

ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM

VPAA 20-04

(Supersedes: #29-13/14-ICC Guidelines for Approving New Certificate)

Subject: Policy on Certificates

Applies to: Faculty, staff

Purpose of the Policy

A certificate program is a coherent grouping of courses from one or more disciplines that provides a set of learning experiences, often, but not always, related to a specific career area. Alternatively, a certificate program may provide a multidisciplinary focus on a specific topic or area. A certificate program differs substantially in focus from a degree program, although certain common courses may be applied to both degree and certificate courses of study. A certificate provides formal recognition by the University that the course of study involves substantial exposure to the field or topic.

Policy Details

I. Types of Certificates

The University authorizes the issuance of three types of certificates:

1. Academic Certificates (Credit)
2. Non-credit Certificates
3. Certificates of Participation

All certificates bearing the name of the University shall be one of these three types.

II. Academic Certificates (Credit)

Students may earn an Academic Certificate in recognition of satisfactory completion of a planned sequence of courses at the graduate or upper-division undergraduate levels designed and approved in accordance with the following:

- Academic Certificate programs generally shall be designed for post-baccalaureate students or baccalaureate students who wish to complete a certificate program concurrently with their declared major. Regulations enacted by the U.S. Department of Education require 'stand-alone' certificate programs to meet certain criteria for students to be eligible to receive Federal Financial Aid. A certificate program that may be taken either stand-alone or in combination with a degree is classified as stand-alone.

New Academic Certificate programs need to be classified by the College or Department as belonging to one of three categories:

1. The certificate program is a 'stand-alone' program that meets Federal Financial Aid eligibility guidelines.
2. The certificate program can only be pursued in combination with a degree program.
3. The certificate program is a 'stand-alone' program that does not meet Federal Financial Aid eligibility guidelines.

New Academic Certificate programs must meet the following requirements:

- 1.1 A minimum of 9 units are required for an Academic Certificate.
 - a. Undergraduate-level certificate programs shall consist of at least 9 upper-division units. Up to 6 units of graduate-level coursework may be included in the 9 units.
 - b. Graduate-level certificate programs must include at least 9 units at graduate level. Departments may require a baccalaureate degree as a prerequisite to admission.
- 1.2 Any prerequisites for the courses in the Academic Certificate program shall be clearly stated and included in the listed unit range of the certificate program in the Catalog.
- 1.3 No more than twenty-five percent of the units required for the Academic Certificate program shall be transfer units.
- 1.4 All credit courses in the Academic Certificate program shall be graded in the traditional manner (i.e., A through F), except for those courses that are offered only on a Credit/No Credit basis.
- 1.5 Approval of the Academic Certificate program's curriculum shall follow standard University curricular procedures.
- 1.6 With the permission of the graduate degree program, up to 15 units may be counted toward both a graduate-level Academic Certificate program and a graduate degree program.

III. Non-Credit Certificates

Students may earn Non-credit Certificates through the College Extended Education and Global Engagement in recognition of satisfactory completion of a planned sequence of not-for-credit courses.

IV. Certificates of Participation

A Certificate of Participation may be awarded in recognition of any of a wide variety of educational experiences sponsored by a unit of the University. Such certificates are not meant to connote any specific level of competence and may not be designed or used for such purpose. The rules governing the issuance of such a certificate bearing the University's name or the name of any of its colleges, departments, units, or centers, are as follows:

4.1 The Certificate of Participation shall not bear the University seal.

4.2 Certificates of Participation shall not be awarded for completion of regular University credit courses individually or in clusters.

4.3 All wording on the Certificate of Participation should be such that there is no implication that the University by issuing this kind of certificate is attesting to any level of skills gained or educational achievement.

4.4 Requests to issue a Certificate of Participation shall be reviewed and approved by the Vice President, or designee thereof.

Expiration Date

This policy shall be reviewed in five years from its effective date to determine its effectiveness. It may be revised prior to that time as needed.

History

Issued: March 11, 2014 - #29-13/14-ICC Guidelines for Approving New Certificate Programs

Revised: 05/12/2020