

Reference Number: S82-88

Senate Approval Date: Friday, January 01, 1982

CERTIFICATE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Academic Senate Policy Recommendation S82-88

At its meeting of February 23, 1982, the Academic Senate approved the following proposal.

I. Purpose of Certificate Programs

A. A certificate program is a coherent set of academic courses that does not lead to a degree, but is focused on a substantial area of study that may be practically oriented toward skills and/or occupations. Certificate programs are an additional way of organizing curriculum in order to serve students who wish to return to college or spend a limited time in college in order to learn specific subjects, concepts, skills, and competencies.

Certificate programs shall not infringe upon existing degree programs. Since minor programs do not lead to degrees, however, some minor programs may, of themselves, constitute certificate programs, and some certificate programs may be subsumed within a minor.

B. The award of certificate means that the holder has completed the required course work at a certain level of academic accomplishment. A certificate indicates to a prospective employer that the university validates the particular program of study. It neither credentials nor licenses the student, nor does it guarantee the ability of the student to put into practice what has been studied.

II. Categories of Certificate Programs and Admission Requirements

Certificate programs may be offered in one of two categories:

A. Undergraduate certificate programs: In order to be admitted to an undergraduate certificate program, a candidate must have completed 56 units of undergraduate courses with a 2.0 GPA, with exceptions permitted upon presentation of special justification.

B. Graduate certificate programs: In order to be admitted to a graduate certificate program, a candidate must have completed a baccalaureate degree and must be admitted to post-baccalaureate standing in the university in accordance with standard admission requirements and procedures. The faculty coordinator of a particular certificate program will be responsible for the review process employed and the recommendation on the appropriateness of a student's academic background for admission to the program.

III. Curriculum

Every certificate program must include a core required of all students. The word "core" is defined as individual courses required of all students or courses selected from a designated list of choices within required categories. Undergraduate certificate programs must include a core of at least 12 units. Graduate certificate programs must include a core of at least 9 units. Additional units may be required but no maximum is stipulated.

For all certificate programs, a minimum of two-thirds of the required units must be graded on an A-F basis.

Before completing any certificate program, students must demonstrate an appropriate level of writing competency. The appropriate level shall be determined by the program proposers in consultation with the University Literacy Committee. Each certificate program proposal must specify how the above steps are to be accomplished.

In addition to the foregoing stipulations, the following special requirements must be met:

A. Undergraduate certificate program requirements: All units comprising an undergraduate certificate program must be at the upper division level. Graduate level courses may be used to satisfy requirements at the discretion of the academic area offering the certificate. Credit by examination is permitted in accordance with established university regulations. All course work used to satisfy the requirements of an undergraduate certificate must be completed with a minimum grade point average of 2.0, and only courses completed with a grade of C-, Credit or better may be included to meet undergraduate certificate program requirements.

B. Graduate certificate program requirements: At least one-half but not less than six of the units comprising a graduate certificate program must be in graduate level courses. Any undergraduate courses utilized in the program must be at the upper division level. At least two-thirds of the course units must be taken in residence. Credit by examination is permitted in accordance with established university regulations. Graduate students intending to secure both a master's degree and a certificate may pursue these objectives concurrently. Courses may be used to meet both objectives if they satisfy the requirements of both. All course work used to satisfy the requirements of a graduate certificate must be completed with a minimum grade point average of 3.0, and only courses completed with a grade of C or better may be included to meet graduate certificate program requirements.

IV. Administration

A. Proposals ordinarily may be initiated by individual faculty member, departments, programs, or schools of the university, and following department/school approval shall be processed through the regular program review -process of the university in the same manner as other new or revised curricular programs.

B. Proposals should be submitted in the format prescribed, according to Senate policy #F80-63. Copies of the guidelines are available from the office of the associate provost for academic programs.

C. The sponsoring unit (i.e., department, school interdisciplinary area) must designate an appropriate faculty member who will be responsible for coordinating the program. As may be appropriate, this may be the department chair.

D. All officially approved certificate programs should be described in the University Bulletin.

E. All literature to be published and circulated in connection with such programs should have the prior clearance of the appropriate school dean.

F. The primary responsibility for determining a student's completion of a certificate program shall rest in the academic department or Continuing Education program area in which the certificate program is housed. Endorsement of completion of a certificate program shall be made by the appropriate program head upon review of the student's transcript. This endorsement, together with a listing of the program requirements to be met and a transcript showing that they have been met, shall be forwarded, as appropriate, to the dean of undergraduate studies, the dean of graduate studies and research, or the dean of continuing education for review and formal awarding of the certificate on behalf of the program area offering the program and in the name of the university. All certificates must state the number of units required for the completion of the program. Notification of the award of the certificate shall be forwarded, upon completion of the program, by the appropriate dean to the office of Admissions and Records for recording on the student's transcript and filing in the student's permanent file.

V. Implementation

The above requirements shall apply to all proposals for new certificate programs. Already existing certificate programs shall also be expected to comply with the above criteria unless specific justification can be presented regarding the need for an exception.

The Curriculum Review and Approval Committee shall be charged with the review and approval of proposed certificate programs and with the on-going review of existing certificate programs. Certificate programs shall be subject to review in conjunction with the five-year academic review of the department/ division/program in which the certificate is housed.
