professional%20Programs.pdf>. Guidelines for undergraduate degrees can be found at <http://admin.trinity.duke.edu/curriculum/proposals>.

The Provost, after such consultation and advisement as he or she considers appropriate, forwards the proposal to the Executive Committee of the Academic Council. In this consultation, the Provost may refer the proposal to the Academic Priorities Committee for its consideration and recommendation.

ECAC reviews the proposal and schedules a presentation to the Academic Council. The Council generally receives the proposal at one meeting and votes on the proposal at a subsequent meeting. If the degree is approved, the Academic Council then forwards the resolution to the Provost and the University Secretary for presentation to the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees votes approval or disapproval. (Trustees meet four times a year, in late September or early October, late November or early December, February and May.)

Examples of degree proposals and meeting dates for ECAC and Academic Council, as well as other information, are available at the Academic Council Office, phone (919) 684-6447, or the Provost's Office, phone (919) 684-2631.

### **Changing the name of a unit**

The normal process for initiation and consideration of proposals to change the name of a unit should follow the steps listed below. It is essential that the Provost and Executive Vice Provost be kept fully apprised of all considerations by the proposing unit.

Initiation of a proposal to change the name of a unit typically begins within an existing academic unit (i.e., departments, divisions, other degree-granting subunits, or schools) and should first be vetted by the entire faculty or the designated governing bodies of that unit's faculty, as appropriate, and by faculty of other relevant units in the case of interdisciplinary units.

The unit should forward the complete proposal and a letter of support from the chair to the relevant dean or director. If the Provost and Executive Vice Provost have not yet been informed about the proposed program, the dean or director should do so at this point.

The dean or director should then present the proposal to the school's or institute's governing body for its approval.

The dean or director should then forward the proposal to the Provost and Executive Vice Provost.

The Provost, after such consultation and advisement as he or she considers appropriate, will forward the proposal to the Academic Programs Committee. If their recommendation is positive, the Provost will forward the proposal to the Executive Committee of the Academic Council (ECAC) for its consideration and recommendation.

ECAC will review the proposal and schedule a presentation to the Academic Council for review and vote. If the proposal is approved, the Academic Council will forward the resolution to the Provost, Executive Vice Provost, and the University Secretary for presentation to the Board of Trustees.

For units with no faculty governance body, the Dean of the College/School or Director of the Institute/Center should submit the proposal to the Provost and Executive Vice Provost.