



The following approvals must be obtained prior to sending the Letter of Intent to Develop a New Academic Degree Program to the UNC System Office.

Institution

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Degree Program Title (e.g. M.A. in Biology)

BFA in Graphic Design

Reviewed and Approved By (Name and title only. No signature required in this section.)

Check box to indicate participation in review. (Provost is required.)

- ✓ **Provost: Joan F. Lorden**
- Faculty Senate Chair (as appropriate): N/A**
- Graduate Council (as appropriate): N/A**
- Undergraduate or Graduate Dean (as appropriate): N/A**
- ✓ **Academic College Dean: Lee Gray, Interim Dean**
- ✓ **Department Chair: Lydia Thompson, Chair**
- ✓ **Program Director/Coordinator: David Brodeur, Associate Professor**

New Academic Proposal Process

New academic programs are initiated and developed by the faculty members. Approval of the Letter of Intent to Develop a New Academic Degree Program must be obtained from department chairs and college deans or equivalent administrators before submission to the UNC System Office review.

Directions: Please provide a succinct, yet thorough response to each section. Obtain the Provost’s signature and submit the proposal via the PREP system to the UNC System Vice President for Academic Programs, Faculty, and Research, for review and approval by the UNC System Office. Once the Letter of Intent to Develop is approved, the institution can begin work on the formal Request to Establish a New Degree Program.

Letter of Intent to Develop a New Academic Degree Program

Institution	The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Joint Degree Program (Yes or No)? If so, list partner campus.	No
Degree Program Title (e.g. M.A. in Biology)	BFA in Graphic Design
CIP Code and CIP Title (May be found at National Center for Education Statistics)	50.0409
Require UNC Teacher Licensure Specialty Area Code (Yes or No). If yes, list suggested UNC Specialty Area Code(s).	No
Proposed Delivery Mode (campus, online, or site-based distance education). Add maximum % online, if applicable.	Campus
Proposed Term to Enroll First Students (e.g. Spring 2019)	Fall 2020
List other programs in the UNC System (may be found at UNC System website)	BFA in Graphic Design at Appalachian State University BS in Graphic Design at Elizabeth City State University B in Graphic Design at North Carolina State University

SACSCOC Liaison Statement: *(Provide a brief statement from the University SACSCOC liaison regarding whether the new program is or is not a substantive change.)*

Since the new credit hours amount to 20% of the new BFA in Graphic Design, which is less than the 33% threshold, and since the new degree does not require new faculty, equipment, facilities, financial resource, and library and learning resources, the new program is not a significant departure and does not require SACSCOC notification or approval.

Program Summary: *(Briefly describe the proposed program and summarize the overall rationale.)*

Maximum of 1,000 words.

Include the following in your narrative:

- Ways in which the proposed program is distinct from others already offered in the UNC System (use the 4-digit CIP as a guide). Information on other programs may be found on the UNC System [website](#).
- How this program supports specific university and UNC System [missions](#).
- Collaborative opportunities with other UNC institutions as appropriate.

Graphic design, in the most straightforward sense, is the strategic use of text and images to solve communication problems. Notably, that definition does not include any media or formats. Contemporary professional practice in graphic or communication design encompasses a diverse array of technologies and media, including printed materials, Web sites, tablet and phone apps, imagery for videos, and much more. Design educators now have to develop curricula that balance concrete experiences across this range of formats with strategies and problem-solving techniques that can be applied to all potential professional challenges. These professional contexts are likewise evolving at an extraordinary pace due to rapid changes in technology and business environments. This proposal, for a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design, addresses these challenges by delivering a curriculum that responds to growing areas of professional design practice, with particular emphasis on Web design and development.

The proposed BFA in Graphic Design is a professional degree that will prepare students for a diverse range of potential careers in the growing field of visual communications, including, but not limited to: graphic designer/developer, art director, Web designer, user experience/user interface designer, animator, and creative director. The degree will be delivered on-campus, in-person and will be a 75-credit-hour program developed in accordance with National Association of Schools of Art & Design (NASAD) standards. The proposed degree will transform the BFA in Studio Art with a Concentration in Graphic Design, currently offered by the Department of Art & Art History, into a stand-alone BFA degree program. The distinction between a BFA with a “concentration” in a subject area and a dedicated degree is an important distinction. The American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA), the preeminent professional organization in the field, characterizes this degree type as follows: “A BFA in graphic design, communication design, or interaction design is the most commonly recognized professional degree.” The new degree will allow graduates to more effectively compete in a rapidly-evolving profession, and the Department of Art & Art History will be better positioned to compete for the best incoming candidates seeking this specific skillset. The core target audience will be regional college applicants interested in a professional creative career in visual communication. Consistent with UNC Charlotte’s mission of access, enrollment will likely include community college transfer students, as well as entering first-year students.

Across the UNC System, we have identified one BFA in Graphic Design at Appalachian State, one

Bachelor of Graphic Design at NC State, and one BS in Graphic Design at Elizabeth City State. Additionally, there are some institutions in the UNC System, such as East Carolina, that offer Graphic Design as one concentration among many in a BFA program. We consider the programs at Appalachian State and NC State as the nearest equivalents to what we propose; however, our proposal offers several key points of distinction.

First, our proposed program aligns with our University's mission by providing an urban-based program that responds to both corporate and civic needs in our community. The program's design evolves from our continuing conversations with regional employers, from small businesses to large corporations, as well as our ongoing engagement with community and civic partners. Our program will be uniquely based in North Carolina's largest city and, as such, will offer students distinct opportunities to partner with a diverse range of organizations, from global corporations to local nonprofits. Second, we have developed enhanced and expanded course offerings in Web-based and interactive design strategies and technologies. The peer programs we have identified in the UNC System focus either on print technologies or are "platform agnostic," meaning that the courses focus on strategies and techniques independent of technologies. As we will discuss in greater detail under "Societal Demand," our research indicates that Web-based design/development careers offer the greatest growth potential in the coming decades.

The proposed degree aligns with the UNC system mission by providing a professional-preparation-focused degree: students who complete the degree will be prepared to compete upon graduation for middle-quintile income and above employment opportunities in visual communication careers. Further, the degree fulfills the institutional mission by including curricular aspects that prepare students to address community engagement and urban research institution goals through applied civic activity. UNC Charlotte has been designated a Carnegie Community Engagement University due to its high level of outreach and civic activity; our proposed program seeks to leverage these relationships and resources so that students can experience the potential impact of their skills and knowledge on their communities. Assignments embedded in the new proposed program will engage students in community partnerships to leverage their skills for civic improvement.

The key collaborative opportunities we have identified target UNC System Community Colleges. A high proportion of students we serve at UNC Charlotte are transfer students. Many of those students have transferred from community colleges in our region, such as Central Piedmont Community College or Rowan Cabarrus Community College. In the proposed degree, 15 credits of studio art and art history coursework would continue to transfer from 31 UNC System Community Colleges to UNC Charlotte in accordance with the Uniform Articulation Agreement of May 2017. As we establish new courses in our proposed degree, we intend to collaborate with faculty at community colleges to maintain clear lines of communication about our course content and skills expectations for incoming students. We take time to graduation considerations very seriously in our program and foresee enhanced relationships

with our community college partners as essential to improving the transfer student experience.

Student Demand: *(Provide evidence of student demand. Discuss the extent to which students will be drawn from a pool of students not previously served by the institution. Maximum length 1,000 words.)*

The Department has clear evidence of a sustained and strong student interest in Graphic Design. According to UNC Charlotte's Institutional Research Analytics Dashboard (found at <https://ir-analytics.uncc.edu/tableau/overview-enrollment-demographics-and-degrees-awarded>), an average of 34 students each semester are officially recognized as concentrating in Graphic Design from 2011-2017 (see below).

Semester	BFA Students with Graphic Design Concentration
Spring 2017	29
Fall 2016	32
Spring 2016	33
Fall 2015	35
Spring 2015	32
Fall 2014	36
Spring 2014	30
Fall 2013	34
Spring 2013	40
Fall 2012	38

It is important to note that this number undercounts the current total population of students who are interested in pursuing a BFA with a concentration in Graphic Design. At the present, all entering students are enrolled as Bachelor of Arts students. During their Junior year, following successful completion of a required portfolio review, students are admitted into the BFA degree program. Students take multiple introductory courses in the Graphic Design concentration, intending to declare the discipline as their focus, prior to being officially enrolled as a BFA student with a concentration in Graphic Design. In a typical entering cohort approximately 20-24 students intend to declare a concentration in Graphic Design. Thus, on average, there are approximately 80 students (freshmen through seniors) “enrolled” in the concentration Graphic Design program each year. In the future, students will apply directly to the BFA in Graphic Design program and, because we expect many

current students to transfer to the new degree, the new program is anticipated to begin with a student population of 60 to 75 students.

This enrollment average is also reflected in the number of graduates the area produces per year. An average of 20 students per year earn a BFA in Studio Art with a concentration in Graphic Design from 2011-2017 (see below).

Academic Year	BFA Degrees Awarded with a concentration in Graphic Design
2016-17	16
2015-16	30
2014-15	10
2013-14	18
2012-13	16
2011-12	29 (one dual concentrate)
2011-17	20/yr

Each of these data points demonstrates that there is significant demand for professional education in graphic design amongst our current student body. The new proposed degree will likely increase that demand and strengthen post-graduate outcomes, by providing higher levels and a broader range of profession-specific content and experiences.

Our target for enrollment growth is to average 24 degrees awarded after five years of offering the new degree. This represents a 25% increase over the current average of degrees awarded. 24 graduates per year should also remain safely within the bounds of new job opportunities per year within the Charlotte metropolitan region (see anticipated enrollments below):

Academic Year	Anticipated Graphic Design BFA Degrees Awarded
2020-21	22
2021-22	20
2022-23	26
2023-24	24
2024-25	30
2020-25	24/yr

The new degree will achieve this enrollment growth by targeting potential students not previously served by the Department of Art & Art History. By increasing curricular experiences in Web design and UX/UI, the new degree will attract technology- and strategic-minded students with creative abilities. Increased curricular opportunities to develop Web-based and UX/UI interactive content will attract this “puzzle-solving,” creative student who starts with an interest in technology and successfully develops her or his talent in visual creativity through the new degree.

The majority of current Graphic Design concentration students are attracted to the program for the opportunity to do visually creative work. These students then develop their technology literacy and strategic-thinking skills through our classroom experiences. To add more technology- and strategy-minded students to the student body would significantly enrich the diversity of creative, and critical, problem-solving approaches present in the classroom. A balance of problem-solving techniques and strategies also best reflects how successful businesses and organizations tackle contemporary communication problems in the field of graphic design.

Societal Demand: *(Provide evidence of societal demand and employability of graduates from each of the following source types. Maximum length 1,000 words)*

- Labor market information (projections, job posting analyses, and wages)
 - Specific to North Carolina (such as ncworks.gov, nctower.com, or outside vendors such as [Burning Glass](#))
 - Available from national occupational and industry projections (such as the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#))
 - Projections from professional associations or industry reports
 - Other (alumni surveys, insights from existing programs, etc.)

According to NCworks.gov, the 2016 median wage for a Graphic Designer employed in Mecklenburg County was \$45,219, while the median wage for a Web Developer was \$75,961. On April 6, 2018, there were 28 job openings for Graphic Designers advertised online in Mecklenburg County, for which there were 102 potential candidates in the workforce, or 3.64 candidates per job. While they consider this to be a competitive statewide market, they also forecast Graphic Design to be a ‘National High Growth’ industry that has a ‘Bright Outlook Nationally.’ The local forecast for Web Developers is even healthier, as there were 57 job openings advertised with 48 potential candidates, or 0.84 candidates per job. NCWorks considers Web Development to be a ‘Regional High Growth’ industry that has a ‘Bright Outlook Statewide.’

Data collected from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), shows similar trends with slightly higher

numbers. In 2016, there were 266,300 Graphic Design positions nationally with a median pay of \$47,640 per year. From 2016 to 2026, their employment outlook for Graphic Designers is projected to grow 4% nationally, which is slightly slower than the average of 7% for all occupations. During the same period, there were 162,900 Web Developer positions nationally with a significantly higher median pay of \$66,130 per year. Again, the BLS employment outlook for Web Developers is eye opening, as it is projected to grow 15%, which is more than twice the average for all occupations.

BLS lists the most common required level of education for Graphic Designers as a Bachelor's Degree at 61.54%, an Associate's Degree at 15.38%, and other 23.08%.

The Projections Managing Partnership (PMP), which is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration, and is provided with technical support from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, also anticipates a positive long-term outlook for both Graphic Designers and Web Developers. From 2014 to 2024, the occupational projections for Graphic Designers in North Carolina will increase 8.1% with 240 average annual openings and Web Developers will increase 31.9% with 180 average annual openings.

These numbers are bolstered through feedback we have received from our alumni. In the fall of 2017, we sent out a Google Survey and received a total of 180 responses. The survey included questions about location, employer and job title, and perceptions of trends in the field of Graphic Design. One critical question asked whether alumni believe that UNC Charlotte students would be better served by a stand-alone BFA in Graphic Design (as we are proposing here) rather than a BFA in Art with a Concentration in Graphic Design (as is current). An overwhelming 79% responded in support of the stand-alone degree. Their accompanying commentary revealed three consistent themes: since the need for Web and User Experience/User Interface (UX/UI) design has expanded exponentially over the last decade, contemporary Graphic Designers must come prepared with these added skill sets; alumni emphasized that more Graphic Design specific classes would mean more in-depth study and better career training; and a BFA in Graphic Design degree is more widely recognized and prestigious in the profession and attractive to potential employers.

The survey also asked UNC Charlotte Graphic Design alumni about the kinds of media they have been working with over the past two years and to weigh the number of digital-based projects (such as Web, UX/UI, and video) against the number of print-based projects (such as print-ads, catalogs, and other collateral). The results support the need for a balance of the two skill sets, as 24% of respondents estimated that they work on equal amounts of digital and print-based projects. The results were also similar for 'Mostly Digital with some Print' (14.5%) and 'Mostly Print with some Digital' (12.8%). However, at the far ends of the scale, 12.2% stated that they exclusively worked on digital-based projects versus only 2.9% who worked exclusively on print-based projects, which illustrates the industry's need for more Web and UX/UI designers.

Finally, Graphic Design faculty regularly receive informal feedback as many alumni return to review our graduating students' work in the BFA exhibitions held each semester. They often reveal a keen interest in the future of the program and have consistently expressed interest in seeing expanded opportunities in Web-based and UX/UI design give students the skills alumni know businesses and organizations need.

For Doctoral Programs Only:

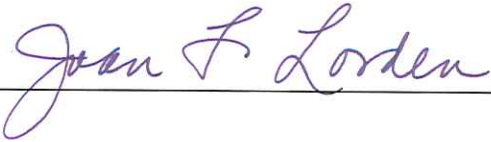
Describe the following (maximum length 2,000 words):

- The research and scholarly infrastructure in place (including faculty) to support the proposed program.
- Method of financing the proposed new program (including extramural research funding and other sources) and indicate the extent to which additional state funding may be required.
- State the number, amount, and source of proposed graduate student stipends and related tuition benefits that will be required to initiate the program.

Contact: (List the names, titles, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers of the person(s) responsible for planning the proposed program.)

Position Title	Name	E-mail Address	Telephone
Graphic Design Area Coordinator, Associate Professor of Graphic Design	David Brodeur	dbbrodeu@uncc.edu	687-0178
Associate Professor of Graphic Design	Bobby Campbell	rcampb44@uncc.edu	687-0195

This Letter of Intent to Plan a New Program has been reviewed and approved by the appropriate campus authorities.

Position Title	Signature	Date
Provost		2/20/2019
Provost (Joint Partner Campus)		