

**3.6.1** The institution's post-baccalaureate professional degree programs, master's and doctoral degree programs, are progressively more advanced in academic content than its undergraduate programs. (Post-baccalaureate program rigor)

Compliance       Partial Compliance       Non-Compliance

**Narrative:**

Graduate programs at UNC Charlotte are progressively more advanced than corresponding undergraduate degrees. First, graduate programs are based on a core of rigorous graduate courses developed by the graduate program faculty and reviewed and approved by the University Graduate Council. Further, all graduate programs require students to successfully complete a graduate level culminating experience which may take the form of a comprehensive exam, thesis or dissertation defense, project presentation or other appropriate capstone evaluation. Doctoral degrees are conferred only after the student has demonstrated outstanding scholarship in an approved program of study. To be admitted to candidacy, all doctoral students must complete a comprehensive qualifying exam. UNC Charlotte ensures that Graduate Programs are consistent with commonly accepted standards for graduate study at the time of implementation and when changes are proposed.

Graduate courses at UNC Charlotte are numbered at the 5000, 6000, 7000, 8000, and 9000 levels. Master's courses are numbered 5000 through 7000 while doctoral courses are numbered at the 8000 and 9000 levels. Graduate students are not allowed to apply undergraduate courses to a graduate program of study. 5000 level courses may be offered with parallel undergraduate courses listed at the advanced senior level (4000). In cases where undergraduates and graduates are in the same classroom, those taking it for graduate credit must be enrolled as a graduate student and receive more academic challenging assignments than those taking the course for undergraduate credit.

The University of North Carolina General Administration must review and approve all academic program development within the 17 constituent institutions. New doctoral and master's degree programs must first present planning documents before requesting authorization to establish a new degree. During the planning phase, each proposal is reviewed by an outside panel of disciplinary experts composed of faculty from the constituent UNC institutions, who are asked to comment on the quality and relevance of the proposed degree. Requests for Authorization of new Doctoral Degrees are also reviewed by the UNC Graduate Council and the UNC Board of Governors has the statutory responsibility to authorize the implementation of a new degree program (*Board of Governors Policy on Academic Program Planning, Regulations for Academic Program Planning and Evaluation, Guidelines for Academic Program Development [UNC Policy Manual]*) This academic program development procedure requires the constituent institution to clearly demonstrate to the UNC General Administration that its program requirements are appropriate for the proposed degree and that it has the resources (budget, faculty, library holdings, facilities, and equipment) to maintaining a success graduate curriculum. Subsequent review of new programs is required to ensure these high standards are maintained.

To ensure the adequacy of the curricula and resources in graduate education, the executive and administrative affairs of the Graduate School are carried out by the Associate Provost for Graduate Programs and Dean of the Graduate School. The position works in cooperation with the deans of the colleges of Arts + Architecture, Business, Computing and Informatics, Education, Engineering, Health and Human Services, and Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Program Graduate Faculty in the academic departments are responsible for curriculum development and revisions. Each college has its own internal review process but all graduate curriculum proposals must be reviewed by the University Graduate Council. The Graduate Council consists of elected Graduate Faculty representatives from each of the colleges, a graduate student representative, a representative from the university Library and the Dean of the Graduate School. The Library representative and Graduate Dean are ex-officio, non-voting members of the Council.

Only members of the Graduate Faculty may engage in the teaching and mentoring of graduate students. The Graduate Faculty is composed of the University faculty who have proven to be effectively engaged in education and scholarship at the graduate level. In accordance with criteria developed by the individual academic departments and approved by the Graduate Council, the Dean of the Graduate School appoints members of the Graduate Faculty for renewable terms. Members of the Graduate Faculty offer courses and seminars, mentor graduate students, and supervise research at an advanced level of scholarship (2010-11 Graduate Catalog page 16.)

Significantly increased expectations are placed on the graduate student above those required at the undergraduate level. Unlike undergraduate education, graduate education is intended to develop independent specialized skills and knowledge in the academic discipline of study. The curricula on the graduate programs are broader in scope and require more critical thinking, more comprehensive problem solving, and engagement in exploration of topics. The current Graduate Catalog defines a set of core competencies that are intended to reflect the range of skills a graduate student at UNC Charlotte should achieve in research, scholarly activity, ethics, and advanced professional training (2010-11 Graduate Catalog page 15).

**Evidence:**

*Board of Governors Policy on Academic Program Planning, Regulations for Academic Program Planning and Evaluation, Guidelines for Academic Program Development [UNC Policy Manual] UNC Charlotte 2010-2011 Graduate Catalog*