

# **Graduate Council Guidelines for Evaluating and Prioritizing Graduate Programs**

*Approved by Graduate Council on June 30, 1995*

*Revised 2001; May 14, 2008*

## **Rationale**

At UC Davis, the development and evaluation of undergraduate and graduate academic programs is the responsibility of the faculty. In order to maintain the quality of graduate education, the faculty, through the Graduate Council, bears a responsibility to engage in the process of renewal of academic programs. The process of establishing, disestablishing, and regulating graduate programs at the Master's and Ph.D. levels is the ongoing responsibility of the Council. The Graduate Council will be using the following set of guidelines in evaluating graduate programs at UC Davis.

## **Guidelines**

It is the Graduate Council's responsibility to evaluate the academic components of graduate programs and to identify those that define the distinctive character of UC Davis as a research university. In collaboration with the Administration, those that define the academic character of UC Davis should be supported and managed in such a manner as to optimize graduate education and research across the campus. Criteria to be considered in identifying and prioritizing graduate programs that contribute to the quality of the campus include:

- The quality of the curriculum, faculty, and students
- The record of achievement of the program
- The place of the program in the field as a whole
- The anticipated future of the program and the discipline
- The contribution and centrality of the program to the missions and goals of the campus and the state
- The contribution of the program to other fields of study at UC Davis at the graduate and upper division undergraduate levels
- The FTE, financial, and facilities resources required to develop or maintain the strength of the program

As scholarship is dynamic, it is expected that new graduate programs will be proposed by the faculty. The criteria for evaluating newly proposed programs differ from those used in evaluating existing programs in that a new program would not have a record of accomplishment. In addition, criteria relevant specifically to Master's-only programs appropriate to a research university were approved previously and are appended to this document.

- effective teaching programs
- successful students
- public service relevant to disciplinary potential

## **Standards and Measures**

**Academic Quality:** The paramount criterion on which all academic programs are to be judged must be quality, which is the excellence of achievements. This includes quality of the faculty, entering students, graduates, and the overall quality of the academic experience as perceived by those associated with the program and by external evaluators. The quality of graduate programs must be judged in a manner that is independent of the final degree objectives of the students. In accessing the quality of graduate programs, the following will apply:

**Programs:** Quality in a graduate program refers to the degree to which a program has

- a clear statement of its mission and goals
- a curriculum that is appropriate to the mission and reflects current thinking in the discipline or field
- consistently good teaching in courses
- good faculty mentoring of graduate students

**Faculty:** Quality with regard to faculty refers to the degree to which faculty

- are actively engaged in significant research or other relevant creative endeavors
- are making a contribution to their discipline or field
- are good teachers
- are good mentors for graduate students

**Students:** Quality with regard to students refers to the degree to which students

- are highly qualified for admission into a program
- produce excellent research or creative work in projects, theses, or dissertations, and, if relevant, publications
- successfully compete for appropriate placements (employment, admission to further graduate education, post-doctoral appointments) after graduation.

**The place of programs in the field as a whole:** Assessing the place of a program in the field as a whole refers to internal and external recognition of

- outstanding faculty achievement in research
- effective teaching programs
- successful students
- public service relevant to disciplinary potential
- scholarship at the frontier of inquiry

**The future of the program and discipline:** Assessing the future of the program and discipline refers to an assessment of the degree to which a program

- reflects academic vitality and is engaged with distinctive or emerging intellectual directions
- recognizes and adopts new trends in graduate education
- provides an education which will allow graduates to pursue current and future employment opportunities

**The record of achievement of programs:** The record of achievement of existing programs refers to the degree to which a program is successful in

- recruiting highly qualified students to the graduate program
- honoring the University's goals of diversity in its student cohorts<sup>1</sup>
- retaining and supporting its graduate students
- providing the facilities necessary for student research
- facilitating/ensuring students' completion of their degrees in a timely fashion
- placing its students in appropriate positions after graduation

### **Priorities**

These guidelines will be used by the council through the Program Review subcommittee and review teams in reviewing existing programs and by the Educational Policy subcommittee in establishing new programs. The Council will use these measures in recommendations of establishment, continuation, or disestablishment of individual programs. The degree to which programs demonstrate success in meeting these guidelines will be used to recommend resource allocations, e.g., faculty FTE, block grant funds, graduate student admission quotas, and to determine the viability of programs within the broad context of graduate education on the campus.

**Appendix:** Master's-only Graduate Programs, June 15, 1994

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<sup>1</sup> *University of California Diversity Statement*, adopted by the Assembly of the Academic Senate May 10, 2006; endorsed by the President of the University of California June 20, 2006.  
<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/diversity/diversity.html>

## **Appendix: Master's-only Graduate Programs**

*Approved by Graduate Council, June 15, 1994*

The Graduate Council of the University of California, Davis recognizes that the University fulfills a unique role within the framework of the Master Plan for Higher Education in the State of California as the sole public institution empowered to grant doctoral degrees. Nevertheless, there are circumstances under which it is appropriate to establish academic programs in which the master's is the only advanced degree offered. In general, such programs will reflect the distinctive qualities of a graduate program set within the context of a research university in order to provide opportunities for advanced education and training. Such programs commonly will be guided by a strong element of applying the results of research, through service and outreach, to the people of the State of California.

In seeking to establish master's-only graduate programs or evaluating their continuing effectiveness, the following criteria shall provide guidance:

### **Academic Quality**

The paramount criterion on which all academic programs are to be judged must be quality, including quality of faculty, entering students, graduates, and the overall quality of the academic experience as perceived by those associated with the program and by external evaluators. The quality of graduate programs must be judged in a manner that is independent of the final degree objectives of the students.

### **Distinctiveness**

Master's-only graduate programs must demonstrate their distinctive contributions to the mission of the campus and to the people of the State of California. In particular, such programs must clearly identify a characteristic set of educational objectives and the manner in which they are able to reach their goals.

### **Culture**

Master's-only graduate programs at the University of California can only thrive if they benefit from and contribute to the atmosphere of a research university. Such a culture is based on an emphasis on research, a critical mass of faculty engaged in an intellectual discipline and a viable group of peers and mentors with whom to exchange ideas and interact regularly.

### **Appropriateness**

Master's-only degree programs are normally appropriate if there is a demonstrated need for graduates who have been educated in a research-oriented atmosphere and where the master's

degree is customarily viewed as the terminal advanced degree for practicing a particular profession. Further, it is expected that UC Davis graduates will be prepared to hold leadership positions in their fields. Finally, the faculty bears a responsibility to consider the appropriateness of a terminal master's degree program. The program must demonstrate that its requirements of students are commensurate with a master's degree rather than a doctoral degree.