

Formalized Process for Consideration of New Graduate Degree Proposals by the New Mexico Council of Graduate Deans

This document outlines a process and calendar for consideration of new graduate degree proposals by the New Mexico Council of Graduate Deans (NMCGD).

A. Prior to Consideration

Each of the representatives of the NMCGD is expected to provide to the Council with information as early as possible about programs preparing proposals at their institutions. Normally this information will be communicated at meetings of the NMCGD, but should a proposed program be approved by a graduate council without this information being disseminated, an announcement of the program should be made immediately to the chair of the NMCGD and to the Educational Programs staff person at the NM Higher Education Department (HED; see 5 NMAC 5.5.2.10 B).

Rationale – early notice will facilitate efficient processing of proposals hastening final approval.

B. Timing of Submission to the Commission and Graduate Council

“A proposal should be submitted to the commission and the council of graduate deans at least nine months prior to the anticipated date of implementation of the program, in order to allow sufficient time for review by the council of graduate deans, the academic council, the commission and the state board of finance prior to implementation (5 NMAC 5.5.2.10 B).” Proposals for new graduate programs must be submitted to the NMCGD (and HED staff) no later than November 1.

Rationale – Approval processes following upon institutional approval includes in order: the NMCGD, Academic Council, HED staff, HED Educational Programs Committee, HED, and the Board of Finance. Few if any of these entities meet more frequently than monthly and some on a longer period.

C. Materials for Submission to the NMCGD

Before submission to the NMCGD, the proposing school must have signature approval from all entities required in their internal approval process. When approvals are complete, the original approval form must be submitted to the NMCGD along with the complete proposal (body, and all supporting documents). While the detailed financial documentation intended for HED staff will not be reviewed in detail by the NMCGD, absence of financial information may delay approval of the proposal if the economic impact of the program is in doubt. It is highly recommended that the chair of the NMCGD review materials prior to final distribution to avoid confusion regarding completeness.

Rationale – These are the documents used to address the specified areas of concern articulated in 5 NMAC 5.2. Without these items, a judgment regarding conformance cannot be made by the NMCGD.

D. Nature of the Submitted Materials

The preferred method is for digital submission via files in PDF format (Adobe Acrobat or comparable) that include all of the materials referred to in “C” above. Digital submissions should be sent to the chair of the NMCGD who will arrange to have the proposal posted for download by members. Members may request that a file be sent as an email attachment.

An alternative method for distribution is for the proposing institution to make paper copies of the required materials and to distribute these to each of the Council members and to HED staff.

Rationale – Each of the graduate degree granting institutions are to play a role in assessing duplication and integration of resources, determination of need and academic rigor, and cost effectiveness of proposed programs. Ready access to the proposal and supporting materials provides quick response and hastened approval.

E. Scheduling of NMCGD Meeting to Consider Proposals

As soon as possible after the chair of the NMCGD has determined that the submitted materials meet the requirements of the Council, the chair will begin the process of scheduling a meeting to consider the proposal. To provide sufficient time for member universities to review and provide feedback to their Council representatives, the meeting will normally be scheduled for a time 30 days after the required materials become available for review. This interval assumes that universities are not on semester break so that faculty and staff are in residence to provide reviews.

Rationale – Conflicting goals of the NMCGD is to provide a thorough and defensible review representing the widest possible variety of academic perspectives, while impeding the progress of the proposal as little as possible. Given the mechanics of distribution, dissemination and collection of information combined with competing responsibilities of faculty who provide the majority of the review, 30 days is judged to be a nominal period to accomplish the goal.

F. Quorum

A minimum of 5 of the six Council members must be present, available remotely or represented by written proxy to act on a proposal for a new graduate program. A Council member may designate a representative for their university if they are unable to attend.

Rationale – the goal of this quorum level is to establish a high expectation for participation in this process by all universities, while recognizing that a meeting should

not be cancelled causing a delay in the approval process because the schedule for individual Council members may not permit participation in every instance.

G. Conduct of the Approval Meeting

Departmental representatives from the proposing institution, including members of the team preparing the proposal, are to make a **brief** presentation of their proposal to Council members, after which they will be asked to respond to questions posed by the Council. Meetings of the NMCGD are subject to the open meetings act and may be attended by the public, however, it is not anticipated that individuals other than Council members and departmental representatives will actively participate in the meeting. Supporting statements from other individuals and organizations are to be in written form. Supporting and critical reviews from other New Mexico institutions are to be communicated by the Council member from that university.

Rationale – The goal of this section is to focus the deliberative process on the proposal, the proposing department and the Council by adopting a philosophy that requires that individual Council members serve as spokespersons for their constituencies – rather than having individuals providing input at a meeting.

H. Outcomes of Deliberations

Approval: A majority of Council members must vote in person, remotely or by proxy for approval of proposed graduate programs.

Qualified Approval: A majority of the Council may find a proposed program acceptable, but withhold final approval pending clarification of issues raised in the approval meeting. At the time that Qualified Approval is given, the Council shall outline a schedule for receiving clarification and indicate the method by which final approval shall be made (at a meeting of the NMCGD or by correspondence).

Rationale – Experience has shown that few proposals arrive for consideration by the NMCGD without flaws sufficient to make them unacceptable as presented. This section provides for inclusion of missing materials or clarification of issues without need for a rehearing at a subsequent meeting.

I. Report of the NMCGD

The Chair of the NMCGD is responsible for providing written notification in a timely manner to the Academic Council and to HED of the findings and recommendations of the NMCGD after their meeting to consider a new graduate program.