



Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs (SSGPDP) Policy

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Responsible Office:	AA – Academic Affairs
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. POLICY SUMMARY	1
II. DEFINITIONS	2
III. POLICY TEXT.....	3
IV. COMPLIANCE/RESPONSIBILITIES	8
V. PROCEDURES.....	8
VI. RELATED INFORMATION	11
VII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	12
VIII. REVISION HISTORY	12

I. POLICY SUMMARY

This Policy governs Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs (SSGPDPs) at the University of California (UC or University), including but not limited to

establishment, discontinuance, setting student charges, and requirements for converting a state-supported graduate professional degree program to a SSGPDP.¹

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Self-supporting** – Self-supporting means that all program costs, both direct and indirect, are covered by revenues generated by the program such as student charges or from alternative revenues that are not disallowed funds as defined in Section II.g. below.
- B. Program costs** – Program costs include both direct and indirect costs.
- C. Direct costs** – Direct costs for SSGPDPs include, but are not limited to, costs related to instruction, program support, student services, financial aid, faculty and staff salaries and benefits, supplies, and equipment.
- D. Indirect costs** – Indirect costs are costs that cannot be charged to a particular project or activity but are incurred by the University or an organizational unit of the University as a result of undertaking the project or activity. Indirect costs for SSGPDPs include, but are not limited to, the charges levied by a school, college, campus, and/or systemwide entity for a program’s share of academic and administrative support, libraries, building use, and operation and maintenance of physical facilities.
- E. Charges (SSGPDPs)** – Charges are funds paid by students to attend SSGPDPs. The charges may include approved Compulsory Campus-based Student Fees and Course Materials and Services Fees (CMSF). Although students in SSGPDPs may be required to pay Compulsory Campus-based Student Fees and CMSF, these fees are disallowed funds (as defined in II.g. below) and may not be used to support the SSGPDP.
- F. Tuition and fees (state-supported programs)** – Tuition and fees are funds paid by students to attend state-supported programs and include, but are not limited to, Tuition, Student Services Fee, Professional Degree Supplemental Tuition (PDST), and Compulsory Campus-based Student Fees and CMSF.
- G. Disallowed funds** – Disallowed funds are funds the SSGPDP may not rely on for program costs. Disallowed funds include State General Funds and tuition and fees as defined in II.f above. Although students in SSGPDPs may be required to pay Compulsory Campus-based Student Fees and CMSF, revenue from these fees may not be used to support the SSGPDP.

¹ Nothing in this Policy constitutes a contract, an offer of a contract, or a promise that any student charges ultimately authorized by the University will be limited by any term or provision of this Policy. The University expressly reserves the right and option, in its absolute discretion, to establish student charges at any level it deems appropriate based on a full consideration of the circumstances, and nothing in this Policy shall be a basis for any party to rely on student charges of a specified level or based on a specified formula.

H. Compendium – The Compendium is the [*Compendium of Universitywide Review Processes for Academic Programs, Academic Units, & Research Units*](#). The Compendium draws on current University policies to articulate systemwide review processes for proposals to establish, transfer, consolidate, change the name of, and discontinue or disestablish undergraduate degree programs (in certain cases), graduate degree programs, schools, colleges, and research units.

III. POLICY TEXT

A. Introduction. Self-supporting graduate professional degree programs (SSGPDPs) allow the University of California (UC or University) to: (1) serve additional students above and beyond those supported through resources provided by the State; and (2) fulfill demonstrated higher education and workforce needs. Models of self-supporting graduate professional degree programs include, but are not limited to, those that serve non-traditional populations, such as full-time employees, mid-career professionals, international students with specialized goals, and/or students whose professional education is supported by their employers. Many SSGPDPs are: (1) offered through an alternative mode of delivery, such as online or hybrid instruction; (2) alternatively-scheduled (e.g., during evenings, weekends, and/or summers); and/or (3) offered in alternative locations (e.g., off-campus).

This Policy governs the establishment and operation of SSGPDPs at the University and its campuses.

When the University received adequate State support to honor its commitment to the California Master Plan and to expand graduate academic and professional programs in response to State and societal needs, UC directed self-supporting programs primarily to working adults and other non-traditional student populations. These programs provide alternative venues and opportunities for access to quality programs leading to graduate professional degrees. With the decline in State support, this Policy now recognizes that offering self-supporting graduate professional degree programs is also a necessary educational strategy to allow the University to serve a greater number of students above and beyond those whom State resources will support. Although these programs receive no State support, they have the potential to generate resources that would enhance the quality, accessibility, and affordability of core academic programs and departments.

A proposal to create a self-supporting program must make a compelling academic and budgetary case for the program. In addition, it must articulate how it will ensure that the self-supporting program will not have a detrimental impact on state-supported teaching, research, or service, both academically and financially, in the unit proposing the program.

This Policy governs Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs (SSGPDPs) at the University of California, including, but not limited to, establishment, discontinuance, setting student charges, and requirements for converting a state-supported graduate professional degree program to a SSGPDP. SSGPDPs shall not use disallowed funds.

University of California – Policy SSGPDP
Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs

Nothing in this Policy is intended to prescribe campus policy or pre-empt a campus' discretion with respect to how it distributes resources with the exception that disallowed fund sources may not be used to fund SSGPDPs. Campuses may have their own policies with regard to SSGPDPs provided those policies do not conflict with this Policy.

B. Description of self-supporting graduate professional degree programs.

SSGPDPs are graduate programs that primarily serve professionals seeking to advance their careers.

SSGPDPs enable the establishment of new graduate professional degree programs and, in some cases, the maintenance of existing graduate professional degree programs. This Policy governs both circumstances. With the exception of the source of funds and the costs the funds must cover, all SSGPDPs must adhere to the same policies as state-supported programs. SSGPDPs are subject to Academic Senate oversight and review to ensure that all degree programs meet UC standards of academic rigor and quality. All faculty (both Senate and non-Senate) in SSGPDPs are governed by UC academic personnel policies and practices.

All direct and indirect costs shall be covered by charges paid by SSGPDP students or by other funds that the sponsoring academic unit allocates to the SSGPDP. SSGPDPs may not use disallowed funds.

- C. Programs ineligible for self-supporting status.** Programs ineligible for self-supporting status include the following: all undergraduate degree programs, all academic master's degree programs leading solely or primarily to a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree, and all Ph.D. programs.
- D. Location of offerings.** SSGPDP courses and other program requirements may be offered on-campus, at appropriate off-campus locations, or online, using distance technologies as appropriate (consistent with [Academic Senate Reg. 694](#)).
- E. Comparable quality to regular state-supported graduate programs.** SSGPDPs are held to the same standards of quality as all other UC graduate professional degree programs. Student admission and performance standards for SSGPDPs are governed by the Academic Senate.
- F. Comparable faculty.** As is the case for all other UC degree programs, Senate faculty are responsible for SSGPDPs. Senate faculty who teach in SSGPDPs are appointed, evaluated, and advanced under the same processes and criteria as are other Senate faculty regardless of whether a portion of their regular compensation comes from SSGPDPs. The nature of certain practice-oriented degree programs may warrant a higher proportion than usual of non-Senate faculty (e.g., clinical faculty, adjunct faculty, lecturers, and visitors).
- G. Faculty workload and compensation.** SSGPDPs shall comply with the [Academic Personnel Manual \(APM\)](#) with respect to how faculty, both Senate and non-Senate, are compensated. Faculty are expected to comply with all relevant reporting requirements. Teaching in a self-supporting program does not constitute workload for purposes of State reporting. Faculty teaching in SSGPDPs shall be handled either through compensation to a faculty member's department for a reduction in the

faculty member’s workload (a “buy- out”) or through additional compensation to the faculty member for additional workload above normal workload. This depends on whether the teaching replaces part of the faculty member’s expected full-time load (a “buy-out”) or is in addition to the full-time load (additional compensation). A “buy-out” must include the complete cost of faculty salary, health benefits, and retirement compensation. Campus policies on “buy-out” or additional compensation may be applied so long as they do not conflict with this policy or the APM.² SSGPDPs shall not in any way diminish a school or department’s responsibilities to the full complement of state-supported programs. For non-Senate academic appointees covered by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), this Policy applies only to the extent provided for in the MOU.

H. Initiation and approval of SSGPDPS

1. **Initiation.** Departments, groups of departments, or schools may propose a new SSGPDP or conversion of an existing state-supported program to an SSGPDP. Proposals shall originate with an academic unit that is authorized to conduct graduate work. A proposal to create a self-supporting program must make a compelling academic and budgetary case for the program. In addition, it must articulate how it will ensure that the self-supporting program will not have a detrimental impact on state-supported teaching, research, or service (both academically and financially) in the unit proposing the program.
2. **New Program.** The establishment of a new SSGPDP must be approved according to procedures and requirements specified in the Compendium.
3. **Conversion.** Conversion of an existing state-supported program to self-supporting status is regarded as exceptional. Special justification must be given for a conversion application to be approved. For example, clear and overwhelming evidence must be provided to demonstrate that the existing state-funded model is no longer sustainable or has unduly restricted development of the program. Graduate professional degree programs converting to self-supporting status must meet the same criteria as new SSGPDPs and are subject to the same review criteria as new SSGPDPs. This includes criteria related to financial sustainability, financial accessibility, faculty appointments, and course approvals. Initial review of a conversion proposal shall be conducted by the Graduate Council of the proposing campus. The campus Graduate Council determines whether the converting program is in good academic standing and provides CCGA with a statement of support or non-support for the proposal.
 - i. *Conversion when changing academic requirements.* A proposal to convert a state-supported program that includes changes to the program’s academic requirements shall be reviewed through the same processes as a newly-created graduate professional degree program.

² [Section 662 of the APM](#) addresses additional compensation for additional teaching.

Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs

- ii. Conversion when not changing academic requirements.* A proposal to convert a state-supported program that includes no changes to the program's academic requirements shall be reviewed through Academic Senate processes at the campus and at the system level to evaluate context and justification for the conversion and to assure that the program proposed for conversion is in good academic standing. In order for a conversion proposal to be reviewed at the system level, the program must have undergone and received a meritorious academic review within the previous five years. At the discretion of systemwide review bodies, system level review may be expedited.
 - iii. Review of conversion to SSGPDP.* The first academic review of a program that converted from state-supported to self-supporting status shall be in the fourth year of establishment (after three years of operation). Thereafter the program joins the campus' regular academic review cycle.
- I. Phase-in period.** All SSGPDPs shall be fully self-supporting within three years of inception. The sponsors of each proposed self-supporting program shall submit to UCOP a cost analysis and fiscal phase-in plan for review and approval.
- J. Failure to become or remain self-supporting.** If a new or converting self-supporting program does not reach financial sustainability within the required three years, the campus shall be responsible for all costs of continuing or phasing out the program and shall not use disallowed funds for those purposes. Similarly, if an existing SSGPDP is no longer financially self-supporting, the campus shall be responsible for all costs of continuing or phasing out the program and shall not use disallowed funds for those purposes.
- K. Reversion to state-supported status.** Any SSGPDP (existing, new, or converted) seeking to become a state-supported graduate professional degree program shall be subject to the same campus and systemwide approvals required to establish new state-supported graduate academic or professional degree programs and enrollments.
- L. Discontinuation.** Consistent with the requirements for the discontinuation of any UC academic program, a discontinued SSGPDP must ensure that students have the opportunity to complete their degrees or transfer to other programs.
- M. Review of SSGPDPs.** Campus Graduate Councils shall review SSGPDPs as part of regularly-scheduled campus program reviews on the same basis as state-supported academic programs are reviewed. Once established, the SSGPDP shall be under the purview of the campus Graduate Council and the Graduate Division to ensure adequate progress of students according to campus criteria. Campuses may apply additional review measures so long as they do not conflict with this Policy. SSGPDP courses are subject to normal campus procedures for approval, revision, and termination.
- N. Admission and enrollment.** Admission standards for SSGPDPs shall be comparable to those in effect for analogous state-supported programs, if such programs are available.

Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs

Admissions criteria may specify some type or period of work experience in the field, as applicable to the specific graduate professional degree offered. Students must be admitted through the Graduate Division through the regular admissions process.

Enrollments in SSGPDPs do not count for purposes of calculating the number of students supported by the State. SSGPDP enrollments will be reported separately from enrollment of students in state-supported programs. During the approved phase-in period, the reporting of enrollments as either state-supported or self-supporting will conform to the specifications of the approved plan referenced in I above.

- O. Approval by President of student charges and phase-in plans.** In addition to the program approval requirements above, proposed student charges and the phase-in plan for each SSGPDP shall be submitted to the President for approval.
- P. Student charges.** The President will review and approve proposed student charges for each SSGPDP upon establishment or conversion, as well as subsequent proposed annual increases or decreases in such charges. The President will report annually to The Regents on the level of student charges for each approved program. Student charges for SSGPDPs will cover all program costs within the required three-year period unless the campus chooses to use other non-disallowed funds to assist in meeting program costs. The Chancellor must approve the use of non-disallowed funds to subsidize SSGPDPs. Chancellor approval authority may not be delegated. The level of student charges shall be based on a full and accurate assessment of all program costs as defined in the Policy and further detailed in the implementation procedures. Program deficits, including deficits during the approved phase-in period, are the responsibility of the campus; disallowed funds cannot be used to cover any deficit. State-supported degree programs and SSGPDPs must separately account for their use of resources. Campuses shall not charge a blended tuition/fee level for any course or program. However, self-supporting and state-supported students may be enrolled in the same courses if there is an appropriate accounting for the self-supporting and state-supported costs. Charges may not be assessed prior to approval.
- Q. Financial accessibility.** SSGPDPs must have a financial accessibility goal for their student population and a student financial support plan for achieving this goal. It is expected that the plan will address access for students from a wide range of income levels. Examples of possible student financial support include scholarships or grants from the program's own resources (i.e., return-to-aid from student charges), privately raised funds, participation in federal and/or private loan programs, or other external support. For the purposes of state and federal student financial aid programs, "student charges" has the same meaning as "tuition."
- R. Consultation.** Input on program characteristics and the level of student charges must be regularly sought from program stakeholders and must cover a multi-year period. Stakeholders must include students in and faculty from the program.

Implementation procedures are part of the policy and included in Section V below.

IV. COMPLIANCE/RESPONSIBILITIES

All University of California campuses and academic departments that offer or seek to offer a self-supporting graduate professional degree program are subject to this policy. Responsibilities for program approval are detailed in the [Compendium of Universitywide Review Process for Academic Programs, Academic Units, and Research Units](#). Responsibilities for the process of certification of self-supporting status and Presidential approval of self-supporting program charges are detailed in the implementation procedures in Section V.

V. PROCEDURES

IMPLEMENTATION OF SELF-SUPPORTING GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL DEGREE PROGRAMS (SSGPDP) POLICY

The President issues the following Policy implementation procedures for the SSGPDP Policy:

A. Program approvals

1. Prior to operation, all SSGPDPs must obtain necessary program approvals according to procedures and requirements specified in this Policy and any other applicable academic program approval policies. The Compendium is the procedural document that implements the policies governing academic program approvals.
2. Newly-approved SSGPDPs will be reviewed on the campus after three years through a process chosen by the campus Graduate Council. Subsequent to that review, the programs will be subject to the regular program review cycle.
3. SSGPDP proposals should pay particular attention to addressing the program review criteria specified by the Academic Senate, including sufficient financial information for reviewers at the campus and systemwide levels to assess the likelihood that the SSGPDP within three years will meet all these criteria using funds from charges to the program's students primarily and, if necessary, funds from other sources allowed by SSGPDP policy.
4. A proposal for a new or conversion SSGPDP must be accompanied by letters of support from the Graduate Council, the formally recognized group that serves as the Academic Senate's executive board or cabinet, the Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost, and the Chancellor.
5. New SSGPDPs and state-supported programs seeking to convert to SSGPDP status may apply for review of proposed student charges [see III (P) in the Policy] prior to completion of program approval processes. However, no student charges can be imposed in advance of final program approval by the Academic Senate and the President.
6. SSGPDPs that are being discontinued or converted to state-supported status must adhere to the requirements of this Policy, any other applicable academic

program approval policies, and the requirements for discontinuance and establishment respectively, as described in the Compendium.

B. Process for certification of self-supporting status and Presidential approval of self-supporting program charges. SSGPDP student charges must be approved by the President annually. In order to receive Presidential approval for student charges, each SSGPDP and each campus with one or more SSGPDPs shall follow the following procedures:

1. *Annual program templates.* For each SSGPDP, an SSGPDP template shall be completed that covers the following elements:
 - a. *Program approval status.* The completed template shall indicate the program approval status for the SSGPDP, the date, and results of its most recent academic program review, and/or the dates the next academic program review will begin and be completed.
 - b. *Current and proposed student charges.* The completed template shall include, at a minimum, the current level of student charges and the projected student charges for the next two years. Newly-proposed programs shall include projected student charges for the three-year phase-in period. Approved Compulsory Campus-based Student Fees may be charged to SSGPDP students when it can be shown that SSGPDP students benefit from the services funded by those fees.
 - c. *Financial accessibility.* The completed template shall include a clear statement of and rationale for the program's financial accessibility goal; the SSGPDP's student financial support plan, and the extent to which the program is attaining its financial accessibility goal. For programs that have converted or are proposing to convert from state-supported status, the description shall compare the program's student financial accessibility with that expected when it was State supported and with that of other UC programs offering similar degrees (whether self-supporting or not).
 - d. *Cost analysis.* The completed template shall include a cost analysis that demonstrates that the proposed student charges cover full direct and indirect costs ("program costs)," or (to the extent that student charges are insufficient to cover these costs) that no disallowed funds will be used to subsidize program costs. The required elements and format of the cost analysis shall be specified in the SSGPDP template. New SSGPDPs are subject to the same cost analysis. Programs are expected to become fully self-supporting within three years, though campuses may continue to subsidize program costs with non-disallowed funds at their discretion. Program cost deficits, including any deficits during the phase-in period, must be covered by the campuses; disallowed funds may not be used to cover any deficit. The template shall require campuses to identify in advance fund sources that will be used to cover any projected deficits and to verify that those fund sources (or substitute non-disallowed sources) are being used to cover any current deficits.

University of California – Policy SSGPDP
Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs

- e. *Consultation.* The completed template shall include a section identifying the stakeholders who were consulted and when and how the consultation took place, and providing a short summary of the feedback received from each category of stakeholders. Stakeholders should have the opportunity to have their comments or their summary of their comments included in the materials submitted with the template. Input on program characteristics and the level of student charges must be regularly sought (at least every other year) from program stakeholders. Stakeholders must include students in and faculty from the program. Prior to establishing a new program, student input shall be sought from students likely to apply to such a program.
2. *Campus annual submittals.* Each campus with one or more SSGPDPs must provide an annual submittal consisting of (1) a cover letter from the Chancellor to the President requesting approval of student charges for the upcoming year and (2) the SSGPDP templates for each existing or proposed SSGPDP on that campus. Specifically, the cover letter shall include:
 - a. A statement that appropriate campus leadership has reviewed and approved the attached templates for each SSGPDP on that campus. The statement must certify that each program is operating on a self-supporting basis (or is using non-disallowed funds to cover any program cost deficit) and is in compliance with this Policy.
 - b. A request to approve the proposed level of student charges for each existing or proposed SSGPDP for the upcoming year.
 - c. A completed SSGPDP student charges form showing, for each SSGPDP, the current level of student charges, the proposed level of student charges, and the percentage increase or decrease, if any. The UC Office of the President (UCOP) will provide the blank form to ensure that student charges can be compared across programs.
3. *Timeline for submittals.*
 - a. Fall term preceding the next academic year:
 - Campuses receive templates from UCOP together with instructions on the process for the required annual submittals.
 - b. Spring term preceding the next academic year:
 - Budget Analysis and Planning (BAP) at UCOP receives completed campus annual submittals with the attached templates for each SSGPDP. Staff designated by BAP and the Provost begin to review proposals.
 - The Provost and BAP receive results of UCOP staff review, including campus annual submittals with the attached templates for each SSGPDP.

University of California – Policy SSGPDP
Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs

- President makes decisions and campuses are notified of approved program student charges for the upcoming academic year (and leading summer term, if any programs enroll their students initially in the summer).

c. The President reports this information to The Regents annually.

C. Miscellaneous implementation procedures

1. *Reporting of enrollments.* SSGPDPs should be identified in the Corporate Student System with a program code that is distinct from state-supported programs and with an attribute code flagging enrollments in each SSGPDP as self-supporting.
2. *Faculty workload.*

All faculty participation in the SSGPDP must be funded directly from SSGPDP revenue or other allowable sources in proportion to the faculty member's workload commitment to the program. If the faculty member's participation is in lieu of some of their responsibilities as a full-time UC employee, then the SSGPDP must reimburse the faculty member's department an amount equivalent to the cost of that particular faculty member's time (a "buy-out"). Consistent with the requirement that the SSGPDP must cover all program costs, for a "buy-out" the total cost of faculty salary, benefits, and retirement must be funded by SSGPDP-generated or other non-disallowed funds. If the faculty member's participation is in addition to their responsibilities as a full-time UC employee, then they should receive additional compensation, which must be calculated and recorded in accordance with relevant Academic Personnel Manual policies and reporting requirements.³

For non-Senate academic appointees covered by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), this policy applies only to the extent provided for in the MOU.

VI. RELATED INFORMATION

Prior University of California policies on self-supporting programs can be found at <https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/content-analysis/academic-planning/self-supporting-programs.html>

[Delegation of Authority to the President to Set Fees for Self-Supporting Degree Programs](#) [approved by the UC Regents, November 20, 1998]

³ The UC [Academic Personnel Manual](#) addresses additional compensation for additional teaching. Additional University-compensated teaching outside of the assigned teaching load, including teaching for self-supporting UC degree programs, UNEX courses and programs, and other continuing education programs run by the University, must be disclosed in annual reporting and count toward the faculty member's maximum 39/48 days of outside professional activities (see APM - 025-10-a(2), APM - 671-10-a(2), and APM - 662-17).

Policies Applying to Campus Activities, Organizations and Students (PACAOS) 80.00:
[Policy on Compulsory Campus-based Student Fees](#)

[Compendium of Universitywide Review Processes for Academic Programs, Academic Units, and Research Units](#)

[Academic Senate Regulation 694](#)

[Academic Personnel Manual \(APM\)](#)

[Section 662 of the APM](#)

VII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Not applicable.

VIII. REVISION HISTORY

September 30, 2020: The policy was modified to include a more appropriate timeline for the submittal and review of proposed student charges.

This Policy was also reformatted into the standard University of California policy template and to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.

July 12, 2016: Policy revised and superseded the [Policy on Self-Supporting Graduate Degree Programs](#) and the [Implementation Guidelines for the Policy on Self-Supporting Graduate Degree Programs](#) that were [approved and implemented](#) on **September 23, 2011**.

Revised policy and implementation section provided more specificity on the criteria and approval process for establishing a new SSGPDP or for converting an existing program to self-supporting status.