



Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Program (SSGPDP) Resource Guide

Purpose

Graduate Division created this resource guide to help faculty and staff understand what should be considered and is needed when developing a new self-supporting program, from the proposal stage to the establishment of the program. This guide was created in consultation with administrators with extensive experience administering self-supporting programs. Please note that some of the guidance in this document may not apply to your specific program's needs and self-supporting programs are administered very differently across the campus (there is no one-size-fits-all model).

Important Campus and UCOP Policies and Proposal Guide

[UC Policy](#)

[UCI Guidelines](#)

[Quick Guide for Creating a Graduate Degree Proposal](#)

Important Contacts

Academic Planning: Paul Kang (p.kang@uci.edu), Associate Vice Provost for Institutional Planning

Academic Senate: Thao Nguyen (thao.nguyen@uci.edu), Graduate Council Analyst; Michelle Chen (m.chen@uci.edu), Council on Planning and Budget Analyst

Budget Office: Katherine Warnke-Carpenter (kcarpent@uci.edu), Assistant Director of Academic Resource Planning

Division of Continuing Education: Tim Keef (tkeef@uci.edu), Chief Marketing Officer

Financial Services: Susan Rose (serose@uci.edu), Director of Financial Services

Graduate Division: Celina Mojica (cmojica@uci.edu), Director of Academic Initiatives

Registrar: Aliya Thomas (aliya.thomas@uci.edu), University Editor



SSGPDP Proposals

Preliminary Concept Form

To help with the proposal planning process, Graduate Division created a preliminary concept form for proposers to fill out. Proposers should include information on the length of the program (one year, five quarters, etc.), program format (fully in-person, hybrid, or fully online), competitor programs, and who will be involved in the proposal process. The preliminary concept form will help the Graduate Dean determine if a proposal should move forward with market research. Proposers should meet with Celina Mojica (cmojica@uci.edu), Director of Academic Initiatives, to discuss the program concept and the graduate program proposal process and any other questions proposers might have. The Graduate Dean will meet with proposers as needed.

Market Research

As part of the proposal development process, the campus requires preliminary market research to determine the potential viability of and demand for a program before a school invests significant resources in the full development of a proposal. Once the Graduate Dean approves the completed market research form, Graduate Division will schedule a meeting with the Chief Marketing Officer in the [Division of Continuing Education](#) to begin the market research process. Please note that the market research report should be no more than two years old at the time of the full proposal is submitted to Graduate Council. If the market research report is more than two years old, proposers should consult with Graduate Council to determine if a new market research report will be needed before the full proposal is submitted.

Things to Consider for the Planning and Proposal Process

(Please note, that not all the items listed below will pertain to your proposal)

- **Cross/Concurrent Enrollment in State-Supported Courses**
 - Proposers should consider cross or concurrent enrollments for the following reasons:
 - As a temporary stopgap to give the program time to develop courses as it is being established.
 - To allow students more options for electives if it is not financially feasible to develop similar courses for the program.
 - The proposal budget should include costs for student participation in state-supported courses. Proposers will have to work with their schools and the departments responsible for the courses to determine the cost per student. If cost per student is not a feasible model, units should work to determine an appropriate cost calculation.
 - Proposers should include an MOU in the proposal that outlines the agreement between the program and department(s) responsible for the course(s). The MOU should address the cost per



student or other appropriate cost formula, how departments will be reimbursed, accounting of expenses, and the process and timeline for terminating the agreement.

- Cross or concurrent enrollments should not negatively impact resources for students in state-supported programs. Proposers should do their due diligence to ensure that the course can support the additional students.
- Cross or concurrent enrollments may work best for smaller programs.
- If programs include cross or concurrent enrollments in the proposal, please be aware that this will be heavily scrutinized by Graduate Council and Council on Planning and Budget.
- This should not be used as a general approach or long-term strategy for addressing course offerings. Also, proposers should keep in mind that tracking expenses may become administratively burdensome.

- Proposing a Part-Time Program or Track

- Proposers should work with the department to determine the appropriate part-time structure.
- Proposers should also create one part-time track (for example either a six-quarter or eight-quarter program but not both options).
 - The Registrar also recommends that part-time programs not extend past eight quarters.
- Proposers should consult with the Registrar to ensure the proposal adheres to campus policies for part-time programs.
- Proposers should include the part-time track in the proposal for a more straightforward implementation. Graduate Division recommends this even if the program might not implement the part-time track right away.
- Part-time tracks allow the program to accommodate students with disabilities who might request accommodations to attend a program part-time. If a part-time track does not exist for a program, students will be required to pay the full program fee regardless of the number of units they enroll in.
- When and if the program proposal is approved, program leadership should meet with the Assistant Registrar in the Registrar, Academic Resource and Student Fee Director in the Budget Office and Director of Financial Services to implement the part-time fee.
- Part-time fees will need to be approved by UCOP before the program can implement a part-time track.
- Please note that students who start in the part-time track will not be able to switch to the full-time track.

- Online or Hybrid Programs

- Programs should budget for the creation of online courses. The Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation provides services for [online course development](#).



- Programs may want to consider hiring an instructional designer who will work with faculty to translate course content into a digital format.
 - They will consider the user experience when creating the digital content to optimize the student experience.
- If creating an online version of an existing program, proposers may be able to leverage existing course content to create digital content.
- Summer Session Enrollment
 - If programs are considering summer enrollment, programs should be consult with Summer Session and the Registrar regarding logistics.
 - Summer Session will create the courses and enroll students.
 - The program will work directly with Summer Session to enroll students in summer courses.
 - The Registrar will assess students in the summer.
 - Summer Session will hire instructors but can use a program recharge account number to pay instructors.
 - Summer session courses can include courses for an internship or independent study.
- Capstone Completion Fee
 - Proposers should include a capstone fee option for students needing more time to complete a capstone project but DO NOT need complete additional courses or other program requirements. Proposers should consult with the Budget Office to make sure the fee is reasonable given the campus resources the student will use.
 - This prevents a student from paying the entire quarterly program fee for an additional quarter to complete the project. Please note that students will only be allowed to pay the optional capstone fee once they have paid the total program fee.
 - If the proposal includes a capstone fee option, programs should specify under what circumstances students will be allowed this option and the activities that will be allowed.
 - Proposers should also create policies and procedures after the program is established to help determine when it is appropriate to offer students a capstone fee option to complete the capstone project. This should only be used in exceptional circumstances.
 - Students needing to complete additional courses or other requirements must pay the full program fee.
 - Programs may choose to provide a fellowship to reduce the cost for the student.
- Program Reporting
 - The proposal should outline reporting structure.
 - Proposers should determine if the program will report to an associate dean or department chair



- Proposers should determine if program staff report the faculty, faculty program director, department chair, or associate dean, etc.
- Faculty Resources to Support the Program
 - Proposers should consider if current faculty resources are adequate to support teaching, course, and program development, and oversee the program.
 - Proposers should justify whether current faculty resources are adequate to support the program or if more faculty are needed.
 - If additional faculty FTE is needed, the proposal should include a rationale for the additional faculty FTE and the budget should include this expense.
 - Proposers should also consider instructional needs and if lecturers will be hired to teach some courses.
- Faculty Compensation for Teaching Courses and Program Support
 - Faculty may teach courses onload or offload. Proposers should use existing school or department policies to determine the normal workload for faculty. Proposers should also work with their school to determine the appropriate compensation for faculty teaching courses.
 - It is essential to address in the program proposal that faculty teaching courses for SSGPDPs will not negatively impact teaching resources for state-supported programs.
 - There is no policy on the percentage of courses that need to be taught by ladder-rank faculty. Still, the Academic Senate expects ladder-rank faculty to be involved in developing and teaching courses.
 - Faculty may also be needed to help develop courses or support the development of the program. Compensation for this work should also be included in the budget.
- Program Staff
 - Programs should budget for a staff director and/or coordinator(s) to help manage the program's day-to-day operations.
 - Example staff models:
 - Program admissions and program services are split and handled by different staff (Paul Merage School of Business model). This might work best for schools with many or large self-supporting programs.
 - One staff person manages most aspects of the program (model used by Samueli School of Engineering and Donald Bren School of Information and Computer Science). This model might work best for smaller programs or schools where there are not many self-supporting programs.
 - Proposers should consult with school leadership on an appropriate model to adopt.
 - If more than one staff member is needed to run the program, proposers may want to consider adding staff as the projected revenues for the program increase.



- Graduate Division also recommends a dedicated career counselor or career services unit for larger programs or groups of similar programs.
 - Programs can also consider adding a career seminar to the program if adding a career counselor is not practical.
- If developing online courses, proposers may want to consider including an instructional designer in the budget.
- The proposal should outline who the program staff report to (e.g., the program director, assistant dean, associate dean, graduate student affairs director, etc.).
- Faculty Program Director
 - There are a few models to compensate faculty for leading a program. Proposers can choose to include a stipend, summer salary, and/or course release. Proposers should consult with their school or department leadership determine the appropriate compensation.
 - The program bylaws should outline how the program director is appointed and the appointment duration.
- Interdisciplinary Programs
 - Program proposals that involve more than one school need to determine the reporting school.
 - Programs must be housed in an academic unit.
 - Programs may NOT be housed in an organized research unit.
 - Graduate Division recommends proposers include an MOU in the proposal. The MOU should include how the participating schools will manage administrative and academic aspects of the program, sharing resources and revenues, determination of enrollment credit, course approvals, degree program modifications, and the process for schools to terminate the agreement.
- Marketing Plan
 - Proposals should include a significant budget for advertising/marketing the program to prospective applicants.
 - Programs should also describe how the program will outreach to prospective students (attending academic conferences, attending graduate school fairs, outreach to professional societies/organizations, holding on-campus/virtual information sessions, etc.).
- Special Topics Courses
 - Proposer may want to consider adding a special topics course to adapt curriculum as needed to accommodate market demand and address emerging topics in the field.
 - This might eliminate the need to create new courses and submit a program modification as new topics come about.
 - If the topics warrant developing a new course, programs can submit a program modification.



Budget Template and Best Practices for SSGPDP

Proposers should consult with Katherine Warnke-Carpenter (kcarpent@uci.edu), Assistant Director of Academic Resource Planning, in the Budget Office. The Budget Office will provide programs with the current budget template and best practices. Graduate Division recommends you work with the Budget Office to answer questions about the template or budget for the proposal. Proposers should reach out to the Budget Office early in the proposal process so the office can provide guidance on the program budget and costs. The Budget Office also has a [resource page](#) for proposers.

As soon as proposers are in the active phase of writing the program proposal, they should be working with their dean's office on the budget details, including determining faculty compensation for teaching courses, amount of the startup loan, overhead cost rate, etc. Please note that proposers will need to create a Year 0 budget. Proposers and the dean's office should consult with the Budget Office as needed. It is also recommended that proposers reach out to the Council on Planning and Budget to better understand the Academic Senate's review of the proposal budget.

Keep in mind that each year self-supporting programs will have to submit a fee proposal to UCOP. The proposal will include a cost analysis, proposed program cost for the upcoming academic year (with a justification for the if the proposed fee will decrease or increase), and other information about the program. The Budget Office will provide the forms, deadlines, and collect and submit the information needed to UCOP. Please reach out to Katherine Warnke-Carpenter if you have questions.

Programs that Expect to Enroll International Students

Proposers developing an in-person program should consult with the International Center to ensure it adheres to visa, part-time, and [optional practical training \(OPT\)](#) and [curricular practical training \(CPT\)](#) policies, if applicable.

The [International Center's](#) part-time enrollment policies for visa purposes are different from [campus policies](#) regarding part-time enrollment. If a full-time program has optional part-time quarters, international students may be required to enroll full-time to maintain their visa status. Proposers should review the International Center's policies and consult with the center as needed during the proposal process.

[OPT](#) is used after graduation and only applies to programs with a STEM designation.



Newly Established Programs

Work with Registrar to Create a Major Code

The University Editor will request a major code from UCOP once it receives presidential approval. If a program has one or more concentrations, each concentration will have a different major code. At this time, STEM designation must be determined.

Meet with Dean's Office

Graduate Division recommends that programs meet with their dean and senior administrators to determine space and resources for the program, approve hiring staff to support the program, and review the program's budget and finances.

WASC Approval

Programs need to work with the [Office of Institutional Research, Assessment and Planning](#) to obtain WSCUC approval before the program can open admission to the program.

Create a Program Website

Programs should work with their schools to create a dedicated website for the program. If a simple website suffices, programs can use [UCI Sites](#) to create a program website. If programs do not use UCI Sites, they will need to pay OIT for domain and/or hosting the website.

We recommend a program's website include the following:

- Highlights about the program to attract potential applicants
- Unique program resources
- Application deadlines
- Program costs
- Program requirements
- A list of participating faculty
- List of program leadership
- Contact information

Marketing Program to Prospective Students

Programs should be marketing their program to prospective students at graduate recruitment fairs, hosting information sessions, and or through related professional societies. Programs should also set aside funding for online advertisements. The Graduate Division can provide limited support in these areas or consult with programs on marketing strategies. Please reach out to Derrick Fazendin, Communications Director, for more information.



Add the Program to the Graduate Application in Slate

Once the program has a major code, the Admissions team in Graduate Division will work on adding the program to the graduate application. Please let the admissions team know if the program requires specific questions or requirements to be added to the general application. Programs should also let the admissions team know the application deadline.

If a program major code is generated late in the current admissions cycle, programs should consider if they have adequate time to recruit a large enough applicant pool or wait until the next admissions cycle to open admissions. Programs that receive presidential approval in December will have to wait until the following admissions cycle to open admission to the program.

Exit Survey and Alumni Tracking

The Graduate Division requires students submitting their final degree paperwork to complete an exit survey. Although our survey asks students many questions about their experience in their graduate program, the questions are generic. The Graduate Division does not regularly track alumni and relies on schools to provide updated job placement for alumni. We recommend that programs track alumni job placement and send follow-up surveys. Alumni survey data (career outcomes, salary, how quickly graduate secured a job, program satisfaction, etc.) should be used to recruit future applicants and make improvements to the program.

The exit survey and alumni tracking will also help programs respond to the Academic Senate's three-year review of SSGPDP programs, which you can read more about below and [here](#).

Programs with Part-Time Tracks, Summer Courses or Reduced Fees for Extra Program Quarters

Program leaderships should meet with the [Budget Office](#), [Registrar](#), [Financial Services](#), and/or [Summer Session](#) to implement part-time and summer fees. Programs should also meet with these units to implement reduced fees for students who need more time to complete the program requirements.

Summer Session will assist with the enrollment of students during summer session.

Programs with part-time tracks should work with the Registrar, [International Center](#), and Graduate Division and provide both units with a list of part-time students for tracking purposes and to ensure they are assessed the appropriate fees.

Campus Resources for Students in SSGPDPs

All SSGPDP students pay a student services access fee and, therefore, have access to all of UCI's resources, including the Graduate and Postdoctoral Resource Center, Division of Career Pathways, Libraries, among others. Some units may require students to come in person or physically reside in California to receive services; students in fully online programs may not be able access these resources. Please note that some programs do not include GSHIP as part of the mandatory fees and therefore, students must voluntarily enroll in GSHIP.



Online Course Creation

Programs that do not have the expertise or instructional designers to create online courses can work with the [Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation](#) to do so for a fee.

State Authorization for Online Programs

State authorization is a regulation of the U.S. Department of Education that requires institutions offering distance education courses to be authorized by each state in which the institution enrolls students (if such authorization is required by the state). Each state has a different set of requirements when it comes to allowing out-of-state universities to offer online graduate degree programs to its residents. Administrators of online graduate programs can visit the Graduate Division's [state authorization webpage](#) to view the approval status for each state. If a state is not approved, the online program cannot admit students from that state.

Program Modifications

New programs cannot make substantive changes until one year after the first cohort of students has matriculated to the program. For continuing programs, the Graduate Council does not allow substantive changes until two years after the program implemented the last changes to the program. The only exception to this policy is if the program's quality will be affected and/or will negatively impact students if the modification is not implemented.

If the above does not apply to your program, programs may request a modification by filling out the following [form](#) and submitting it to Graduate Council. Programs can find submission deadlines for agenda items for upcoming Graduate Council meetings [here](#). Programs should follow their internal procedures approval process before submitting to Grad Council. Interdisciplinary programs that involve more than one school should make sure all schools have been consulted prior to submission of the program modification.

Tracking SSGPDP Expenses

Graduate Division recommends using project codes to track and easily separate SSGPDP expenses from state-supported program expenses. It is also recommended that separate accounts are created for SSGPDPs if possible.

Annual Program Fee Proposals

Each year self-supporting programs will have to submit a fee proposal to UCOP. The proposal will include a cost analysis, proposed program cost for the upcoming academic year (with a justification for the if the proposed fee will decrease or increase), and other information about the program. The Budget Office will provide the forms, deadlines, and collect and submit the information needed to UCOP. Please reach out to Katherine Warnke-Carpenter (kcarpent@uci.edu), Assistant Director of Academic Resource Planning, in the Budget Office if your program has questions.



Established Programs

Three-Year Review by the Academic Senate

Three years after the admission of the first cohort, Graduate Council will conduct a review of the program, assessing both its academic merits and financial health. Graduate Council will review programs in the following areas: program intent and recruitment, congruence with the university mission, ladder faculty involvement, relationship to state-supported programs, curriculum, financial, graduate metrics, participant evaluation, facilities and staff, and professional engagement/internships. Programs can find more details on the review process [here](#) and the review schedule [here](#).

Below are a few things Graduate Council will scrutinize during the review:

- The program is recruiting and admitting a high-quality, diverse applicant pool.
 - Graduate Council will look at applicant selectivity as one indicator of a high-quality applicant pool.
 - If a program is struggling to build its applicant pool, Graduate Council will look to see if the program is actively working to implement marketing and recruitment strategies to increase the applicant pool.
 - Programs should have strategies to recruit diverse students to the program (offering fellowships to admitted students, targeting professional societies, attending graduate recruitment fairs, etc.).
- The program is progressing towards paying back its campus loan and generating revenues.
 - Graduate Council will review enrollment numbers and program expenses to determine if the program is becoming self-sustaining.
- Students are academically successful (GPAs, student retention rates and the % of students completing in normative time is not drastically different from state-supported programs).
- Programs are surveying and tracking alumni job placement.
 - If alumni are having trouble finding jobs in fields related to their degree, the program should consider building stronger connections with industry partners, incorporating professional development in the curriculum or offering professional development programming tailored to their professional needs, and if financially feasible, hiring a career counselor.
 - For program-specific exit and alumni surveys, programs should consider adding questions that assess student satisfaction with the program and if the program helped students to achieve their professional goals. Programs should also use exit and alumni surveys to improve the program.



Programs will receive feedback from the Academic Senate in June of the academic year the program is reviewed. There are three possible outcomes of the review.

1. If the Senate does not recommend significant improvements to certain areas of the program, the program will be incorporated into to the school review process.
2. If the Senate recommends significant improvements or changes to the program, the Senate will request that the program provide a follow-up report on the progress in the areas identified in the review. The Senate will also provide the program with a timeline to provide an update.
3. If there are significant concerns over the viability of a program, the Senate may recommend suspending admissions to or discontinue the self-supporting program.